

(Research Article)

The Sufistic Dimension in Habib Luthfi bin Yahya's Syafahī Interpretation of Qur'anic Verses on Nationalism

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Abstract: This study examines the Sufistic dimension in the syafahī interpretation of Habib Muhammad Luthfi bin Yahya regarding the verses of nationality in the Qur'an. Habib Luthfi was chosen as the object because he is a Sufi scholar as well as a national figure who consistently conveys Qur'anic interpretation through oral media, and his ideas demonstrate a combination of Sufi spirituality and nationalism. This study employs a qualitative method with primary data sources in the form of recorded lectures, religious gatherings, and direct interviews, as well as secondary data consisting of scientific literature related to tafsir, Sufism, and nationality. The analysis is carried out through a descriptive-analytical-comparative approach by paying attention to the methodology of tafsir and its Sufistic context. The results of the study indicate that the syafahī interpretation of Habib Luthfi is characterized as Sufistic-thematic with an approach of tafsir bi al-isyāri and bi al-ra'yī al-maqbūl which still rests on the framework of tafsir bi al-ma'tsūr. His interpretation of six verses of nationality emphasizes the value of love for the homeland, obedience to leaders, jihad in social-moral dimensions, the unity of the ummah, collective gratitude in national development, and respect for diversity as part of sunnatullah. Thus, this study affirms that Sufism can function as an ethical foundation of nationality as well as a model of Qur'anic interpretation that is relevant to contemporary Indonesian reality.

Keywords: Habib Luthfi bin Yahya; Qur'anic interpretation; Sufistic Dimension; Syafahī Interpretation; Verses of Nationality.

1. Introduction

Studies in Qur'anic Studies have developed since the early period of Islamic civilization by presenting various methods and approaches in understanding the Qur'an. Tafsir becomes the main instrument for Muslims to explore the meanings of the sacred text, as stated by al-Dzahabī that tafsir is a scholarly effort to understand the will of Allah in accordance with human capacity. The development of scientific knowledge later gave rise to various types of tafsir such as linguistic, fiqh-oriented, philosophical, theological, and Sufistic (isyārī), in which the intellectual background of the mufassir contributes to shaping the character of his interpretation. This is in line with the view of 'Abdullah Darrāz who likens the Qur'an to a diamond that emits different rays of light from every perspective of its reader.

Among the expanding approaches, Sufistic tafsir has become one of the unique models of interpretation because it emphasizes esoteric meaning acquired through inner intuition. Although initially receiving criticism, a number of scholars such as al-Ghazālī granted legitimacy to tafsir isyārī as long as it does not negate the literal meaning. In the modern era, the oral interpretive tradition or tafsir syafahī is increasingly relevant, as it is considered capable of presenting a contextual relationship between the verses and the social reality of the ummah. This model is applied by several figures such as asy-Sya'rāwī and Wahbah az-Zuhārī who later codified their teachings into written tafsir works to maintain methodological integrity.

In the Indonesian context, the tradition of oral tafsir has been practiced since the Walisongo era and continues to develop through contemporary scholars. One of the important figures in this tradition is Habib Muhammad Luthfi bin Yahya, a Sufi scholar,

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statesman, and Chairman of the World Sufi Forum. His interpretation combines Sufistic approaches and nationalist perspectives, resulting in a moderate, contextual type of *tafsir* oriented toward unity and Indonesian values. Through lectures, sermons, and religious gatherings, Habib Luthfi often relates Qur'anic verses to issues of nationalism, security, and nationality, such as his interpretation of QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 126 which emphasizes the importance of love for the homeland as part of faith.

According to Habib Luthfi, the supplication of Prophet Ibrahim as recorded in the verse conveys that every citizen needs and must possess a sense of love for the homeland and a spiritual bond with both faith and the state. For the essence of membership in a nation cannot be realized without love. It is love that becomes the seed of nationalism and nationality. Concern for the country and society will emerge when that love is present and grows within the soul (Interview with the Main Informant; Habib Luthfi bin Yahya, Pekalongan, April 3, 2021).

He continued that through love, a person will be able to appreciate what has been granted by God, and he will preserve and protect everything God has given to him, including his homeland. Therefore, love in all matters occupies a primary position. He then connects the discussion of love for the homeland with the discourse of Sufism. Likewise, in the stages of the spiritual journey toward Allah SWT, love occupies the highest position (*maqâm*) as expressed by the great Sufis, namely al-Imâm al-Kalabadzî (d. 880 CE) and Abû Ja'far ath-Thûsî (d. 85–460 H), regarding the hierarchical stages of *maqâm* in Sufism. If toward the Most Glorious God, the sharp sword that can be used to attain *wushûl* or union with Him is the sword of love, then so it is toward His creation and among the creations of God is the earth upon which we stand, wherein many communities are formed under the symbol of the state.

Therefore, love for the country is the manifestation of love for the Owner of the Country, clarified Habib Luthfi. According to him, this is the core interpretation of the supplication of Prophet Ibrahim as so that his homeland is protected and becomes a safe haven, enabling the hearts of the local people to remain calm and peaceful. For fulfilling obedience to Allah SWT in all activities becomes easier when tranquility and peace envelop the heart. Moreover, national development can run smoothly so that the mission of prospering the ummah will be more easily realized if the security of a region is assured (Interview with the Main Informant; Habib Luthfi bin Yahya, Pekalongan, April 3, 2021).

The Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) is non-negotiable such is the slogan consistently echoed by Habib Luthfi, because love for the homeland reflects faith. According to him, the red and white that symbolize NKRI must be firmly embedded in the conscience of every citizen. Struggling for the glory of the red and white is a form of servitude to God and a manifestation of faith in Him. Religion and the state are not two separate matters; they cannot be divided. For strong defense within the framework of unity in the archipelago is born from the identity of a God-conscious person who protects the integrity of his homeland (Kanafi, 2013).

Based on the above background and considering the stance of Habib Luthfi who comes from a Sufi (*tarekat*) scholarly background and continually emphasizes nationalist spirit in his religious activities, the author is interested in making Habib Luthfi the main figure of this research object. The author will gather fragments of Qur'anic thought of Habib Luthfi bin Yahya that emerge from his social-scholarly identity regarding the verses of nationality, which will then be examined and analyzed objectively, critically, and argumentatively. Therefore, this research becomes relevant to be raised in a scholarly work in the form of a thesis entitled "The Sufistic Dimension in the *Syafahî* Interpretation of Habib Luthfi bin Yahya Regarding the Verses of Nationality".

2. Literature Review

Research on the Sufistic dimension in the syafahî interpretation of Habib Luthfi bin Yahya regarding the verses of nationality originates from knowledge obtained through regular religious gatherings at the Majlis Kanzus Shalawat Pekalongan. This interest emerges because Habib Luthfi is a charismatic scholar who consistently instills the spirit of love for the homeland into Indonesian society. To strengthen the academic foundation, the author examined various scholarly sources, including books, journals, theses, and dissertations relevant to this study.

Comparative studies used in this research include the work of Imam Suprayogo on the politics of kiai, a thesis by Ali Fitriana Rahmat regarding the contextual syafahî interpretation of KH. Hasyim Muzadi, and a thesis by Hammydiati Azifa Lazuardini Iskarillah on Sufi pedagogy and the politics of Habib Luthfi. These three works share a common point, namely the focus on charismatic figures and the role of scholars in socio-political spheres. However, this research differs because it specifically examines the syafahî interpretation of Habib Luthfi regarding the verses of nationality with a methodological orientation toward Qur'anic interpretation.

Other supporting sources for this research include a work by Mufaizin discussing nationalism from the perspective of the Qur'an and Hadith, a thesis by Ahmad Faizun regarding the interpretation of nationalism in *Tafsir Al-Ibrîz* by Bisri Mustofa, as well as articles by Muhammad Alwi HS and Iin Parninsih related to the method of verbalization of the Qur'an as a model of oral-based tafsir. All three demonstrate the relationship between tafsir, nationalism, and the Indonesian context, although the focus and figures studied differ from this research. At this point, the author's research provides a broader scope because it centers on the interpretation of the verses of nationality through the perspective of a single prominent figure, namely Habib Luthfi bin Yahya.

Through this mapping of the literature, it can be concluded that scholarly studies concerning Habib Luthfi have mostly focused on aspects of Sufism and national politics, while research on his ideas in the field of Qur'anic interpretation, particularly through the syafahî method, has not yet been found. Therefore, this research emerges to fill this gap by combining the approach of syafahî interpretation and Sufistic discourse as a new scholarly contribution. Based on this foundation, this research is titled: "The Sufistic Dimension in the Syafahî Interpretation of Habib Luthfi bin Yahya Regarding the Verses of Nationality."

3. Research Method

This research employs a qualitative method with a library research approach that integrates literature study and case study to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of the syafahî interpretation of Habib Luthfi bin Yahya. The data sources consist of primary data in the form of recordings of pengajian and lectures of Habib Luthfi, both from social media and personal documentation through exclusive interviews, as well as secondary data in the form of relevant scholarly literature such as books, journals, articles, and other academic works related to tafsir and the theme of the research. The data collection techniques include the process of searching, filtering, classifying, and reviewing both primary and secondary data, accompanied by direct interviews using a structured list of questions regarding the biography and Qur'anic views of Habib Luthfi. Data analysis is conducted through a descriptive-analytical method to examine the syafahî interpretation systematically, factually, and accurately from two perspectives: first, the study of *tafsir wa 'ulûmuhi*, which includes the sources, methodology, style, and ideology of interpretation; second, a comparative study with authoritative tafsir literature to measure the relevance of the interpretation to the rules of tafsir, with an *isyârî* approach to observe the Sufistic dimension within the guidance elements of the interpretation. Technically, this research refers to the Scientific Writing Guideline of the Institute of Qur'anic Sciences Jakarta (2017), and the results of the research are presented in five chapters consisting of an introduction, theoretical

foundation, biography of the figure, analysis of the interpretation results, and a conclusion containing recommendations for future research.

4. Results and Discussion

The Sufistic dimension in Habib Luthfi bin Yahya's interpretation of the verses of nationality derives from his syafahi (oral) exegesis collected from various recordings of his religious gatherings and sermons both from social media and personal recordings through exclusive interviews with primary informants.

Love for the Homeland

The concept of love for the homeland in the Qur'an can be traced through the terms *balad* and *baldah* which appear nineteen times, one of which is found in the supplication of Prophet Ibrahim (as) as stated in QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:126. The supplication represents a plea for the land in which he resides to become a safe, fertile, and prosperous region. The exegetes provide various interpretations of the word *âmana* in this verse, ranging from protection from torment, fear, war, to disasters. *Tafsir al-Marâghî*, *Rûh al-Bayân*, *At-Thabathaba'i*, and *as-Sya'rawî* emphasize that the prayer is not merely a request for existential security (*takwini*), but also legislative (*tasyri'i*), meaning that humans are obliged to protect, care for, and maintain the safety of their homeland. This meaning intersects with the idea of nationalism, in which the homeland is regarded as a divine trust that must be protected with love, loyalty, and sacrifice. Thus, the value of nationalism has indeed existed since the time of Prophet Ibrahim (as), even though its theoretical terminology had not yet formally emerged (QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:126; *Al-Marâghî*, 1992; *As-Sya'rawî*, 2006).

In the perspective of Habib Luthfi bin Yahya, the supplication of Prophet Ibrahim (as) conveys the message that love for the homeland is the foundation of faith, because love generates concern, responsibility, and willingness to defend the nation. According to him, love for the homeland is also part of spirituality; even in Sufism, love (*mahabbah*) is placed as the highest *maqâm* in the journey toward Allah SWT, as explained by prominent Sufi figures such as al-Kalabadzi and Abu Ja'far al-Thusi. This means that if toward Allah the Most Exalted the sharp weapon that can be used to achieve *wushûl* (union with Him) is the sword of love, then the same applies to God's creations, including the earth upon which we stand, in which many communities are formed under the banner of nations. Therefore, love for one's country is a manifestation of love for the Owner of the Country, as stated by Habib Luthfi.

This attitude aligns with the example of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), who expressed his love for Makkah and Madinah as narrated in authentic hadiths. Habib Luthfi also affirms that nationalism is a form of gratitude for God's blessings and a fortress that protects the nation from division; it can be manifested in all aspects of life such as education, culture, environment, economy, and social affairs. With love grounded in faith, humans can build a peaceful civilization, become *al-insân al-kâmil*, and fulfill the mandate of stewardship (*khilafah*) on earth, as also emphasized in the views of Quraish Shihab and the narration of Umar ibn al-Khattab ra (Luthfi bin Yahya, 2016; Shihab, 2001; HR. Bukhari; HR. Tirmidzi).

Regarding love for the homeland, the writer found a hadith narrated by al-Bukhârî which intersects with nationalism:

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يُوسُفَ حَدَّثَنَا سُعِيَّاً عَنْ هَشَّامَ بْنِ عُرْوَةَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا قَالَ ثُمَّ قَالَ اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمْ اللَّهُمَّ حِبِّبْ لِيَنَا الْمَدِينَةَ كَمَا حِبَّتِ الْأَنَّا مَكَّةَ... رَوَاهُ الْبَخَارِيُّ

"Muhammad bin Yusuf narrated to us, Sufyan narrated to us from Hisham bin 'Urwah from his father from 'Aisyah (ra), she said: The Prophet (pbuh) said, 'O Allah, endear Madinah to us just as You have endeared Makkah to us.'" (HR. Bukhârî).

There is also a piece of advice from Umar ibn al-Khattab ra, who said:

لَوْلَا حُبُّ الْوَطَنِ لَخَرَبَ بَلَدُ السُّوءِ فَإِنْجِبِيَ الْأَوْطَانَ عُمِّرْتِ الْبَلْدَانَ

" If it were not for love for the homeland, then a country would fall and be destroyed. Therefore, with love for the homeland, nations can prosper."

Obedience to *Ulil Amri*

The verse QS. An-Nisâ' [4]:59 commands Muslims to obey Allah, the Messenger, and *ulil amri* as the foundation of social and state governance. Classical and contemporary exegetes explain that *ulil amri* includes holders of scientific or governmental authority, such as scholars, muftis, judges, and state leaders, as described by Ibn 'Abbâs, Imam Ahmad, al-

Baidhāwī, and Ibn Kathīr. Obedience to *ulil amri* is binding as long as their commands do not contradict the Sharia, and any disputes must be referred back to the Qur'an and Sunnah. This principle is affirmed in exegetical works such as *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, *Tafsīr al-Karīm ar-Rahmān* by as-Sa'dī, *Tafsīr al-Ahkām al-Hushārī*, and *Tafsīr al-Mishbāh* by Quraish Shihab, serving as an ethical framework of obedience that maintains state stability and public welfare (QS. An-Nisā' [4]:59; Ibn Katsīr, 2000; As-Sa'dī, 2002; Shihab, 2001).

Habib Luthfi bin Yahya's perspective aligns with the exegetical views of the scholars, yet he adds a Sufistic dimension by emphasizing that every human being is a leader (*ulil amri*) over himself, so obedience begins with the governance of the heart. The hadith "kullukum rā'in..." and the hadith about the heart as the controller of the body become the basis that true obedience originates from the purity of the heart, as affirmed by al-Ghazālī that human behavior follows the state of the heart. In the narration of Imam Bukhārī it is mentioned:

كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْؤُلٌ عَنْ رَعْبِيَّتِهِ (رواہ البخاری)

"You are all leaders and will be held accountable for your leadership." (HR. Bukhārī)

حَدَّثَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ حَدَّثَنَا زَكْرِيَّاءُ عَنْ عَامِرٍ سَمِعَتُ النُّعْمَانَ بْنَ يَشْيَىٰ يَقُولُ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ إِنَّ فِي الْجَسَدِ مُضْعَفَةً إِذَا صَنَحَتْ صَلَحَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ إِلَّا وَهِيَ الْفَأْلُ (رواہ البخاری)

"Abu Na'im narrated to us, Zakariyyā narrated to us from 'Āmir, that I heard An-Nu'mān bin Bashīr (ra) say: I heard the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) say: Verily, in the body there is a lump of flesh; if it is good, the whole body is good, and if it is ruined, the whole body is ruined. Indeed, that lump of flesh is the heart." (HR. Bukhārī).

From this, Habib Luthfi emphasizes that the ideal leader is the one who has spiritual awareness so that his policies are based on morality, ethics, and public interest. This leadership model was exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), who was known as the trustworthy leader (al-Amīn). In the context of modern nationality, Habib Luthfi views Sufism as a pillar in shaping nationalism, character, and the awareness to preserve God's trust in the form of the homeland (HR. Bukhārī; HR. Muslim; al-Ghazālī, 1986; Luthfi bin Yahya, 2016).

Jihad

Jihad in the Qur'an is mentioned 41 times in various derivative forms, and one verse that emphasizes its virtue is QS. An-Nisā' [4]:95, which distinguishes the status of those who strive in jihad with their wealth and lives from those who do not without a legitimate Sharī'ī excuse. Etymologically, jihad derives from the word *juhd*, meaning earnest effort, while terminologically it refers to total struggle in upholding religion through intellectual effort, physical sacrifice, or social roles. Exegetes such as Ibn Kathīr, Wahbah az-Zuhailī, and Hamka explain that jihad is not limited to warfare but includes *da'wah*, education, defending humanity, and contributing to the preservation of religion and the state. In this context, jihad holds a meaning parallel to strengthening civilization and the dignity of the ummah through concrete work, sacrifice, and spiritual commitment (QS. An-Nisā' [4]:95; Ibn Katsīr, 2000; az-Zuhailī, 2009; Hamka, 1982).

Habib Luthfi bin Yahya's perspective aligns with exegetical scholars, yet he expands the meaning of jihad to the socio-economic and Sufistic domains. According to him, jihad is divided into two: jihad with wealth and jihad with oneself. Jihad with wealth includes contributions to community welfare through education, developing social facilities, economic empowerment, and maintaining mosques as the most relevant form of jihad in the modern context.

وَلَعَلَّ تَقْدِيمَ الْأَمْوَالِ عَلَى الْأَنْفُسِ لِمَا أَنَّ الْمُجَاهَدَةَ بِالْأَمْوَالِ أَكْثَرُ وُقُوَّاً وَأَنَّهُ دَفْعًا لِلْحَاجَةِ حِينَ لَا يُتَصَوَّرُ الْمُجَاهَدَةُ بِالْأَنْفُسِ بِلَا مُجَاهَدَةَ بِالْأَمْوَالِ

"Perhaps the precedence of mentioning jihad with wealth before jihad with the self is because striving with wealth occurs more frequently (not only in times of war), and is more complete in fulfilling human needs. Jihad with the self cannot be realized without jihad with wealth."

Meanwhile, jihad with oneself manifests in controlling the ego, patience, dedication to righteous deeds, and struggle against ignorance, poverty, and weak faith. Habib Luthfi emphasizes that jihad today is not about taking up arms but about economic, educational, and moral jihad aligned with the principle of *mujāhadah* in Sufism that aims to purify the heart through spiritual training and self-discipline, as explained by al-Ghazālī, al-Munāwī, and other

Sufi scholars (Luthfi bin Yahya, 2016; al-Ghazālī, 1986; al-Munāwī, 1998; Tafsīr Rūh al-Ma‘ānī, al-Alūsī, 1994).

Unity of the Ummah

The concept of ummah wāhidah in QS. Al-Mu'minūn [23]:52 affirms that humankind is called to unite in one religion of tawhīd, one purpose, and one orientation of servitude to Allah SWT. Etymologically, the word ummah contains meanings such as purpose, leadership, the straight path, shari'ah, religion, community, and obedience, while wāhidah denotes an indivisible unity. Scholars such as al-Ashfahānī, al-Bāqilānī, Abū Zahrah, Rāshīd Rīḍā, and Quraish Shihab interpret ummah wāhidah as a community of diverse individuals united by fitrah, creed, and a common goal within the framework of tawhīd. The majority of exegetes explain that the messengers were sent with the same core religious teachings, while the ummah may at times follow guidance and at other times slip into misguidance. In this context, Habib Luthfi bin Yahya explains ummah wāhidah as a community unified through social cohesion and internationalism grounded in devotion to God, and he criticizes group egoism, sectarian fanaticism, and political polarization including the phenomenon of “cebong” and “kampret” which disgraces the ummah and hinders national progress. Therefore, he emphasizes the importance of finding common ground amidst differences, regarding ikhtilāf as a mercy that must be managed through consultation and ethical dialogue, as encouraged in the hadith “mā nadīma man iṣtashāra” and QS. Asy-Syūrā [42]:38, so that the unity of the ummah and the nation is preserved (QS. Al-Mu'minūn [23]:52; Hamka, Tafsīr Al-Azhar; Shihab, Al-Mishbāh; Luthfi bin Yahya, 2016).

Furthermore, Habib Luthfi reminds that Muslims should not easily accuse one another of deviance or bid'ah merely due to technical differences, because the 72 deviant sects mentioned in hadith arise from doctrinal deviation, not simply from differences in methods or instruments. He points out that changes in instruments such as weapons, uniforms, or technology are not blameworthy innovations, but part of the dynamics of time. In his view, true Sufism is character and etiquette: purifying the heart from love of the world, not abandoning striving and work. Simple practices such as etiquette in the restroom, table manners, greetings, and honoring fellow human beings are manifestations of Sufism embedded in adherence to Shari'ah. Thus, he asserts the need for Sufism that lives within social and political realms: society may differ in choices and opinions, but must uphold ethics, avoid insults, slander, and hoaxes, so that unity is not destroyed by fleeting emotions.

الصَّوْفُ هُوَ الْأَدَبُ

“Sufism is adab (ethics and proper conduct).”

According to Habib Luthfi, Indonesia will remain strong only if all societal layers leaders, officials, security forces, and the public internalize Sufism as a moral foundation, so that they fulfill the trust of the nation with correct outward conduct and hearts that continuously rely upon Allah SWT within the framework of ummah wāhidah (Luthfi bin Yahya, 2016; al-Munawī, Fayḍ al-Qadīr; the narrations of the 72 sects and hadiths of adab).

The Dream Country

The verse QS. Sabā' [34]:15 describes the land of Saba' as an ideal example of a prosperous country (baladatun ṭayyibatun wa rabbun ghafūr), namely a fertile region with a well-organized social, economic, and governmental system before it was ultimately destroyed due to disbelief and the loss of gratitude. Linguistically, baldah refers to a residential area, ṭayyibah means good, pure, and beneficial, while ghafūr indicates the vastness of Allah's forgiveness for servants who return to Him. The majority of mufassir including Ibn Kathīr, ath-Tabarī, and Quraish Shihab interpret this verse as a warning that the prosperity of a country is a blessing that must be safeguarded through faith, gratitude, and good governance. The leadership of Bilqis, the fertility of the land, the orderliness of society, and environmental discipline symbolize the idealization of a blessed country before Allah withdrew these blessings as a socio-spiritual consequence of its inhabitants' denial (QS. Sabā' [34]:15; Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm; ath-Tabarī, Jāmi' al-Bayān; Shihab, Al-Mishbāh).

According to the interpretation of Habib Luthfi bin Yahya, the ideal country as described in this verse can only be realized when the society is united, led by a just leader, capable of utilizing natural and human resources in a balanced way, and upholding the value of gratitude in both spiritual and social dimensions. He emphasizes that the development of

infrastructure, education, trade, economic resilience, and national discipline is a form of collective gratitude that must be proven through concrete work, not merely through words. In modern contexts, Habib Luthfi views jihad as an effort to build civilization through education, economy, culture, and strengthening national character, rather than solely through warfare. He also emphasizes gratitude as a moral foundation: the tongue proclaims alhamdulillāh, the body uses blessings for goodness, and the heart realizes that everything comes from Allah. This classification of gratitude aligns with the view of Sufi scholars such as Ruzbihān al-Baqlī, who divides it into lisān al-insānī, lisān al-rūhānī, and lisān al-rabbānī, namely the gratitude of common people, the gratitude of the elect, and the gratitude of those who know Allah (Luthfi bin Yahya, 2016; Ibn Mājah, Sunan Ibn Mājah; Ruzbihān al-Baqlī, ‘Arā’is al-Bayān).

Pluralism

QS. Al-Hujurāt [49]:13 emphasizes that humanity was created with different tribes, nations, and cultural backgrounds so that they may know one another rather than deny one another's existence. Linguistically, sya'b rooted in syu'ūb relates to social communities formed based on shared lineage, history, culture, and geographic settlement, in line with Ibn Khaldun's theory of 'asabiyyah as the foundational force behind civilization and the rise of nation-states. The majority of Qur'anic exegetes, including Quraish Shihab and Hamka, highlight that this verse teaches the equality of human dignity, cross-identity respect, and the management of diversity through values of brotherhood, egalitarianism, and collaboration in goodness not forced assimilation nor cultural uniformity. In the perspective of Islamic multicultural education, the verse encourages an attitude of mutual respect, empathy, tolerance, and social responsibility as part of one's spiritual journey toward taqwā, the only measure of honor in the sight of Allah (QS. Al-Hujurāt [49]:13; Shihab, Al-Mishbāh; Hamka, Tafsir Al-Azhar; Ibn Khaldun, Muqaddimah).

Habib Luthfi bin Yahya interprets this verse as a foundation for Sufi pluralism a perspective that diversity constitutes a tajallī (manifestation of Allah's attributes), which must be respected with noble character rather than suspicion or hostility. According to him, humans cannot live independently because their intrinsic nature is to socialize and depend on one another; thus, Sufism must manifest as morality, love, and humanism not merely symbolic practices. He stresses that the more religious a Muslim becomes, the more tolerant they should be, following the example of Wali Songo including Sunan Kudus and Sunan Kalijaga who spread Islam through culture, art, gentleness, and respect for local traditions. Therefore, Sufism must exist in public spaces through active roles in education, economy, culture, politics, and national life, thereby producing al-insān al-kāmil (the complete human) who integrates spirituality with social contribution. This approach positions Habib Luthfi within the tradition of Sufi-thematic exegesis grounded in bi al-isyārī methodology and the framework of Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah with a Syādziliyyah nuance, while demonstrating that the more religious a person becomes, the more humanistic, tolerant, and constructive their contribution to shared life will be (Luthfi bin Yahya, various lectures; Said Aqil Siradj, 2018; Ruzbihān al-Baqlī, ‘Arā’is al-Bayān).

Islam is not only concerned with creed and law, nor merely about faith and ritual worship. One of the greatest missions of Islam's presence is intellectuality, civilization, culture, and ultimately humanity. This is the essence of the Prophet's hadith:

إِنَّمَا بُعْثِثُ لِأَنْمَمْ صَالِحَ الْأَخْلَاقِ (رواه البخاري)

"Indeed, I was only sent to perfect noble character." (HR. Bukhārī)

5. Conclusion

This research demonstrates that the Sufi dimension within the syafahī interpretation of Habib Luthfi bin Yahya on the national verses is rooted in the epistemological construction of tafsīr bi ar-ra'yī and bi al-isyārī while remaining grounded within the corridor of bi al-ma'tsūr. Methodologically, his interpretation is thematic (maudhū'ī), Sufi in style (isyārī), and based on the manhaj of Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah (Asy'ariyyah) with an orientation toward practical-ethical Sufism (tasawuf 'amalī-akhlāqī) and Shāfi'ī jurisprudence. This positions Habib Luthfi's syafahī exegesis as a model of oral interpretation that remains academically measurable yet flexible in addressing contemporary national and Indonesian contexts.

Substantively, Habib Luthfi's interpretation of six national verses QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:126, An-Nisā' [4]:59 and [4]:95, Al-Mu'minūn [23]:52, Sabā' [34]:15, and Al-Hujurāt [49]:13. demonstrates a strong integration between the spiritual values of Sufism and the discourse of nationhood. Love for the homeland is interpreted as the highest expression of mahabbah intertwined with faith; obedience to ulil amri is associated with the righteousness of the heart as a moral control center; jihad is redefined as mujāhadah against ignorance, poverty, and weakness of faith; the unity of the ummah (ummah wāhidah) is supported by ethical Sufism that rejects narrow fanaticism; the concept of baldatun ṭayyibatun is understood as an ideal nation that attains prosperity through collective gratitude and just governance; while pluralism (syu'ūb wa qabā'il) is perceived as a divine manifestation (tajallī) requiring a tolerant, humanistic, and inclusive attitude. Thus, the Sufi dimension does not distance the community from socio-political realities but instead becomes an ethical foundation for nationalism, unity, and civilizational development.

Theoretically and practically, this study asserts that the syafahī interpretation of Habib Luthfi bin Yahya presents a Sufi-nationalism exegesis paradigm that is relevant to the context of modern Indonesia. This paradigm illustrates that Sufism is not identical with escapism but can function as a "factory of morality" that shapes citizens with spiritual character, love for the homeland, anti-violence values, and a commitment to cross-group brotherhood. The primary contribution of this research lies in systematically mapping the sources, methods, style, and ideological orientation of Habib Luthfi's interpretation of the national verses, while also opening space for further studies on other themes in his syafahī exegesis that remain underexplored, such as economics, education, and global humanitarian issues.

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