

Sufism Thoughts and Teachings

By Sheikh Arwani Amin In "Risālah Mubārakah

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Abstract

The prevalence of spiritual crises in the contemporary era, especially in Indonesian society, is often caused by excessive dependence on Hubb al-Dunya. Hubb al-Dunya or dependence on material possessions can lead to various other issues in their life, either intentionally or inadvertently. Sufism is proposed as an alternative solution to these issues. One of the best ways to understand Sufism is by studying the thoughts and teachings of Sufi figures. Sheikh Arwani is known for his role as a murshid qiraah and murshid of the tariqa or Sufi order, contributing significantly to the spread of Sufism in Indonesia, especially in Kudus. This research employs a basic qualitative approach, relying on library studies and reviewing relevant literature. The primary source is the "Risālah Mubārakah" turats, used in the practice of the Naqshbandiyya Khalidiyya Mujaddidiyya order, spread by Sheikh Arwani. Sheikh Arwani's teachings are characterised as Sufism Amali, which is evident in his dual roles as a murshid of Qiraah al-Qur'an and a murshid or leader of the Sufi order. His teachings often incorporate Quranic arguments to support Sufism practices. For instance, he emphasizes the principle of wara' by advising students not to use the Quran for worldly gain. This approach underscores the importance of integrating spiritual values into daily life, aligning with the broader principles of Sufism. The study concludes that Sheikh Arwani's teachings and practices have had a significant impact on the spread of Sufism and tariqa in Kudus, demonstrating the potential for Sufism to address spiritual crises in contemporary society.

Keywords: Sheikh Arwani, Sufism, Zuhud, Wara

Introduction

A predominant orientation towards worldly matters constitutes a primary catalyst for contemporary societal challenges. Excessive preoccupation with earthly concerns, often termed *hubb al-dunya* or love of the world, is a breeding ground for various forms of misconduct. For instance, a worldly mindset can evolve into a materialistic life orientation. This materialistic disposition can lead to disillusionment when desired worldly attainments are not realised. Furthermore, unchecked materialism may foster envy and discontent, even in the face of personal sufficiency. Such individuals may come to believe that worldly possessions are indispensable for happiness.

A corollary issue arising from *hubb al-dunya* is a loss of awareness of one's distance from the Divine (Schimmel, 2000). This realisation often prompts individuals to enhance their *ibadah* as a means of spiritual rapprochement (Siddiq, 2001). Contemporary society is grappling with a crisis of spirituality. Sufism is proposed as a potential remedy for this spiritual malaise (Al-Hujwiri, 2015). The essence of Sufism is soul purification (Schimmel, 2000). Its teachings exemplify the depth of Islamic spirituality. *Zuhud*, or asceticism, emerged as a counterpoint to the opulent lifestyle of the Umayyad dynasty (Simuh, 1997). While the monarchical system influenced societal norms, it also impacted individual spirituality. This suggests that Sufism originated as a response to the spiritual challenges of its time (Abdullah, 1980). Consequently, contemporary Muslims can draw upon the wisdom of classical Sufism to address contemporary issues (Siradj, 2012). Moreover, Sufism constitutes a crucial component of the Islamic faith, representing the dimension of *ihsan* within the tripartite framework of *Iman*, *Islam*, and *Ihsan* (Shihab, 2009). Sufism embodies the cultivation of a profound connection with the Divine. The purification of the heart necessitates guidance from a spiritual mentor, a path known as the *tariqa* or *sufi order* (Sri Mulyati, 2006). Numerous Sufi orders have emerged throughout history, with several prominent ones flourishing in Indonesia, including the Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya, Naqshbandiyya, and Naqshbandiyya Khāḍiriyya Mujaddidiyya. Adherents of these orders, known as *salik*, are guided by a spiritual leader called a *murshid*.

Tariqa Naqshbandiyya Khāḍiriyya Mujaddidiyya was disseminated by Sheikh Muhammad Arwani Amin Said in Kudus, hereafter referred to as Sheikh Arwani. Renowned as a charismatic Qur'anic scholar, particularly in the field of *Qira'at*, Sheikh Arwani's teachings formed the basis for the order's practices (Rosidi, 2008). His disciple, Sheikh Hambali Sumardi, compiled these

teachings into a book titled Risalah Mubarakah, which outlines the order's lineage, initiation rites, and practices such as dhikr and muraqabah (Hambali Sumardi, 1968). Beyond his Qur'anic expertise, Sheikh Arwani's Sufi teachings are particularly noteworthy. These teachings were imparted to his students during Qur'anic studies. One important principle was to avoid using Quranic knowledge for worldly gain. This emphasized on detachment reflects the Sufi ideals of zuhud and wara'.

Research Methodology

Research data is collected through document review and observations on the practices of the Naqshbandiyya Khālidīyya Mujaddidiyya sufi order (Tariqa) and Risalah Mubarakah written Hambali Sumardi with guidance by Sheikh Arwani. The focus of this research is a model of Sufism thought and Teachings by Sheikh Arwani with a focus discussion on how Sheikh Arwani implemented Sufism principle on his santri.

Research findings

1. Sheikh Arwani's Life and His Role in Spreading Sufism in Kudus, Central Java

Sheikh Arwani was a distinguished Islamic scholar renowned for his extensive knowledge of the Qur'an and his humble demeanour. Born Muhammad Arwan on September 5, 1905, in Kudus, Java, he was the son of Amin Sa'id and Wanifah. His upbringing in the religiously rich environment of Madureksan, near Masjid al-Aqsa Kudus, set the stage for his future scholarly pursuits (Rosidi:2008). Known for his profound wisdom and humility, he was affectionately referred to as "Kiai Sae," a term reflecting his positive character and respected status within the community.

Arwani Amin hails from a family deeply entrenched in Islamic scholarship and education. His father, Amin Sa'id, was a prominent figure in Kudus, the son of the esteemed scholar Sheikh Imam Haramain. This lineage included notable scholars such as Sheikh Ma'shum and Sheikh Fauzan, indicating a strong heritage of religious learning (Mifrohul: 2017). The family's engagement in religious education was further exemplified by Amin Sa'id's bookstore, "al-Amin,"

which later evolved into "Mubarakatan Thoyyibah," underscoring the family's commitment to Islamic education and community service.

Sheikh Arwani's educational journey began within his family, focusing on foundational Islamic teachings before he attended Madrasah Muawanatul Muslim in 1912 (Moh. Rosyid: 2015). He furthered his studies at Madrasah Mambaul Ulum Solo, where he mastered various Islamic sciences. His academic pursuits continued at Pondok Pesantren Tebuieng under Sheikh Hasyim Asy'ari and later at Pondok Pesantren al-Munawwir in Yogyakarta, where he specialised in qiraat sab'ah (seven Quranic recitations). His studies under Sheikh Munawwir and Sheikh Sirojudin Undaan Kudus, among others, solidified his status as a leading scholar in Qur'anic studies.

In 1979, Sheikh Arwani established Yanbu'ul Qur'an Pesantren, which became a notable centre for Qur'anic memorisation and education. This initiative, initially funded by personal savings and donations, was driven by his commitment to preserving and advancing Islamic knowledge (Bakhita: 2020). The pesantren quickly gained recognition for its rigorous Qur'anic and qira'at education, attracting students from various parts of Indonesia and beyond. The growth and impact of Yanbu'ul Qur'an Pesantren reflect Sheikh Arwani's dedication to nurturing Islamic scholarship and education (Shofaussamawati: 2017).

Sheikh Arwani Amin passed away on October 1, 1994, at the age of 92, leaving behind a profound legacy. His demise was deeply mourned by countless individuals who had been touched by his profound wisdom and guidance (Rosehan: 1987). His scholarly contributions, including the seminal work "Faidl al-Barakat fi al-Sab'i al-Qira'at" and other influential texts, underscore his enduring impact on Islamic scholarship. Sheikh Arwani's final will emphasise the importance of sincere Qur'anic study, adhering to the principles taught by his mentor Sheikh Munawwir. His legacy continues to inspire and guide future generations in their pursuit of Islamic knowledge and practice (Rosidi: 2008).

2. Tariqa Naqshbandiyya Khālidiyya Mujaddidiyya and Risālah Mubārakah

A. Tariqa Naqshbandiyya Khālidiyya Mujaddidiyya

The Tariqa is a spiritual path or method adopted by individuals (salik) in their quest to draw closer to Allah. It is intrinsically linked to Sufism, with Tariqa serving as a practical manifestation of Sufi principles. The term "Tariqa" is derived from the Arabic word "ṭarīqah,"

meaning path or way, and carries connotations of method and system (Al-Yassui: 2019). Tariqas emerged in the 2nd century Hijri, alongside the development of Sufism, with notable figures such as Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jilani founding the Qadiriya Tariqa and other key Tariqas including Naqshbandiyya, Suhrawardiyya, Shadhiliyya, Mawlawiyya, Tijaniyya, and Sanusiyya (Mulyati: 2004).

The Naqshbandiyya Khalidiyya Mujaddidiyya Tariqa, a branch of Naqshbandiyya, traces its origins to Sheikh Bahauddin Naqshbandi, who passed away in 1389 CE. His full name was Muhammad bin Bahauddin al-Uwaysi al-Bukhari. Sheikh Bahauddin is recognised as the primary reviver of the Naqshbandiyya Tariqa, refining and transmitting teachings from earlier generations extending back to the Prophet Muhammad. The term "Naqshband" linguistically combines "naqsh" (engraving) and "band" (banner), reflecting the deep imprint of divine remembrance in the heart, as associated with Sheikh Bahauddin's spiritual practice (Martin: 1996).

Sheikh Bahauddin Naqshbandi was born in Muharram 717 AH (1317 CE) in Qasr-i Hinduvan, now known as Qashrul Arifan, near Bukhara, Uzbekistan. His birth was marked by a divine fragrance, which was interpreted by Sheikh Muhammad Baba as-Samasi as a sign of the forthcoming great scholar (Martin: 1996). Sheikh Baba as-Samasi, a renowned scholar and saint, recognised Bahauddin as a future imam and provided blessings for his spiritual journey. Bahauddin's upbringing in a devout family, with lineage tracing back to the Prophet Muhammad through Sayyidina Husain, set a strong foundation for his future spiritual contributions (Fuad: 1996).

The Naqsyabandiyah order spread extensively under Baha'uddin's leadership and continued to flourish after his death. It was introduced to India by Ubaidallah Ahrar and later became prominent under the leadership of Ahmad Sirhindi, who introduced the Mujaddidiyya branch. The order also spread to Indonesia through Syekh Yusuf Al-Makassari, who was influenced by Muhammad Abdul Baqi', a prominent figure in the order (Martin: 1996).

B. Tariqa Naqshbandiyya Khalidiyya Mujaddidiyya Principles

The Naqshbandiyya Khalidiya Mujaddidiyya Sufi order is founded on eleven core principles that reflect its spiritual practices and teachings. The foundational principles were established by Sheikh Khaliq Ghujdawani and are complemented by three additional principles

introduced by Sheikh Bahauddin al-Naqshbandi. This summary outlines these key principles and practices as they pertain to the order's spiritual path (Martin: 1996).

The eight principles proposed by Sheikh Khaliq Ghujdawani include (Mulyati: 2004): Husy dar dam (awareness in every breath), which emphasises maintaining conscious awareness of one's breaths as a means to divine connection; Nazar bar Qadam (guarding one's steps), which stresses the importance of maintaining spiritual focus through mindful movement and posture; Safar dar Watan (journey in one's homeland), symbolising the internal journey of self-improvement and seeking a true spiritual guide; and Khalwat dar Anjuman (solitude amidst the crowd), which involves either physical withdrawal from crowds or maintaining inner solitude despite external interactions. Additionally, the principles include Yad kard (constant remembrance), which involves the continuous recitation of God's name to ensure persistent divine awareness; Baz gasyt (return), focusing on self-correction and avoiding spiritual deviations through specific supplications; Nigah dasyt (vigilance), which pertains to maintaining constant spiritual awareness during remembrance practices; and Yad dasyt (return to remembrance), signifying the highest state of spiritual perception and divine presence (Martin: 1996).

Sheikh Bahauddin al-Naqshbandi introduced three supplementary principles: Wuquf Zamani (time observation), requiring regular assessment of time spent in spiritual practices; Wuquf Adadi (counting), which involves careful monitoring of the number of recitations; and Wuquf Qalbi (heart observation), focusing on ensuring the heart remains engaged solely with God during remembrance practices (Fuad: 1996).

Other teachings within the Naqshbandiyya Khalidiyya Mujaddidiyya order include the practices of Zikir (remembrance) and Wirid (invocations), Murāqabah (spiritual introspection), Rabithah (spiritual connection with the guide), Khatmi Khwajagan (closing prayers), Tawajjuh (spiritual encounter), and the ceremonial Baiat (pledge) and Ijazah (authorisation) (Mulyati: 2004). These practices are integral to spiritual development and adherence to the order's teachings, ensuring a structured path towards divine communion and spiritual fulfilment (Martin: 1996).

C. Risālah Mubārakah

The Risālah Mubārakah is a pivotal text for followers of the Naqshbandi-Khalidiyya Mujaddidiyya Sufi order, written by Sheikh Hambali Sumardi under the guidance of Sheikh

Arwani. This manuscript emerged from the necessity for a structured written guide for the order's practices following Sheikh Arwani's receipt of initiation from Sheikh Mansur Popongan of Solo. The preface includes an invocation and acknowledgement of the teachings received from Sheikh Mansur, aiming to aid practitioners in their spiritual journey and enhance their worship practices (Hambali Sumardi, 1968).

The Risālāh Mubārakah encompasses various aspects of the Naqshbandiyya Khalidiyya Mujaddidiya order, starting with a welcome note from Sheikh Arwani and a preface by Sheikh Hambali Sumardi. It includes a detailed lineage of the order's Sheikhs, presented both in poetic and tabular forms. The book outlines the methodology for practising the order, including detailed instructions on spiritual exercises such as Zikir (remembrance of God), Murāqabah (spiritual introspection), and Suluk (spiritual seclusion). Key practices described involve repetitive recitations, meditative states, and specific rituals associated with the order.

The Risālāh Mubārakah plays a crucial role in guiding adherents of the Naqshbandiyya Khalidiyya Mujaddidiya order by providing a clear, structured reference for their spiritual practices. This written guide supports the preservation and continuity of the order's teachings, ensuring that practices and rituals are consistently maintained across generations. It also assists practitioners in deepening their spiritual experience and adherence to the order's principles, thus reinforcing the authenticity and stability of their religious practices (Hambali Sumardi, 1968).

Implementation of Sufism Principles: Zuhud and Wara' in the Teachings of the Qur'an by Sheikh Arwani

The principles of Sufism, particularly Zuhud (asceticism) and Wara' (piety), are deeply intertwined with Qur'anic teachings and play a significant role in the spiritual practice of Sufi traditions. Zuhud refers to the practice of renouncing worldly pleasures to focus on spiritual growth and closeness to God, while Wara' emphasises caution and abstinence from actions that are haram (forbidden) or makruh (disliked) in Islam (Schimmel, 2000). These principles are not merely theoretical but are actively implemented and reflected in the life of Sheikh Arwani Amin, a prominent Sufi teacher whose teachings are rooted in the Naqshbandiyya Khalidiyya Mujaddidiya order (Martin: 1996).

Sheikh Arwani Amin's approach to Sufism aligns closely with Qur'anic teachings, demonstrating how Sufi practices can be harmonised with Islamic scripture. His teachings illustrate the practical application of Zuhud and Wara' through his daily conduct and spiritual guidance. For instance, he emphasises the importance of maintaining a state of Zuhud by encouraging his followers to detach from materialism and focus on the eternal rewards of the Hereafter. Sufism principal reflected in his teachings and practices, where he integrates Qur'anic verses and Hadith to underscore the importance of asceticism (zuhud) and spiritual vigilance (wara').

Moreover, Sheikh Arwani's adherence to Wara' is evident in his strict observance of ethical conduct and his advice to avoid even the slightest forms of prohibited or doubtful actions. His guidance to his disciples includes practical advice on how to embody Wara' in everyday life, such as ensuring that the Qur'an is used solely for spiritual enrichment rather than for worldly gains. The careful and intentional practice of these principles not only reflects his deep understanding of Sufism but also serves as a model for his followers, illustrating the effective integration of Sufi values with the ethical teachings of the Qur'an

Summary

Sheikh Arwani's Sufi teachings are distinguished by their practical nature. As both a Qur'anic recitation instructor (and a spiritual guide within the Naqshbandiyya Khalidiyya Mujaddidiyya order, he seamlessly integrated Qur'anic values with Sufi principles, emphasizing the importance of piety and caution among his students. While his teachings align with the broader tenets of the Naqshbandiyya tradition, his practical implementation may have included unique aspects not explicitly mentioned by others. Sheikh Arwani consistently conveyed the core principles of the Naqshbandiyya tradition through practical actions such as Zikr (remembrance of God), spiritual journey, contemplation, and turning towards God. Beyond fulfilling spiritual needs, the Naqshbandiyya order, as taught by Sheikh Arwani, has played a significant role in society, fostering a robust spiritual network that has contributed positively to various aspects of community life.

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