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FROM KHULDI TO MORAL RESILIENCE: A PEDAGOGICAL READING OF E. ABDURRAHMAN'S POPULAR SUNDANESE QUR'ANIC EXEGESIS

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ABSTRACTS

This article examines the metaphorical construction of the khuldi narrative in E. Abdurrahman's (1912–1983) popular Sundanese Qur'anic exegesis and its pedagogical implications for moral education. The study draws primarily on "Buah Choldi" (1951) and "Ancurna Hiji Nagri," supported by other exegetical writings and teaching materials. Using qualitative textual analysis, it combines Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) to identify metaphorical expressions through comparisons of basic and contextual meanings and map their source and target domains. The findings reveal an interconnected sequence of metaphors involving the khuldi fruit, nakedness, leaves, and a layered fortress. These metaphors represent temptation and ambition, moral awareness, rationalization of wrongdoing, and the preservation of faith. Their pedagogical synthesis conceptualizes moral resilience as the capacity to maintain moral orientation through awareness, reflection, self-control, habituation, and commitment to faith. This study contributes to Islamic education by connecting metaphorical interpretation in popular Sundanese Qur'anic exegesis with contemporary discourse on moral resilience

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A. INTRODUCTION

The forbidden tree is an important theological motif in narratives of human origins that appears across various religious and mythological traditions (Martin-Achard, 1952; Muzakki & Irham, 2021; Ramli & Husin, 2015). Within religious traditions, this motif provides a space for reflection on the limits of obedience, disobedience, and the relationship between human beings and God (Anderson, 2000; Barr, 1959; Brueggemann, 2010; Treier & Kieser, 2020).

The Qur'an does not specify the name or species of the tree forbidden to Adam and Eve, whose narrative centers on God's command to enjoy the provisions of jannah while avoiding one particular tree (Brannon, 2002; Neuwirth, 2014; Rippin, 2022). Subsequent exegetical traditions have offered various identifications, including grapes, wheat, figs, and dates (Al-Qurtubî, 2005; Ṭabarī, 1954). In Indonesian Muslim tradition, the tree is popularly known as the "khuldi fruit," associated with the Arabic root kh-l-d, meaning eternity (Van Bruinessen, 2012; Izutsu, 2002). Its interpretations extend from questions of obedience and human desire to reflections on maturity, moral responsibility, and the continuity of human life (Mir 1986; Neuwirth 2014; Rahman 2009; Syam 2010; Fauzi 2015; Rois et al. 2025; Zabidi et al. 2024).

In E. Abdurrahman's popular Sundanese Qur'anic exegesis, the khuldi fruit becomes an entry point for interpreting the Adam narrative as a reflection on human moral experience. He associates the fruit with Satanic temptation and ambition, extending the experience of Adam to the continuing moral struggles of his descendants. This interpretation shifts the analytical focus toward how temptation influences human choices, moral awareness, and the pursuit of worldly satisfaction. He states:

> *"Aja ketjap buah chuldi atawa choldi teh, eta asalna tina ketcap-ketcap setan nu dipake ngagoda ka Adam, sarta ayeuna terus-terus dipake ngagoda ka Bani Adam sarta bongan sok maretik eta buah maka hirupna di alam dunya teu panggih djeung katengtreman lahir batin..."* (E. Abdurrahman, 1951).
>
> *(The narrative of the forbidden fruit is rooted in the whisper of Satan as he tempted Adam—a whisper Iblis continues to use to tempt the children of Adam to this day. Because humans are frequently tempted to "pluck" that fruit, their lives in this world fail to attain true peace of body and soul.)*

The significance of E. Abdurrahman's interpretation lies in the interconnected moral experiences represented through the khuldi fruit, nakedness, leaves, and layered fortress. These elements articulate successive moments in human moral life: the attraction of temptation, awareness of its consequences, rationalization of wrongdoing, and preservation of faith. This sequence makes the khuldi narrative particularly relevant to Islamic moral education by linking moral vulnerability with awareness, reflection, self-regulation, and value preservation. This study approaches this interconnected structure as "metaphorical ethics," referring to the pedagogical organization of moral experience through metaphorical interpretation.

The pedagogical relevance of this metaphorical structure emerges from its relationship with the processes of character formation in Islamic education. Contemporary scholarship emphasizes moral quality, value integration, exemplary conduct, and the habituation of ethical practices as important dimensions of educational development (Rafliyanto 2025; Tasurun Amma et al. 2024; Yusuf et al.

2024). Within this perspective, the metaphors of the khuldi fruit, nakedness, leaves, and layered fortress provide interpretive resources for examining moral awareness, introspection, self-control, spiritual discipline, responsibility, and the preservation of faith. The layered-fortress metaphor, in particular, offers a way to examine how everyday ethical practices relate to deeper commitments to sincerity and faith orientation.

In this study, moral resilience is introduced as a contemporary analytical category for interpreting the pedagogical implications of E. Abdurrahman's metaphorical exegesis. The concept refers to the capacity to maintain moral integrity and ethical orientation when facing temptation and challenges to personal values (Sala Defilippis et al. 2019). Contemporary moral education scholarship also associates moral resilience with the preservation of moral agency through critical reflection, moral imagination, and the capacity to navigate disruptions to ethical commitments (Bauer and Hermann 2024). These perspectives provide a conceptual framework for interpreting the moral processes represented in E. Abdurrahman's exegesis, particularly awareness, reflection, self-control, habituation, and the maintenance of faith orientation. The term therefore functions as the researchers' analytical formulation, developed through a pedagogical reading of his metaphorical interpretation.

Previous studies of E. Abdurrahman have approached his intellectual legacy from several perspectives. Historical and biographical studies have situated him within the development of Islamic movements and PERSIS, emphasizing his organizational leadership and political engagement (Wildan 1997b; Bachtiar and Fauzan 2019). Research on his educational thought has examined rhetorical strategies, istifhām, and imaginary dialogue as means of character formation (Nugraha et al. 2024). Meanwhile, studies of his Qur'anic exegesis have focused on his interpretation of Q.S. al-Ḥujurāt and the ideological orientation underlying his reformist thought (Nugraha and Rohmana 2021; Nugraha 2024). These studies have established historical, rhetorical, educational, and ideological dimensions of his intellectual contribution. The metaphorical construction of his popular Sundanese exegesis, particularly its relationship with ethical reflection and pedagogical meaning, remains an area requiring further investigation

Studies of the Nusantara exegetical tradition have also developed through historical, epistemological, linguistic, and literary approaches. Rohmana (2013) maps the diversity of Sundanese Qur'anic exegesis in relation to language, interpretive styles, and ideological orientations. Ja'far and Iqbal (2023), examine the relationship between Indonesian exegetical traditions, scholarly networks, and local epistemologies, while Nugraha et al. (2025), analyze Qur'anic translation into Sundanese through linguistic adaptation and cultural reception. Research on Syarif Sukandi's poetic exegesis further highlights the symbolic and aesthetic dimensions of local Qur'anic interpretation (J A Rohmana 2020). These approaches illuminate the historical development, knowledge networks, linguistic mediation, and aesthetic forms of Nusantara exegesis. Their analytical emphases provide an important foundation for examining another dimension: how metaphorical constructions in popular Sundanese exegesis organize ethical meanings and offer pedagogical resources for Islamic moral education.

Metaphor provides a conceptual framework for examining how concrete experiences are used to articulate abstract moral and spiritual meanings. In the study of religious language, metaphor enables religious experience to be expressed and

understood through symbolic structures (Soskice 1985). In E. Abdurrahman's exegesis, the fruit, nakedness, leaves, and fortress can therefore be examined as elements connecting concrete experiential domains with abstract moral and spiritual concepts. Their relationships provide the basis for identifying how metaphor organizes ethical reflection within his popular Sundanese Qur'anic interpretation.

To examine the relationship between concrete experience and moral concepts, this study employs Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, metaphor allows an abstract experience to be understood through the structure of a more concrete experience. This framework is used to identify how elements such as the tree, fruit, nakedness, leaves, and fortress acquire symbolic functions in E. Abdurrahman's interpretation and are mapped onto the accompanying moral and spiritual concepts. The analysis is then read from the perspective of moral education to identify its possible pedagogical implications.

This study examines the metaphorical construction of the khuldi narrative in E. Abdurrahman's popular Sundanese Qur'anic exegesis and its implications for Islamic moral education. It explores his interpretation, maps the metaphors of the fruit, nakedness, leaves, and layered fortress through Conceptual Metaphor Theory, and interprets their pedagogical significance through moral resilience. The study contributes a contextual reading of his exegesis, a conceptual mapping of metaphorical ethics, and a pedagogical formulation of moral resilience as the capacity to sustain moral orientation through awareness, reflection, self-control, habituation, and commitment to faith, grounded in the responsibility of khalīfah fī al-arḍ.

B. METHOD

This study employs qualitative textual analysis to examine metaphorical constructions and ethical meanings in E. Abdurrahman's exegesis. The primary corpus comprises the Sundanese article “Buah Choldi,” published in *Majalah At-Taqwa* (1951), and the undated manuscript “Ancurna Hiji Nagri,” which provide the principal materials for analyzing the khuldi narrative and layered-fortress metaphor. Other accessible exegetical writings and teaching materials serve as supporting sources for related ethical ideas. Textual segments were selected for their explicit symbolic expressions and relevance to temptation, moral awareness, self-control, and faith, with emphasis on passages that illuminate the interconnected structure of moral experience.

The Qur'anic passages concerning Adam, particularly Q.S. al-A‘rāf: 22 and Ṭāhā: 121, provide the textual context for examining E. Abdurrahman's interpretation. The analysis traces how he develops the meanings of these passages through Sundanese expressions, moral illustrations, and references to everyday social experience. The socio-religious context of Sundanese Muslim society in the 1950 is considered through the historical circumstances of his preaching, educational activities, and exegetical writings. This contextual reading helps situate the ethical meanings within their historical setting, while contemporary educational concepts are introduced at the interpretive stage to examine their present pedagogical significance.

The analysis draws on Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) to examine how concrete experiences structure abstract moral and spiritual meanings. The tree, fruit, nakedness, leaves, and fortress are examined in relation to their contextual functions in E. Abdurrahman's interpretation. Their metaphorical meanings are mapped from source domains, such as temptation, bodily exposure, concealment,

and physical protection, onto target domains involving moral vulnerability, awareness, rationalization, and the preservation of faith. The relationships among these mappings are then examined as an interconnected structure of ethical experience that informs the pedagogical interpretation.

Metaphorical expressions are identified using the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) developed by the Pragglejaz Group (Group 2007). The procedure involves identifying lexical units, establishing their basic and contextual meanings, and examining their semantic relationship to determine metaphorical usage. Applied to the original Sundanese expressions, the analysis considers historical usage and exegetical context. The identified units are then mapped through Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) to establish their conceptual functions and relationships within the extended symbolic structures of E. Abdurrahman's exegesis.

The analysis proceeded through five stages. First, the primary texts were read closely to identify Sundanese expressions, narrative contexts, and ethical themes. Second, metaphorical lexical units were identified through MIP by comparing their basic and contextual meanings. Third, these units were mapped through CMT to establish source and target domains and their relationships within the broader symbolic structure. Fourth, the findings were interpreted in relation to E. Abdurrahman's socio-religious context and relevant Qur'anic and exegetical discussions, with comparative references selected for their relevance to the Adam narrative, the forbidden tree, and the ethical meanings in the primary corpus. Fifth, the metaphorical findings were synthesized pedagogically through moral awareness, reflection, self-control, habituation, and faith orientation. Moral resilience served as a contemporary analytical category to conceptualize the capacity to sustain moral orientation.

The analysis considers the linguistic and documentary characteristics of E. Abdurrahman's Sundanese texts, including historical spelling conventions and lexical variations. Original expressions are retained alongside English translations, which account for their immediate textual context, ethical meanings, and cultural nuances. Metaphorical interpretation remains grounded in the original wording. Given the limited digitization and documentation of some mimeographed manuscripts, the study draws on accessible and verifiable texts, situating its findings within the scope of the available corpus.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

E. Abdurrahman's Hermeneutical Horizon

E. Abdurrahman (Endang Abdurrahman) was born on 12 June 1912 in Cianjur. He received his religious education at Pesantren Al-I'anah Cianjur under the leadership of Muhammad Nuh bin Idris, where he acquired an Islamic scholarly foundation within the Sundanese religious environment (Wildan 1997a). This educational background provides an important context for examining the cultural and ethical dimensions of his later Qur'anic interpretation.

His intellectual development unfolded through engagement with the reformist ideas of PERSIS in Bandung, particularly through his encounter with A. Hassan. This engagement informed his rational-critical approach to religious texts, reflected in his emphasis on the purification of creed, evidentiary arguments, and the evaluation of religious practices against normative foundations. His commitment to Islamic

preaching and education further connected this orientation with the cultivation of faith and character (Abdurrahman, n.d.-d). This intellectual orientation provides a context for reading his interpretation of the khuldi fruit, in which the Qur'anic narrative is developed into an ethical reflection on temptation, human choice, and responsibility

From the 1930s onward, E. Abdurrahman contributed to PERSIS education and preaching through teaching, writing, and educational activities, while engaging with the socio-political dynamics of Indonesian Muslims. His experiences during the colonial period, the revolution, and the early years of Indonesian independence form part of the historical context of his intellectual development (Bachtiar and Fauzan 2019). This context helps situate his use of Qur'anic narratives as sources of ethical reflection on human conduct and social life.

In Sundanese tradition, moral and religious values are often conveyed through *siloka*, a form of figurative expression that communicates meanings through symbols and indirect references. In E. Abdurrahman's exegesis, terms such as *wirang* (shame associated with moral or social disgrace), *era* (embarrassment or shyness), and *ajrih* (fear or apprehension) articulate different dimensions of human moral experience (Moriyama 2005; Saringendyanti et al. 2018). These expressions, together with the metaphors of the khuldi fruit and layered fortress, connect concrete experiences with reflection on character, self-awareness, and responsibility. Metaphor thus organizes ethical experience through culturally meaningful forms of expression.

E. Abdurrahman's interpretation of the Adam narrative and the khuldi fruit brings Qur'anic meanings into dialogue with the socio-religious experiences and cultural values of Sundanese society. In the analyzed corpus, the narrative is developed into ethical reflections on temptation, human conduct, and moral responsibility. This study interprets these connections as the basis for examining how Qur'anic metaphors articulate moral awareness, responsibility, and character formation (Nugraha et al. 2024)

The Khuldi-Fruit Metaphor

This section examines E. Abdurrahman's interpretation of the khuldi fruit through the concept of the "tree of illusion." The tree represents the broader structure of human temptation, while the fruit symbolizes the attraction of eternity, power, and illusory benefit. This metaphorical relationship frames the Adam narrative as an ethical reflection on human ambition and moral orientation.

The phrase "khuldi fruit" is understood as an integral part of the narrative of the first human journey. Therefore, before explaining its metaphorical meaning, E. Abdurrahman emphasizes that God created Adam with a clear purpose: to appoint him as a khalīfah on earth. This view is reflected in the following explanation:

> *"Adam katut bani Adam sakumna ditempatkeun di ieu alam lain pikeun disiksa atawa nandangan kahinaan, tapi diangkat salaku khalifah anu kudu ngatur kasuburan jeung kamakmuran dunya... Tegesna, lamun giat ngalawan godaan setan anu salawasna rék ngagubragkeun manusa kana jurang kahinaan, Allah ngajamin yén hirup di ieu kebon (dunya) bakal aya dina kasuburan, hirup hurip, sarta bagja mulya."* (E. Abdurrahman, 1951).
>
> "Adam and all his descendants were placed in this world not to be punished or subjected to humiliation, but to be appointed as khalīfahs responsible for

> cultivating the fertility and prosperity of the earth... In other words, if human beings earnestly resist the temptation of Satan, who continually seeks to cast them into the abyss of humiliation, God guarantees that life in this 'garden' (the world) will be fertile, prosperous, and blessed." (E. Abdurrahman, 1951).

The quotation shows that, in E. Abdurrahman's view, human creation has a clear normative purpose. The depiction of the world as a "garden" demonstrates an encounter between the Qur'anic narrative and Sundanese agrarian imagery, in which the living space is understood as a trust that must be cared for and managed ethically. This imagery creates a possible pedagogical reading: human beings live in a space that demands responsibility, stewardship, and protection from corruption.

The caliphate appears as a moral identity of human beings from the beginning of creation as well as an existential orientation directing the course of life. The khalīfah is understood as a subject who bears responsibility for managing the earth and directing life before God, so that human existence unfolds as a journey whose ultimate destination is God as its source and final end. The illustration of planetary circulation and the hands of a clock returning to their starting point emphasizes that life has a direction that must be maintained (E. Abdurrahman, n.d.-a, n.d.-c).

Within this framework, the khuldi narrative represents a test of the human caliphal mandate, in which entrusted responsibility may give way to egoistic desire. The Qur'anic accounts of human origin and return to God (Q.S. al-Mā'idah: 18; al-Inshiqāq: 6) reinforce this theological orientation (Nugraha 2023; Redaksi 1993). Moral education consequently involves cultivating awareness of this responsibility and sustaining the human orientation toward God (Nugraha et al. 2024).

Exegetical discussions differ over whether the jannah inhabited by Adam refers to the eschatological paradise or a garden in this world (Hamzah and Abdullah 2012). E. Abdurrahman interprets it metaphorically as a representation of worldly life, which provides human needs and requires responsible stewardship. Drawing on Q.S. Ṭāhā: 118–119, he portrays the world as a miniature paradise when human beings resist Satanic temptation and remain oriented toward divine guidance (E. Abdurrahman, 1951). Within this interpretation, the khuldi fruit symbolizes a temptation that threatens the ethical management of earthly life, connecting moral choice with human responsibility and the preservation of faith.

Table 1 compares classical, rational-symbolic, and E. Abdurrahman's interpretations of the khuldi narrative, highlighting the distinctive ethical-pedagogical orientation of his reading.

Table 1. Comparison of Interpretations of the Khuldi Fruit

No.	Aspect	Some Classical Exegeses	Rational/Symbolic Reading	E. Abdurrahman
1	Tree identity	Grapes, wheat, figs, etc.	Not important	Tree of illusion
2	Meaning of khuldi	Associated with eternity	Can be read symbolically	Eternity and power
3	Nakedness	Exposure of the body	Symbol of a particular experience	Humiliation/moral dignity
4	Leaves	Covering the body	Symbol of covering	Alibi/rationalization
5	Orientation	Narrative/theological	Psychological/symbolic	Ethical-pedagogical

This comparison highlights E. Abdurrahman's shift from identifying the tree's ontological nature toward interpreting the Adam narrative as an ethical reflection on human moral struggle.

1. The Khuldi Fruit as a Metaphor for Eternity and Power

In the Qur'anic account, Satan presents the forbidden tree to Adam through the promise of *al-khuld* (eternity) and *mulk lā yab*ـى (an enduring kingdom) (Q.S. Ṭāhā: 120). E. Abdurrahman develops these two expressions as interconnected forms of human temptation: the desire for permanent existence and the aspiration to lasting power. His interpretation is articulated in the following passage:

> *"Sabab sjetan geus nipu ka Nabi Adam, madjarkeun rek mere buah choldi.., tangkal nu abadi, nu kekel djeung langgeng, sarta ngadjangdjian rek ngadjadjapkeun kana karadjaan nu moal runtag"* (Abdurrahman 1951, 1–2).
> "
>
> (Because Satan deceived Prophet Adam by whispering promises to grant him the fruit of immortality and a kingdom that would never crumble – Author's note).

The quotation shows that E. Abdurrahman reads khuldi as a rhetorical construction produced through Satanic speech. Expressions such as "the eternal tree" and "the kingdom that will never collapse" evoke images of eternity and power that touch upon human existential ambitions. The attraction of the khuldi fruit thus lies in the linguistic construction of temptation, through which *khulūd* and *al-mulk* form a symbolic structure connecting human ambition with the desire for eternity and enduring power.

E. Abdurrahman further extends the meaning of *khulūd* to the pursuit of *al-māl* (wealth), through which material accumulation appears to promise lasting security and continuity of life. He associates this orientation with *at-takāthur*, *taḥāsun*, and *taḥāsud*, reflecting the competitive pursuit of possession and status. Similarly, *al-mulk* is developed into an aspiration for recognition and domination, with Pharaoh serving as a Qur'anic representation of power elevated to an absolute position. These connections

reveal how the promises of eternity and enduring sovereignty are translated into human ambitions for wealth, status, and control (E. Abdurrahman, 1951).

In E. Abdurrahman's reading, the khuldi fruit is also associated with weakened moral vigilance when temptation is allowed to enter the decision-making process. The attraction initially presented as a promise of eternity and power can shift human attention from the caliphal trust toward more egoistic interests. This structure represents an early stage of moral struggle that subsequently produces consequences for self-awareness and behavioral self-control (E. Abdurrahman, 1951).

Within Conceptual Metaphor Theory, this structure can be formulated as TEMPTATION IS AN ATTRACTIVE OBJECT. The khuldi fruit functions as a concrete object whose attraction is constructed through promises of eternity and enduring power. This mapping connects the sensory experience of encountering an attractive object with the moral experience of facing temptation. The pursuit of the promised benefits further represents the human tendency to seek illusory advantages that can redirect moral orientation. This conceptual formulation is developed in the present study to explain the ethical significance of the khuldi-fruit metaphor (Gibbs Jr 2008; Lakoff and Johnson 1980).

2. Nakedness and Waraq al-Jannah as Symbols of Moral Awareness

The following scene depicts Adam and Eve attempting to cover their bodies with waraq al-jannah, as stated in the Qur'anic verse:

فَأَكَلَا مِنْهَا فَبَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْءَاتُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ ۚ وَعَصَىٰ آدَمُ رَبَّهُ فَغَوَىٰ

"Then the two of them ate from the tree, and their nakedness became apparent to them, and they began to cover themselves with the leaves of Paradise. Adam thus disobeyed his Lord and went astray."

Some exegetes interpret this event literally as the act of covering the body with leaves from Paradise, sometimes describing the leaves as fig leaves or large leaves sewn together with roots (Al-Qurtubî 2005). Rationalist exegetes, meanwhile, have interpreted it as a symbol of sexual awareness or conception considered premature (Santosa et al. 2011). These examples demonstrate different emphases on the physical, biological, and symbolic dimensions of the exposure of nakedness. In E. Abdurrahman's reading, attention is directed more explicitly toward the moral experience of humiliation, shame, and awareness of wrongdoing.

In E. Abdurrahman's reading, the expression "karasa ku sorangan buligir oratna" connects physical exposure with the inward recognition of moral vulnerability. The image of nakedness conveys the experience of having one's wrongdoing exposed, revealing the gap between outward appearance and moral conduct. Shame emerges as an awareness of this discrepancy, particularly when the wrongdoing becomes visible to others. E. Abdurrahman explains:

"Sedengkeun perbawana eta buah, dimana didahar lain matak ngeunah djeung nimat nu abadi tapi matak udar pakean ngabolekerkeun orat sorangan, sabab nadjan gandang, nadjan ginding lamun tas ngalakukeun djahat, tetep martabatna rendah sarta wirang mun kaperego ku nu ngarti, reup geuneuk raj pias siga nu udar samping tengah djalan" (E. Abdurrahman, 1951)

(In this instance, the nature of the fruit was not to provide lasting pleasure or deliciousness upon consumption, but rather to expose the garments that covered one's nakedness. For no matter how dashing a person might appear in fine attire, committing a wrongful act causes their dignity to plummet, and they feel shame when discovered by others. Their face flushes red—much like someone whose clothes have come undone while walking before a crowd.

The quotation presents the khuldi fruit as an illusion whose attraction culminates in the exposure of moral vulnerability. The expressions *nadjan gandang* and *nadjan ginding* illustrate how outward appearance and social standing cannot erase the moral consequences of wrongdoing. Shame initially emerges through the possibility of social exposure, while its ethical significance develops through the individual's recognition of personal wrongdoing. This distinction allows shame to be understood as a constructive moral response that encourages self-examination and correction.

The phrase *wa ṭafiqā yakhsifāni min waraq al-jannah* in the sequence of verses indicates the human response to this exposure. In E. Abdurrahman's exegesis, covering oneself with leaves from Paradise is understood as a symbol of the human tendency to seek justification once wrongdoing has been exposed. He states:

> *"Memang biasana lamun katohjan sok neangan alesan, hajang nutup wiwirang, bari diri sorangan ngarti kana kapalsuan diri sabab teu daekkeun buni sakadar ditutup ku daun djengkol atawa ekol, lebah dieu perlu ngarasa era ku ringkang, adjrih ku diri"* (E. Abdurrahman, 1951).
>
> "It is common that when one's wrongdoing is exposed, one looks for excuses and tries to conceal one's shame, even though one personally recognizes the falsity of those excuses. Wrongdoing cannot be hidden merely by covering it with leaves such as jengkol or ekol leaves. At this point, one needs to feel ashamed before oneself and fearful of oneself."

The quotation presents *waraq al-jannah* as a symbol of moral rationalization following the exposure of wrongdoing. The expressions *neangan alesan* (seeking excuses) and *nutup wiwirang* (concealing shame) describe efforts to protect one's self-image after a transgression, even when the individual recognizes the falsity of these excuses (*diri sorangan ngarti kana kapalsuan diri*). The images of *jengkol* and *ekol* leaves illustrate the fragility of concealment, while *era ku ringkang* and *ajrih ku diri* direct attention toward inward shame, self-examination, and personal accountability. These expressions convey a Sundanese ethical vocabulary in which awareness of one's conduct becomes a basis for acknowledging wrongdoing, correcting behavior, and accepting responsibility (E. Abdurrahman, 1951, 1954a, 1954b).

The khuldi fruit, nakedness, and *waraq al-jannah* form an interconnected structure of moral experience. The fruit embodies the attraction of temptation, nakedness reveals the consequences of transgression, and the leaves represent attempts to preserve self-image through excuses and concealment. Building on E. Abdurrahman's interpretation, this study develops a pedagogical reading centered on vigilance, self-awareness, and personal accountability. Within this framework, Iblis represents the forces of temptation that may redirect human conduct, while Adam's experience provides a narrative basis for reflecting on moral choice, self-regulation, and the preservation of faith orientation.

Within Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory, these images yield two conceptual mappings: MORAL EXPOSURE IS NAKEDNESS, linking bodily exposure with moral vulnerability and the disclosure of wrongdoing, and MORAL RATIONALIZATION IS COVERING, linking the act of covering the body with concealing wrongdoing through excuses and self-justification. Both mappings are grounded in E. Abdurrahman's expressions *buligir oratna*, *neangan alesan*, and *nutup wiwirang*, which connect bodily imagery with moral exposure and concealment.

The Layered-Fortress Metaphor and the Formation of Moral Resilience

Within Conceptual Metaphor Theory, E. Abdurrahman's layered-fortress image can be formulated as MORAL INTEGRITY IS A FORTRESS, mapping physical defense onto the protection of faith and moral integrity. His original account describes five successive layers—brick, wall, iron, silver, and gold—as barriers protecting the innermost structure of faith. This study develops an educational interpretation of these layers by associating them with everyday character, voluntary worship, religious obligations, sincerity, and core faith. Read from the outermost to the innermost layer, this sequence provides a pedagogical framework connecting daily conduct with the cultivation of inner religious commitment.

To explain this mechanism, E. Abdurrahman presents faith through a metaphor of a fortress consisting of five layers:

> *"Iman téh lir ibarat hiji nagara anu bentengna lima lapis: benteng emas, perak, beusi, tembok, jeung bata. ... Nalika musuh ningali benteng bata, manéhna henteu langsung hayang nyerang, sabab ngira di jerona teu aya barang berharga. ... Nanging nalika lapisan demi lapisan kabuka—tina tembok, beusi, nepi ka perak—panasaran musuh beuki ngagedéan, nepi ka tungtungna kabuka benteng emas sarta ahirna laksana ngagdabah iman"* (E. Abdurrahman, n.d.-b).
> "Faith is like a country with five layers of fortification: gold, silver, iron, wall, and brick. ... When the enemy sees the brick fortress, he does not immediately want to attack because he assumes there is nothing valuable inside. ... Yet when layer after layer is opened—from the wall, to iron, and then to silver—the enemy's curiosity grows, until the gold fortress is exposed and faith eventually collapses."

The five layers form a spatial hierarchy in which the outermost brick layer protects the inner structures of wall, iron, silver, and gold. E. Abdurrahman's narrative uses this arrangement to illustrate how threats penetrate successive defenses before reaching the core of faith. This study interprets the same sequence pedagogically, moving from everyday conduct through religious practice and obligation toward sincerity and core faith. The progression reflects the interconnected dimensions of moral formation: daily conduct provides its practical foundation, while inner commitment gives religious practice its enduring direction.

The brick layer is associated in this study with everyday character, particularly manners toward teachers, parents, and fellow human beings. E. Abdurrahman's discussion emphasizes the importance of ethical conduct in sustaining the moral condition of a community (E. Abdurrahman, n.d.-b). This association positions everyday manners as the practical foundation of faith protection. From a pedagogical perspective, habituating proper conduct contributes to sustaining moral orientation.

The wall layer is associated in this study with voluntary religious practices (*sunnah*), including tahajjud, rawātib prayers, and voluntary fasting. E. Abdurrahman's discussion of these practices illustrates the role of devotional discipline in maintaining spiritual commitment (Abdurrahman, n.d.-b). This association extends the fortress metaphor from everyday interpersonal conduct to the regular cultivation of religious practice. Pedagogically, voluntary worship can be understood as a means of sustaining spiritual sensitivity and consistency in one's moral orientation (Setyobudi et al. 2025).

The iron layer is associated in this study with religious obligations (*farḍ*), which provide a normative structure for directing human conduct. E. Abdurrahman's discussion of divine mercy and religious responsibility offers a basis for examining how hope in God's forgiveness relates to the fulfillment of religious duties (Abdurrahman, n.d.-b). Pedagogically, this relationship highlights the integration of spiritual hope, awareness of obligation, and accountability for one's actions. Within the analytical framework of moral resilience, these dimensions contribute to maintaining moral orientation when individuals encounter temptation.

The silver layer is associated in this study with sincerity (*ikhlāṣ*), understood as the inward orientation that gives religious actions their moral direction. E. Abdurrahman's discussion of intention and the orientation underlying religious conduct provides the textual basis for this association (E. Abdurrahman, n.d.-b). From a pedagogical perspective, sincerity concerns the formation of intention and the consistency between inward commitment and outward practice. It therefore represents an important dimension of moral integrity.

The gold layer represents core faith as the innermost dimension of the fortress. In this study's interpretation, its position signifies the foundational orientation that gives coherence to everyday conduct, religious practice, obligations, and sincerity. The image of the gold layer being reached after the outer defenses are breached illustrates the vulnerability of faith when its supporting layers are weakened. Pedagogically, this association highlights the importance of cultivating and sustaining faith as the central orientation of moral life.

The five-layer structure provides a pedagogical sequence connecting everyday conduct with the inner foundations of faith. Everyday manners establish the practical basis of moral life; voluntary worship cultivates spiritual discipline; religious obligations strengthen normative commitment; sincerity gives inward direction to religious actions; and core faith provides the foundation that integrates these dimensions. Read as an educational framework, the sequence illustrates the relationship between habitual conduct and the cultivation of enduring moral and spiritual commitment. Table 2 summarizes the relationship between the fortress layers, the forms of temptation identified in E. Abdurrahman's account, and their pedagogical interpretation in this study.

Table 2. Layered-Fortress Metaphor Structure and Implications for Moral Education

No.	Layer	Educational association in this study	Textual or analytical focus	Pedagogical implication
1	Brick	Everyday character	Neglect of etiquette and interpersonal ethics	Habituation of proper manners
2	Wall	Voluntary worship	Underestimation of devotional practices	Spiritual discipline
3	Iron	Religious obligations	Relationship between divine mercy and fulfillment of duties	Awareness of religious obligation
4	Silver	Sincerity	Intention and inward orientation of religious actions	Education of intention
5	Gold	Core faith	Preservation of the foundational orientation of faith	Strengthening of faith

The five-layer mapping presents moral formation as an interconnected process in which everyday manners support spiritual discipline, religious obligations establish normative commitment, sincerity shapes inward orientation, and faith provides the foundation for the entire structure. Synthesizing these dimensions, this study conceptualizes moral resilience as the capacity to sustain moral and faith orientation amid temptation, pressure, and changing circumstances. This concept serves as a contemporary analytical formulation derived from the pedagogical reading of E. Abdurrahman's layered-fortress metaphor.

From Khuldi to Moral Resilience: Articulating Moral Resilience

The four metaphorical structures in E. Abdurrahman's exegesis form an interconnected process of moral formation. The tree and khuldi fruit represent temptation and ambition; exposed nakedness signifies awareness of moral consequences; *waraq al-jannah* illustrates the rationalization and concealment of wrongdoing; and the layered fortress represents the preservation of faith and moral values. These dimensions interact recursively: recognition of temptation encourages moral awareness, awareness prompts reflection, reflection guides self-regulation, and habituated values reinforce moral orientation when individuals encounter subsequent challenges. Together, they provide the pedagogical basis for conceptualizing moral resilience.

Table 3. Theoretical Framework of Metaphorical Structures and Moral Education

Metaphorical Structure	Moral Dimension	Pedagogical Implication	Pedagogical Implication
1	Tree and khuldi fruit	Temptation, ambition, and illusory desire	Moral vigilance and self-control
2	Exposed nakedness	Awareness of wrongdoing and its consequences	Moral reflection and responsibility
3	Waraq al-jannah	Rationalization and concealment of wrongdoing	Reflective honesty and accountability
4	Layered fortress	Preservation of faith and moral values	Habituation, discipline, sincerity, and faith orientation

This study conceptualizes moral resilience as an individual capacity to maintain moral orientation and value commitment amid temptation, pressure, and ethical challenges. Its specific focus is the sustained enactment of ethical values in moral decision-making and action. Psychological resilience concerns adaptation to adversity; religious commitment concerns adherence to beliefs and practices; moral agency concerns the capacity to make and enact moral decisions; and character strength refers to relatively enduring moral dispositions. Moral resilience brings these dimensions into an account of how individuals sustain ethical orientation under challenging circumstances.

Contemporary discussions of moral agency and moral resilience provide a basis for examining the capacity to sustain ethical orientation (Metselaar and Molewijk 2023), while studies of responsibility and caring practices highlight its relevance to everyday action (Boyle 2020). Building on these discussions, this study develops a pedagogical conceptualization grounded in E. Abdurrahman's metaphors. The resulting framework represents a conceptual synthesis derived from textual analysis, providing a theoretical basis for further research on moral resilience in Islamic education. Its educational application and empirical validity remain open to subsequent investigation.

Moral Education and the Caliphal Mission

In E. Abdurrahman's thought, moral education is closely connected to the formation of human beings capable of fulfilling the trust of *khalīfah fī al-arḍ*. This mission provides a theological foundation for directing human knowledge, power, and resources toward responsible action and the common good. His interpretation of the

khuldi narrative offers an ethical framework for examining how the management of desire and moral choices shapes human responsibility.

The caliphal mission entails responsibility for managing personal potential, material resources, and social relationships in accordance with ethical values. In this context, the khuldi-fruit metaphor provides a basis for examining how the pursuit of pleasure, wealth, and power can shape human choices and social conduct. E. Abdurrahman's interpretation thus connects the management of desire with the responsibility to direct worldly resources toward the common good. This educational orientation also resonates with studies that develop Qur'anic values as foundations for Islamic social education (Salim and Hanum Ok 2025).

E. Abdurrahman extends moral reflection to the conditions of social life by associating poverty and social hunger with the deterioration of faith and humanity, particularly in relation to envy and cruelty (E. Abdurrahman, 1951). This interpretation connects individual moral orientation with social responsibility, showing how the management of desire and personal interests bears upon the well-being of others. The relationship between moral knowledge (*'ilm*) and ethical practice (*'amal*) in classical Islamic ethics further supports this connection as a basis for moral formation (Al-Ghazālī, and Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad, n.d.). From a symbolic-hermeneutic perspective, these interpretations also illustrate how religious symbols can guide moral awareness and ethical action (Ricoeur 1967).

From the perspective of Islamic education, the caliphal mission requires the integration of moral awareness, self-control, sincerity, and social responsibility. Moral awareness enables individuals to recognize the ethical consequences of their choices, while self-control guides the management of desires and actions. Sincerity sustains the orientation of these actions toward divine values, and social responsibility directs personal conduct toward the common good. Through learning, reflection, and habituation, these capacities contribute to the formation of individuals who can uphold moral values and fulfill their responsibilities as *khalīfah fī al-arḍ*. This process corresponds with Islamic educational perspectives on personal development and moral transformation (Dwi Yulianto and Dwi Saputra 2021).

CONCLUSION

This study shows that E. Abdurrahman's interpretation of the khuldi narrative develops the story of Adam into an ethical reflection on temptation, ambition, moral awareness, and human responsibility. Through the metaphors of the tree and fruit, nakedness, leaves, and layered fortress, concrete elements of the Qur'anic narrative are connected with moral choice, self-control, reflection on wrongdoing, and the preservation of faith.

From the perspective of Islamic education, these metaphorical structures provide a pedagogical framework linking vigilance toward temptation, awareness of moral consequences, self-reflection, self-control, and the habituation of values. E. Abdurrahman's layered-fortress metaphor depicts the protection of faith through five layers. Their association with everyday manners, spiritual discipline, religious obligations, sincerity, and core faith constitutes the pedagogical interpretation developed in this study. This framework connects moral formation with the responsibility of human beings as *khalīfah fī al-arḍ*.

This study conceptualizes moral resilience as an individual capacity to maintain moral orientation and value commitment amid temptation and ethical challenges. The concept represents a contemporary analytical formulation developed through the pedagogical reading of E. Abdurrahman's metaphorical exegesis. It connects the textual findings with contemporary discussions of moral education by extending the exegete's original interpretations into a pedagogical conceptual framework. The proposed framework offers a theoretical perspective on moral formation, with its educational application requiring further investigation.

The study contributes to Islamic education by demonstrating how metaphorical interpretation in popular Sundanese Qur'anic exegesis can provide resources for examining moral awareness, self-regulation, responsibility, and faith formation. Its findings are limited by the restricted availability of E. Abdurrahman's manuscripts and the scope of the accessible textual corpus. Further research could examine the application of this conceptual framework in Islamic educational settings and evaluate its relevance through empirical studies, including research on moral learning and character formation.

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