



***Rabithah* as an Instrument for Attaining *Khushu* in *Salat*: The Perspective of
KH. Muhammad Utsman Al-Ishaqi**

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Abstract

Among the forms of etiquette in prayer is khushu, which involves bringing one's heart into communication with the Creator through prayer. In practice, achieving khushu is not easy. Scholars have their methods to attain khushu in worship. In this regard, Sufi scholars have their instruments for achieving khushu by invoking the spirituality of their teacher as a means to connect with Allah SWT. This method is commonly known as rabithah. This paper explores the argument's validity for rabithah as an instrument for achieving khushu, widely practiced by Sufi adherents of the Naqshabandiyah tariqah. This paper focuses on KH Muhammad Utsman Al-Ishaqi's opinion of rabithah in detail. This qualitative research utilizes library research, with data from literature reviews presented descriptively. Inductive analysis is used to examine Kiai Utsman's works. The results show that Kiai Utsman reintroduces rabithah to achieve khushu in prayer. He reinstates rabithah, which had been considered to deviate from Islamic law.

Keywords: *Khushu Prayer; Rabithah; Sufism.*

Abstrak

Di antara bentuk adab dalam salat adalah khushuk, menghadirkan hati dalam mengomunikasikan diri kepada Sang Pencipta melalui salatnya. Pada praktiknya, khushuk bukanlah perkara mudah. Para ulama memiliki metodenya masing-masing dalam mencapai khushuk dalam salat. Dalam hal ini ulama sufi mempunyai instrumen tersendiri dalam berkhushuk dengan menghadirkan ruhaniyah sosok guru sebagai sarana untuk menggapai perasaan sampai kepada Allah SWT. Cara ini masyhur dikenal dengan istilah rabithah. Tulisan ini berusaha menggali keabsahan argumentasi rabithah sebagai instrumen mencapai khushuk yang banyak diamalkan oleh kaum sufi yang berafiliasi pada tarekat Naqshabandiyah. Tulisan ini memfokuskan pada pendapat KH. Muhammad Utsman Al-Ishaqi tentang rabithah secara rinci. Penelitian kualitatif ini menggunakan library reseach, dengan data-datanya yang diperoleh dari hasil kajian pustaka yang disajikan secara deskriptif. Analisis induktif digunakan untuk dengan mengkaji karya-karya Kiai Utsman. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa Kiai Utsman menghadirkan kembali rabithah untuk mencapai khushuk dalam salat. Beliau kembali menghadirkan rabithah yang sudah dianggap keluar dari syariat Islam.

Kata Kunci: *Khushuk Salat; Rabithah, Tasawuf.*

Introduction

Islam is a religion built upon three fundamental pillars. Explicitly mentioned in the hadith, they are called Islam, Iman, and Ihsan. In other terms, they are known as Sharia, *Tariqah* (*Sufism*), and *Haqiqah*. These three components need to be synergized to actualize comprehensive Islam. Imam Malik stated that whoever practices Sufism without understanding jurisprudence (deepening knowledge of Sharia) has become a heretic (*ẓindik*), and whoever understands jurisprudence without Sufism is a transgressor (*fasiq*).¹

Some scholars give precedence to jurisprudence as the science whose dissemination is legitimized by the Al-Quran, as mentioned in the verse of Allah SWT, which means: "O

¹ Oleh al-Sya'rani, pernyataan ini dikatakan sebagai ungkapan yang dilontarkan oleh Syaikh Ali al-Kazarwany. Lihat dalam Abdul Wahab Al-Sya'rani, *ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyah, 2012), 417.

Messenger, announce that which has been revealed to you from your Lord" (Quran, Al-Maidah: 67). This verse indicates that only the outward behavior of the Prophet should serve as the scholarly benchmark. Furthermore, on another occasion, the Prophet Muhammad said, "If you knew what I knew, you would laugh little and weep much." This statement indicates the existence of other forms of knowledge that he did not impart to his companions within the framework of Sharia but also encompasses knowledge of the state of the heart and its ailments, which evoke regret and tears.²

Abdul Qadir Isa divides obligations (*taklif*) into two categories: laws related to external actions through bodily movements and internal actions about the heart. External actions are further classified into two types: commands of divinity (*amr al-Ilahiyyah*), which include prayers, almsgiving, fasting, pilgrimage, etc., and prohibitions, such as murder, theft, adultery, etc. Internal actions of the heart also have the same classification as external actions, commands that include faith in Allah SWT, angels, scriptures, messengers, etc., and prohibitions such as disbelief, hypocrisy, arrogance, ostentation, envy, etc.³

The saying of the Prophet Muhammad indicates that those destined for goodness by Allah SWT will go through the most accessible stage of deepening religious knowledge (*tafaqqub fi al-din*). Those who succeed in this *tafaqqub* are known as jurists (*fakih*). Concerning who is referred to as a Fakih, Hasan Al-Bashri stated that a Fakih is an ascetic from the world, loves the hereafter, and is cautious about religious matters.⁴ From Hasan Al-Basri's statement, it is understood that one will not be recognized for their depth in Sufism until they know the various issues of Sharia.

In a hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah, the Prophet Muhammad analogized the five daily prayers to a river, "If there were a river at the door of any of you in which he takes a bath five times a day, would any filth be left on him?" They replied, "No filth would be left on him." The Prophet said, "That is like the five daily prayers. Allah wipes away the sins by them." (Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim)

The urgency of the obligation of the five daily prayers on a Muslim self, which also serves as a pillar in Islam, will always be judged as obligatory as long as life persists. No matter how high one's position is in drawing closer to Allah SWT, it will not invalidate the obligation of prayer as a part of the pillars of Islam. Ibn Umar heard the Prophet Muhammad saying, "The five daily prayers are pillars of religion. Whoever does not offer them shall have demolished his religion."

Not stopping there, someone who reaches a high degree of faith in the sight of Allah SWT undoubtedly also has a high quality of prayer. Their prayer is not limited to the outward movements of the body or recitations from the mouth but encompasses all aspects of perfecting Islam, namely Islam, Iman, and Ihsan. Their prayer transcends mere adherence to Sharia but also involves acknowledgment from the heart of faith and knowledge of the greatness of Allah SWT. Thus, they always maintain decorum when performing their prayers.

² Abu Nashr al-Siraj al-Thusy, *Al-Luma' fi al-Tasawwuf*, (Mesir: Dar al-Kutub al-Hadisah, 1960), 38.

³ Abdul Qadir Isa, *ḥaqā-iq 'an al-Taṣawwuf*, (Suriyah: Dar al-Irfan, 2007), 28.

⁴ Abu Nashr al-Siraj al-Thusy, *Al-Luma'...*, 36.

To achieve such a prayer, a process of understanding is required to attain *khushu*. One method of achieving *khushu* in prayer known among adherents of Sufism is through *rabithah*. Among the scholars who practice and teach *rabithah* is KH. Muhammad Utsman Al-Ishaqi.

Method

This research methodology entails the collection of primary sources, such as writings, speeches, or sermons by KH. Muhammad Utsman Al-Ishaqi, along with secondary sources, discusses his views. These sources will undergo thorough literary analysis to discern KH. Muhammad Utsman Al-Ishaqi's stance, arguments, and opinions regarding the role of *rabithah* in attaining *khushu* during *salat*.

The study will concentrate on scrutinizing KH. Muhammad Utsman Al-Ishaqi's writings specifically address *rabithah* and its connection to achieving *khushu* in *salat*. Through careful analysis and interpretation, the data obtained will shed light on the main arguments, perspectives, and contributions of KH. Muhammad Utsman Al-Ishaqi concerning the application of *rabithah* as a tool for enhancing *khushu* in Islamic prayer.

Furthermore, the analysis will contextualize KH. Muhammad Utsman Al-Ishaqi's views within Islam's broader theological, historical, and cultural framework. The practical implications of his perspective on *rabithah* will be explored in relation to Muslims' contemporary religious practices and lives.

The research will culminate in drawing conclusions summarizing the key findings and significance of KH. Muhammad Utsman Al-Ishaqi's perspective on *rabithah* for achieving *khushu* in *salat*. Discussion on his views' theological and practical implications will also be provided, contributing to a deeper understanding of this aspect of Islamic spirituality.

Result and Discussion

Sketch Biography of Kiai Utsman Al-Ishaqi

Kiai Utsman Al-Ishaqi hailed from a lineage traced back to Prophet Muhammad SAW, with his mother being a descendant of Maulana Muhammad Ainul Yaqin,⁵ also known as Sunan Giri bin Maulana Ishaq. He was born around 1915 in Jatipurwo, Surabaya, into a family of nine siblings. Kiai Utsman was KH's second child. Munadi and Nyai Hj. Surati from Peneleh, Surabaya. He was a prominent figure in the *Qadiriyya* and *Naqshbandiyya* Sufi orders and was revered as a *murshid* or spiritual guide.

His educational journey began in several *pesantrens* (Islamic boarding schools), notably under the guidance of Kiai Khozin Siwalan Panji and later Kiai Munir Jambu in Madura. Eventually, he settled in Pesantren Rejoso, Peterongan, Jombang, under the tutelage of Kiai Romly At-Tamimi. Kiai Utsman was known for his ascetic practices and dedication to knowledge acquisition, often abstaining from returning home until his body had significantly slimmed down from rigorous studies.

⁵ Lihat dalam Abdul Ghafar Umar al-Gresiky, *Sabil al-Waqi Fi Manaqibi Shaykh Muhammad Uthman Ibn Nadi al-Ishaqi RA*, dalam *Majmu'at al-Wa'z'if al-Uthmaniyyah*, (Surabaya: Pondok Pesantren Raudlatul Muta'alimin (PPRM) Jatipurwo Surabaya, t.t.), 173.

Kiai Utsman's spiritual journey was marked by various mystical experiences, including visions of the Ka'ba and encounters with spiritual beings like Prophet Khidir. He was appointed as a *murshid* by Kiai Romly, a role he accepted after a profound spiritual experience. Kiai Utsman exhibited miraculous abilities, such as seeing individuals in their proper spiritual forms and manifesting provisions from unconventional sources.

Despite his mystical experiences and spiritual authority, Kiai Utsman remained grounded in scholarly pursuits and authored several books on Sufism and Islamic practices. His notable works include *'Awn al-Rafiq fi Shaykh al-Tarbiyah wa Adab al-Murid fi al-Tariq*,⁶ *Al-Khulashah al-Wafiyah fi al-Adab wa Kayfiyah al-Dhikr 'inda al-Sadah al-Qadiriyyah wa al-Naqshabandiyah*,⁷ *Al-Nuqtah fi Tahqiq al-Rabitah*, *Al-Risalah al-Nuriyyah*, *Thamrah al-Fikriyyah*,⁸ and *Majmu'at al-Waz'if al-Uthmaniyyah*.⁹

Kiai Utsman Al-Ishaqi passed away on 5 Rabi'us Tsani 1405 H (January 8, 1984)¹⁰ and was buried in the complex of Pondok Pesantren Darul' Ubudiyah Raudlatul Muta'alimin in Jatipurwo, Surabaya, which he founded. His legacy as a spiritual guide and scholar continues to inspire generations of seekers in Indonesia.

The Concept of *Khushu* in Islamic Prayer (*Ṣalat*)

Prayer, as extensively mentioned in various Islamic literature on jurisprudence, is linguistically defined as supplication. However, in Islamic law (*sharia*), prayer is a form of specific movements combined with prescribed recitations, stipulated conditions, and designated times. This practice of prayer can be observed from the outward movements of Prophet Muhammad SAW, followed by his companions and continuously emulated by subsequent generations up to the present.

Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jilany, renowned as the leader of the saints and Sultan al-Awliya', classified the types of prayer commonly practiced by Muslims into two forms: shariah-based prayer and tariqah-based prayer, with the following explanations:

1. *Shariah*-based prayer, according to Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jilany's interpretation of the verse "Guard strictly [the five obligatory] prayers" (Quran, Al-Baqarah: 238), consists of the physical movements of the body, such as standing, reciting the Fatihah, bowing, prostrating, sitting, vocalizing, and uttering specific words. *Shariah*-based prayer also has particular times, namely performed five times a day, preferably in the mosque or the congregation, facing the qibla and following the imam's movements respectfully and calmly.

⁶ Muhammad Utsman Al-Ishaqi, *'Awn al-Rafiq fi Shaykh al-Tarbiyah wa Adab al-Murid fi al-Tariq*, dalam *Al-Muntakhabat fi Rabitah al-Qalbiyyah wa Silah al-Ruhaniyyah*, vol. 5 (Surabaya: Al-Wawa, 2009)

⁷ Muhammad Utsman Al-Ishaqi, *Al-Khulashah al-Wafiyah fi al-Adab wa Kayfiyah al-Dhikr 'inda al-Sadah al-Qadiriyyah wa al-Naqshabandiyah*, dalam *Al-Muntakhabat fi Rabitah al-Qalbiyyah wa Silah al-Ruhaniyyah*, vol. 5 (Surabaya: Al-Wawa, 2009)

⁸ Muhammad Utsman Al-Ishaqi, *Al-Risalah al-Nuriyyah*, (Surabaya: Ponpes. Darul Ubudiyah Raudlatul Muta'alimin Jatipurwo Surabaya, 2016)

⁹ Muhammad Utsman Al-Ishaqi, *Al-Nuqtah fi Tahqiq al-Rabitah*, (Surabaya: Al-Khidmah, 2010)

¹⁰ Keterangan diambil dari Kalender Pondok Pesantren Assalafi Al-Fithrah Surabaya 2024.

2. *Tariqah*-based prayer, as interpreted from the verse "And establish prayer at the two ends of the day and the approach of the night" (Quran, Al-Baqarah: 238), refers to prayer performed by the heart. The heart is positioned in the middle (*wustha*) between right and left, above and below, and between happiness and sorrow, as per the saying of Prophet Muhammad SAW: "The heart is between two of the fingers of the Merciful Lord, He turns it as He wills." The two fingers of Allah refer to His attributes of *Qabr* (Dominion) and *Luthf* (Gentleness), as Allah is free from attributes resembling His creation. This verse and hadith affirm that prayer fundamentally originates from the heart, and negligence of the heart leads to defects in the prayer performed by the body. Prayer with the heart as its essence is indicated by the appearance of heedlessness in the heart, which leads to the invalidity and impairment of the physical prayer. The heart is depicted as the vital organ in the body. In contrast, the other parts of the body are its followers, as mentioned by Prophet Muhammad SAW: "Indeed, in the body, there is a piece of flesh; if it is sound, the whole body is sound, and if it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt. Verily, it is the heart."

Tariqah-based prayer is also performed without regard to time and continues incessantly throughout one's life. The mosque used in this type of prayer is the heart, where the congregation comprises the spiritual powers engaging in the remembrance of Allah using the inner voice, led by the longing in the soul. At the same time, the true qibla is the Presence of His Oneness and the beauty of His Eternal Majesty, representing the ultimate direction. The heart and soul will forever be engaged in this type of prayer. The heart will never die or sleep but will continuously perform prayer, even while the body sleeps, stands, sits, or remains silent.

Suppose prayer is performed using both the shariah and *tariqah* methods, outwardly and inwardly. In that case, the prayer becomes perfect and earns immense rewards to draw closer to Allah spiritually and achieve physical elevation. Thus, the individual who performs such prayer becomes adept in outward worship and insightful inward matters. However, suppose one fails to perform it according to the *tariqah* method. In that case, the value of their prayer diminishes, and they only receive rewards for the elevation of their status, not for their closeness to Allah.

Regarding *khushu* (concentration) in prayer as described in Surah *Al-Mu'minun*: 2, Al-Zuhry interprets it as the tranquility one experiences while performing prayer. According to one opinion, those with *khushu* are not disturbed by activities on their right and left sides due to their intense focus on performing the prayer.¹¹

Method of Achieving *Khushu* in *Ṣalat*

A prayer is considered perfect when performed with total concentration, not in a state of heedlessness. Through *khushu* in prayer, one achieves a noble goal: purifying the heart from sins and being open to receiving unseen matters. Therefore, prayer is the essence of worship

¹¹ Abdul Qadir al-Jilany (w. 561 H.), *Al-Ghunyah li Ṭalibi Ṭariq al-Ḥaqq Azza wa Jalla*, (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2015), jilid. 2, 184.

and the foundation of all goodness. In Surah Taha: 20, Allah says, "establish prayer for My remembrance." This verse signifies that the purpose of performing prayer is to remind humans of the greatness of Allah SWT.¹² Prophet Muhammad SAW strengthens this reasoning by saying: "The obligation of prayer, the command to perform Hajj and Tawaf, and the prescription of various forms of worship aims to remember Allah SWT."

In another narration, it is mentioned: "When a servant stands to perform prayer, Allah SWT lifts the veil between Himself and His servant and directs the servant towards His face. The angels stand from the shoulders of the praying servant to the ends of the sky, following their prayer movements and affirming their supplications. The goodness gained by the one performing prayer extends from the highest point in the heavens to the top of their head, to the extent that a whisper arises, 'If the one praying knew who they were supplicating to, they would not move.' Indeed, the gates of heaven are open to those who perform prayer, and Allah SWT will boast about the ranks of those who pray to His angels".¹³ This statement applies only to those who sincerely focus on their prayer with *kbushu*.

In practice, human desires always incline towards evil (*al-ammarāt bi al-sū'*). They are naturally inclined towards lousy behavior, similar to domesticated animals that need restraint and control to become obedient. Thus, submission in prayer is a form of great happiness for humans—an eternal happiness that cannot be measured by price.¹⁴

Human submission in prayer entails having a tranquil heart, free from anything other than Allah (*al-ghayr*), directing oneself entirely towards Him, and viewing His greatness and magnificence with the inner eye as if witnessing Him with both physical eyes, as mentioned in a hadith narrated by Umar bin Khattab regarding the arrival of the Angel Gabriel to Prophet Muhammad SAW, who answered his question about *ihsan*: "Worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you cannot see Him, then know that He sees you." From this, it is known that *kbushu* in prayer and the presence of the heart, accompanied by the tranquility of the body, are signs of perfect faith. The Quran categorizes the characteristic of a believer as fortunate if they have *kbushu* in their prayer, as elucidated in the Quran:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ (1) الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ (2) [المؤمنون: 1 - 3]

"Verily, successful indeed are the believers, those who offer their *Salat* (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness." (Quran, Al-Mu'minun: 1-2)

According to Al-Zuhaili in his *Tafsir Al-Munir*, quoting Hasan Al-Basri, one of the practical implementations to achieve *kbushu* (concentration) in prayer is by closing one's eyes, as the intended focus is the heart. Thus, when a person is free from distractions, the heart becomes tranquil and focused on the presence of Allah SWT during prayer.

In contrast to Al-Basri's statement, Muhammad Syatho Dimiyathi provides techniques to attain *kbushu* by recommending opening one's eyes during prostration, which scholars interpret as an effort to maintain focus on the place of prostration in every movement of

¹² Ihsan Dahlan al-Jampesy, *Siraj al-Taibin*, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1997), jilid. 2, 20.

¹³ Ahmad bin Muhammad bin al-mahdy Ajibah al-Husainy al-Idrisy al-Syadzily, *Al-Baḥr al-Madid*, (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2002), juz. 3, 518.

¹⁴ Ali bin Ahmad al-Jurjawy al-Atsary al-Hanbaly, *Ḥikmat al-Tashri' wa Falsafatuhu*, (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2017), 53.

prayer. They argue that focusing one's gaze at one point facilitates achieving *khushu*. They also argue against closing the eyes during prayer, as it was a practice of the Jews, whereas Prophet Muhammad SAW and his companions never followed it.¹⁵

Directing one's gaze to the place of prostration should ideally be done from the beginning of *Takbiratul Ibram* until the end of the prayer. Some scholars also recommend facing the Ka'ba directly during worship. At the same time, Al-Bulqiny categorizes it as a common practice, a view reinforced by Al-Asnawi, who considers facing the Ka'ba as a weak opinion. Looking at the place of prostration is also recommended when praying in a dark place.

Al-Baghawi and Al-Mutawali provide detailed instructions on where to focus one's gaze during prayer. According to them, a person should focus their gaze on the place of prostration when standing, then direct it to the feet visible during bowing, look at the nose during prostration, and focus on the lap while sitting. They argue that distributing one's gaze will widely lead to distraction, and concentrating on it is narrowly preferable.¹⁶

Another method to achieve *khushu* is by contemplating the remembrance (*dhikr*) recited during prayer, whether Tasbih or supplication (*du'a*), treating it as if one is reciting the Al-Quran. The author of Al-Mughni understands this as a way to receive rewards for reciting *Subhanallah*, even if not accompanied by the explicit glorification of Allah SWT, as its meaning is still retained.¹⁷

Regarding closing the eyes during prayer, most scholars from the four main schools of thought consider it disliked (*makruh*). Some other scholars do not deem it disliked but consider it disputable in terms of preference (*kebilaf aulā*). However, it may become obligatory when praying naked under compulsion, and it is deemed Sunnah for those who, if they were to open their eyes, would be distracted, as explained by Izzuddin bin Abdissalam.¹⁸ Abdullah al-Hadar adds that the Sunnah's determination to open the eye during prostration is "so that the eyes' sight also prostrates," according to him.¹⁹

Kiai Utsman Al-Ishaqi offers the method of *rabithah* as an instrument to achieve *khushu* in prayer or to obtain spiritual realization in general. This approach is singled out in his book, "*Ann al-Rafiq*," which will also be the focus of discussion in this article. His son followed this step and also succeeded him in leading TQN Al-Utsmaniyah. In his book titled "*Al-Baqiyāt al-Ṣāliḥāt wa al-ʿāqibāt al-Khayrāt wa al-Khatimāt al-Ḥasanāt*," Kiai Asrori Al-Ishaqi not only mentions *rabithah* as a tool for concentration but also emphasizes the perfect love for the spiritual guide (*murshid*), constantly following their *dhikr* guidance, and always feeling close to them (*muraqabah*).²⁰

¹⁵ Abu Bakar Ibn al-Sayyid Muhammad Syatho al-Dimyathi, *ʿĀnāb al-Ṭālibin ʿalā Alfiq Fath al-Muʿin*, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1997), juz 1, hal. 165.

¹⁶ Al-Nawawy, *Al-Majmūʿ Sharḥ al-Muhadḍab*, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1997), juz. 3 hal. 260.

¹⁷ *ʿĀnāb al-Ṭālibin*, juz. 1, hal. 214.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Abdurrahman bin Muhammad bin Umar Baʿalawy, *Bughyah al-Mustarshidin fī Talkhiṣ Fatāwa Baʿdī al-Aimmah min al-ʿUlamā al-Mutaʾakhirin*, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, t.t.), 111.

²⁰ Achmad Asrori Al-Ishaqi, *Al-Baqiyāt al-Ṣāliḥāt wa al-ʿāqibāt al-Khayrāt wa al-Khatimāt al-Ḥasanāt* (Surabaya: Al-Khidmah, 2010), 36.

Rabithah, or spiritual connection, is an essential instrument in the journey towards the presence of Allah SWT. A Sufi practitioner (*salik*) engages in rigorous exercises (*riyadhab*) to reject or eliminate anything other than Him, including one's existence, desires, and Satan. Such exercises, known as *mujahadab*, can be conducted in various ways, including reducing food intake, refraining from relying on personal efforts except those chosen by a teacher, and adhering to a spiritual path (*tarekat*). Al-Ghazali advises referring to the rules of *tarekat* as laid down by al-Junaid, which include maintaining ablution continuously, fasting, observing solitude, incessantly reciting the *tablil* phrase, maintaining a spiritual connection with the teacher (*rabithab*), emulating the teacher's behavior in facing Allah SWT, and striving to eliminate worries (whispers of the heart) while avoiding turning away from Allah SWT.²¹

Rabithab, linguistically meaning "bond" or "connection," emphasizes the role of the teacher as a mediator (*wasilah*) who can convey the Nur Muhammad (the light of Muhammad) to the disciple. According to one account from a Badal, a *salik* would struggle to comprehend the teachings of the *Naqsyabandiyah Khalidiyah Tarekat* and find it difficult to reach the ultimate goal of the spiritual journey without the teacher's guidance. Even during the remembrance of Allah, a disciple should strive to mentally envision their teacher to the extent of imagining their face. This process is believed to bring the teacher's charisma to the disciple. *Rabithab* entails a spiritual connection between the teacher and the disciple, whether face-to-face or not, where the disciple endeavors to visualize the teacher's presence, often manifested as a beam of light.²² Kiai Utsman provides his definition of *rabithab* in his notes:

أَنَّ الرِّابِطَةَ عِبَارَةٌ عَنِ تَعَلُّقِ الْقُلُوبِ بِشَيْءٍ لَشَيْءٍ عَلَى وَجْهِ الْمَحَبَّةِ

"*Rabithab is an expression of the heart's connection to something due to love.*"

However, it cannot be denied that *rabithab*, or heart connection, will occur in every individual, whether desired or not. The human heart will permanently be attached to something it likes. Therefore, Kiai Utsman Al-Ishaqi categorizes *rabithab* into three types: praiseworthy, blameworthy, and permissible. Each contains five legal rulings: obligatory, recommended, forbidden, disliked, and allowable. It is deemed obligatory when the heart's attachment is to Allah SWT and His Messenger and prohibited if it is to prohibited or disliked matters. Permissible cases include one's love for family and children, which are innate or characteristic traits of a person.

The existence of *rabithab* in the heart poses challenges in worship. When starting the *takebiratul ibram* in prayer, one's mind will be disturbed. Thoughts wander everywhere. They forget Allah in their worship and lose awareness of their condition. Their heart is preoccupied with attachment to their wealth, work, spouse, and many other matters. For reasons like these, establishing *rabithab* with a *murshid* (spiritual guide) is needed to eliminate negligence towards Allah SWT in prayer, enabling them to face Allah with a present heart.

²¹ Ach. Sayyi, "Implementasi Model Pendidikan Sufistik Tarekat Qadiriyyah wa Naqsyabandiyah dalam Pendidikan Islam di Pondok Pesantren Assalafi Al-Fithrah Surabaya" dalam Tesis, (Malang: UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim, 2014), 35.

²² Rizqa Ahmadi, "Jamaah Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah Khalidiyah di Kabupaten Trenggalek" dalam Jurnal Living Hadis, Vol. 2 Nomor , Mei, 2017; p-ISSN: 2528-756; e-ISSN: 2548-4761, 307-308.

In his brief treatise *al-Nuqtah*, Kiai Utsman Al-Ishaqi attempts to provide an understanding to those who do not accept *rabithah* with a *murshid*. The deniers of *rabithah* argue that it is not based on evidence from the Al-Quran or Hadith. As it is well known, the companions considered the Prophet Muhammad SAW as their teacher, who taught them various forms of remembrance and other virtuous deeds. According to the deniers, the Prophet Muhammad SAW did not command the companions to establish *rabithah*. Kiai Utsman Al-Ishaqi, quoting statements from the leaders of the *Naqsyabandiyah* tarekat, states that *rabithah* is deemed recommended, as it is part of the means (*wasilah*) used to reject the distractions of the heart and eliminate its heedlessness. By establishing *rabithah*, all temptations and disturbances will disappear, leaving only the means itself, which can then serve as a bridge to the presence of Allah SWT. Essentially, *rabithah* is not the goal but merely a means. The ultimate goal and hope lie only with Allah SWT.

Jurists deem it recommended for a person praying to focus their gaze on the index finger of their right hand. This aims to cultivate concentration of the mind and heart. Similarly, *rabithah* is performed to reject all distractions and temptations and to achieve the presence of the heart by turning towards Allah SWT.

The Prophet Muhammad SAW's invitation to his companions to make pledges (*bai'at*) manifests *rabithah*. Through pledging, the image of the Prophet Muhammad SAW will be ingrained in the hearts and minds of the companions, guiding them in performing or refraining from specific actions. If a person's image is etched, bound, and intertwined, memories of that person will arise in the heart, whether consciously or unconsciously.

Establishing *rabithah* by envisioning the teacher's presence is to ward off negligence when facing Allah SWT. By eliminating negligence in remembrance, a person will attain the door of happiness because the presence of the heart is part of the essence of worship. In contrast, the absence of negligence necessitates the descent of blessings, among the causes of which is remembering the righteous.

The concept of *rabithah* in prayer offered by Kiai Utsman is not new. This concept has been widely conveyed by the spiritual guides of the *Naqsyabandiyah* tarekat, including Kiai Utsman. Establishing *rabithah* by envisioning the teacher's presence is an attempt to emulate the teacher's deep devotion. In doing so, a disciple of the tarekat brings to mind the prayer conditions of the companions with the presence of the Prophet Muhammad SAW overseeing them. As a result, during prayer, they are present and contemplate the manner of the Prophet Muhammad SAW's prayer, believing they are directly witnessed by or confidently witnessing Allah SWT.

Conclusion

Practitioners of Sufism affiliated with tarekat orders are individuals who strive for total adherence to Islam as practiced by the Prophet Muhammad SAW and encompassed in the components of perfecting Islam, namely Islam, *Iman* (faith), and *Ihsan* (excellence), or, in other terms, as the sharia, *tarekat*, and *haqiqah*. In short, a person's adherence to Islam cannot be considered complete if there are deficiencies in implementing these three components of

Islam. One of the primary forms of practice that constitutes Islam is prayer (*salat*). Prayer is an obligation for every Muslim to perform five times a day and night. The element that encapsulates these three main components of Islam is concentration in prayer by bringing the heart into presence, which is difficult to achieve except by those who genuinely strive for it.

Scholars have methods of achieving concentration, including closing their eyes, turning off lights, contemplating recitations, and even establishing *rabithah* by envisioning the *murshid's* presence, as KH expressed. Muhammad Utsman Al-Ishaqi. As a *murshid* who delves into the teachings of the *Qadiriyyah wa Naqshabandiyah tarekat*, Kiai Utsman provides many arguments reinforcing the allowance of establishing *rabithah* during prayer to attain the concentration that is the essence of worship itself."

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