

BAYANI EPISTEMOLOGIES IN MODERN INDONESIA

The Contribution of Al Washliyah Ulama to Quranic Exegesis Studies

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Abstract: This study examines the contribution of Al Washliyah to Quranic exegesis studies in Indonesia. This literature-based research adopts a historical approach, and the research topic is analyzed through Max Weber's theories of social action and dominance of power. This study argues that Al Washliyah ulama have taught various books on Quranic exegesis in its madrasas, published articles on the Quran and its tafsir in its official magazine *Medan Islam* (also *Dewan Islam*), and its ulama have produced several works in the field of Quranic exegesis. Moreover, due to its adherence to the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah (Sunni) creed and the Shâfi'iyah school of jurisprudence, Al Washliyah tends to disregard Quranic exegesis literature from other schools.

Abstrak: Studi ini mengkaji kontribusi Al Washliyah dalam kajian tafsir al-Qur'an di Indonesia. Studi ini merupakan studi kepustakaan dengan menggunakan pendekatan sejarah. Topik penelitian dianalisis dengan teori Max Weber tentang tindakan sosial dan dominasi kekuasaan. Studi ini mengajukan temuan bahwa Al Washliyah mengajarkan sejumlah kitab tafsir Alquran di madrasah-madrasah; menerbitkan artikel terkait Alquran dan tafsirnya pada majalah resminya, *Medan Islam* (juga *Dewan Islam*); dan ulama-ulamanya juga menghasilkan sejumlah karya dalam bidang Alquran dan tafsir. Kepatuhan Al Washliyah terhadap akidah Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah (Sunni) dan mazhab fikih Syafi'iyah juga membuat organisasi ini abai terhadap literatur tafsir dari mazhab lainnya.

Keywords: Quranic exegesis, Al Washliyah, madrasas, Islamic magazine, ulama

Introduction

Mulyadhi Kartanegara has stated that there are four scientific methods in Islamic epistemology, namely *bayani*, *tajribi*, *burhani*, and *'irfani*.¹ On the other hand, Amin Abdullah has also revealed that Islamic epistemology has its own terms, namely *bayani*, *'irfani*, and *burhani*.² In the context of the first epistemology, according to Kartanegara, the *bayani* method is “a method of explanation in which revelation, in this case, the Quran, like the universe, is a source of broad and deep knowledge. The *bayani* method is needed to uncover the deeper reality of the Quran.”³ Historically, ulama in the Muslim world have developed various methods of interpreting the Quran and produced several books of interpretation that have become references and even influenced the thinking of Muslims in various parts of the world, including Indonesia.⁴ In terms of schools of thought, both Sunni and Shia ulama⁵ have developed exegesis studies (or *tafsîr*) and produced some influential Quranic exegesis books.⁶ On another side, many Muslim community

¹ Mulyadhi Kartanegara, *Essentials of Islamic Epistemology: Philosophical Inquiry Into the Foundation of Knowledge* (Bandar Seri Begawan: UBD Press, 2014), 61-73.

² Amin Abdullah, *Islamic Studies Di Perguruan Tinggi: Pendekatan Integratif-Interkonektif* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2012), 132.

³ Mulyadhi Kartanegara, *Reaktualisasi Tradisi Ilmiah Islam* (Jakarta: Baitul Ihsan, 2006), 183-197.

⁴ Muhammad Iqbal and Ja'far Ja'far, “Contemporary Development of Qur'anic Exegesis in Indonesia and Iran,” *Journal of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Societies* 3, no. 1 (2019): 83.

⁵ In the Shia school perspective, according to Thabâthabâ'î, *tafsîr* is “explaining the meanings of the verses of the Quran and revealing their meanings and significance.” According to Baba'i, *tafsîr* is “explaining the *isti'mali* meanings of the verses of the Quran and revealing Allah's intentions from them based on the rules of the Arabic language and the logical rules of communication.” According to Ishfahâni, *tafsîr* is “explaining the *isti'mali* meanings of the verses of the Quran and revealing the true meaning of these verses based on the rules of the Arabic language and the logical rules of communication by using various sources and valid accompaniments (*qarînah*).” See: Muhammad Husain Thabathabai, *Al-Mizân Fi Tafsîr Al-Qur'ân*, Vol. 2. (Beirut: Muassasah al-'Alami li al-Mathbuat, 1393); Ali Akbar Babai and Al Et., *Rawesy Syenassi-e Tafsîr-e Qoran* (Qom: Pezyuhsyghah_e Hauze wa Donesyghah, 1392); Muhammad Ali Redhai Ishfahani, *Mantiq_e Tafsîr_e Qoran* (Qom: Pezyuhsyghah_e Baina Milali Al-Mushtafa, 1432).

⁶ In the Sunni tradition, there are at least four models of writing Quranic exegesis, namely *tafsîr tahlili*, *tafsîr ijmalî*, *tafsîr muqaran*, and *tafsîr maudhu'i*. On the other hand, the model of writing Quranic exegesis in the Shia tradition includes (1) *tafsîr tartibi* such as *al-Mizân fi Tafsîr al-Qur'an*, *Tafsîr Nemune* and *Tafsîr Majma' al-Bayân*, and (2) *tafsîr maudhu'i* such as *Payam_e Quran* by Nashir Makarim Shirazi and *Mansyur_e Jawed* by Ja'far Subhani. In addition, in terms of length and brevity of description, some *tafsîr* books are written in a concise manner such as *al-Ashfa*, some are written with a rather broad description such as *Mushafa*, and some are written with a broad description such as *Tafsîr al-Shafi*. In addition, some books of *tafsîr* are written in the form of *matn* and *sharah* where the verse is in the form of *matn*, and *tafsîr* as *syarah* such as *al-Mizân fi Tafsîr al-Qur'an*, and sometimes mixed between verse and *tafsîr* such as Nahawandi's *Nafahat al-Rahman*. In addition, there are also books of *tafsîr* that cover the entire Qur'an such as *Majma' al-Bayan*, and there are also only in the form

groups have also contributed to the study of Quranic exegesis in the Muslim world, including Islamic organizations in Indonesia.

Historically, Karel A. Steenbrink has stated four factors driving Islamic change in Indonesia in the early 20th century. These were the desire to return to the Quran and hadith, the emergence of a renewal movement in Islamic education, national popular resistance to the Dutch, and the success of Muslims in strengthening their socio-economic organizations.⁷ In the first context, Muslims in the archipelago have paid considerable attention to the Quran and its interpretation. Nashiruddin Baidan has conducted research and found that the study of Quranic exegesis in Indonesia has developed. In the pre-modern period, the study of tafsir was no different from the study in the medieval period, where the book *Tafsir Jalalain* became a reference for ulama and their students. In the first half of the 20th century, the study of tafsir experienced slight development because it led to a more external understanding. Additionally, the characteristics of the study of interpretation in this century are as follows: (1) Ulama and educators still follow the legacy of past ulama, where *Tafsir Jalalain* remains the main reference. (2) Some ulama and educators, especially in the al-Irsyad organization, initiated the development of insights into the interpretation of the Quran. In the context of educational institutions, Baidan concluded that various Islamic educational institutions generally use *Tafsir Jalalain* as a reference book in the study of tafsir. However, several educational institutions, especially those belonging to al-Irsyad, have also used other books such as *Tafsir Juz Amma*, *I'jaz al-Qur'an*, *Tafsir Baidhawî*, and *Tafsir al-Khâzin*. In the next era, the study of tafsir experienced rapid progress where the system of teaching tafsir changed from the method of reading and lecturing to a system of discussion and development of reasoning.⁸ Baidan's study briefly reveals the contribution of Islamic organizations such as al-Irsyad to the study of tafsir in Indonesia.

The study of tafsir in Islamic organizations in Indonesia appears to have received less attention from experts. Some research results by experts on the interpretation of the Quran in Indonesia have been published, but none of them discuss the study of Quranic exegesis in the Al Washliyah organization.⁹ Some experts have indeed examined the

of selections, both verses and chapters, such as *Ahkam al-Quran* by Rawandi. See: Muhammad Ali Ridhai Ishfahani, *Manteq_e Tafsir_e Qoran (Raweshha Wa Gerayeshha_e Tafsiri)* (Qom: Entesyarat_e Jamiah al-Mushtafa al-Alamiyah, 1429), 34.

⁷ Karel A. Steenbrink, *Pesantren, Madrasah, Sekolah: Pendidikan Islam Dalam Kurun Modern* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1986), 26-28.

⁸ Nashruddin Baidan, *Perkembangan Tafsir Al-Qur'an Di Indonesia* (Solo: Tiga Serangkai Pustaka Mandiri, 2003), 70, 84, 110-111.

⁹ Mun'im Sirry, ed., *New Trends in Qur'anic Studies: Text, Context, and Interpretation* (Atlanta, Georgia: Lockwood, 2019); Andrew Rippin, Majid Daneshgar, and Peter G. Riddell, eds., *The Qur'an in the Malay-Indonesian World Context and Interpretation* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2016); Abdullah Saeed, *Approaches to the Qur'an in Contemporary Indonesia* (London: Oxford University Press, 2005).

interpretation within the Muhammadiyah organization¹⁰ and Nahdlatul Ulama.¹¹ Unfortunately, the study of interpretation in other Islamic organizations has received less attention, such as Al Jam'iyatul Washliyah. According to Karel A. Steenbrink,¹² "in terms of quantity, this organization (Al Washliyah) certainly ranks third after Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama." Generally, the study of Al Washliyah still receives less attention from researchers, particularly foreign researchers, despite some research results produced by internal researchers of Al Washliyah on the contribution of Al Washliyah ulama to knowledge development.¹³ In the context of tafsir, no study on tafsir studies within the Al Washliyah organization was found, except in the field of hadith.¹⁴

This article specifically examines the contribution of Al Washliyah ulama to the study of tafsir in Indonesia. It reveals the history and movement of Al Washliyah in Indonesia, as well as its contribution to the study of Quranic exegesis in Indonesia from 1930 to 1980. The article focuses on the contribution of educational institutions, *Medan Islam* magazine, and several of its ulama. This study argues that the contribution of Al Washliyah ulama in the study of Quranic exegesis is that the teaching of tafsir does not only refer to the book of *Tafsir Jalâlain*, but also refers to other books of tafsir. In addition, the ulama established Islamic magazine namely *Medan Islam* (also *Dewan Islam*) and published articles on the Quranic exegesis in the magazine, and some of them have written several works on the Quran and its interpretation. Furthermore, Al Washliyah's adherence to the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah (Sunni) creed and the Shâfi'i school of fiqh leads the organization to overlook tafsir books by non-Sunni-Shâfi'i ulama. In the end, Al Washliyah tends to be an Ash'ariyah and Shâfi'i oriented organization, as stated by B.J. Bolland "Al Washliyah is a very orthodox Shâfi'i school."¹⁵ To explore the research topic, Max Weber's theory of social action and power domination will be utilized.¹⁶

¹⁰ Indal Abror and Muhammad Nurdin Zuhdi, "Tafsir Al-Qur'an Berkemajuan: Exploring Methodological Contestation and Contextualization of Tafsir At-Tanwir by Tim Majelis Tarjih Dan Tajdid PP Muhammadiyah," *ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 19, no. 2 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.14421/esensia.v19i2.1347>.

¹¹ Mubasirun Mubasirun, "Values of Tepo Seliro in Bakri Syahid's Tafsir Al-Huda and Bisri Mustofa's Tafsir Al-Ibriz," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 11, no. 1 (2021), 10.18326/ijims.v11i2.351-376.

¹² Karel A. Steenbrink, "Kata Pengantar," in *Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah 1930-1942: Api Dalam Sekam Di Sumatera Timur* (Bandung: Penerbit Pustaka, 1988), vii-viii.

¹³ Ja'far Ja'far, "Ulama, Al Washliyah and Knowledge in Modern Indonesia (1930-1980)," *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-ilmu Keislaman* 46, no. 2 (2022): 235-256.

¹⁴ Ramli Abdul Wahid, *Sejarah Pengkajian Hadis Di Indonesia* (Medan: IAIN Press, 2010); Ramli Abdul Wahid, "Masa Depan Perkembangan Kajian Hadis Di Nusantara," in *2nd INHAD International Muzakarah & Mu'tamar on Hadith (IMAM2017)*, 2017, <http://conference.kuis.edu.my/imam2017/e proceeding/2001-imam-2017.pdf>.

¹⁵ B.J. Bolland, *The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia* (Springer Netherlands, 2013), 75.

¹⁶ Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (California: University of California Press, 1978), 24-25.

Methodology

This study is a literature study. The research adopts a historical approach as it examines the contribution of Al Washliyah to the study of tafsir in Indonesia from 1930 to 1980. The historical research model of Kuntowijoyo will be consistently applied.¹⁷ The data for this study is obtained through document study activities and interviews with several key informants. The data sources consist of primary and secondary sources. The primary data for this study includes all Al Washliyah documents related to the discussed topic, such as official organizational documents, madrasa curriculum, historical books published by the organization, and works of its ulama. The secondary data for this study comprises the research findings of experts on Al Washliyah and books on the history and development of Quranic studies in Indonesia.

Results and Discussion

Al Washliyah, Madrasah and Quranic Exegesis

Al Jam'iyatul Washliyah is a moderate Islamic organization in Indonesia,¹⁸ founded on Sunday, November 30, 1930, in Medan (North Sumatra, Indonesia).¹⁹ Shaykh Muhammad Yunus,²⁰ a student of Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Mandili in Mecca, and a teacher at Maktab Islamiyah Tapanuli (MIT) in Medan,²¹ named the organization "Al Jam'iyatul Washliyah," which means "the connecting organization."²² The founders of the organization at that time were several alumni of MIT and religious students at Madrasah Al-Hasaniyah,²³ led by Shaykh Hasan Ma'sum,²⁴ an influential ulama in the Sultanate of

¹⁷ Kuntowijoyo, *Pengantar Ilmu Sejarah* (Medan: Tiara Wacana, 2013).

¹⁸ Mhd. Syahnan, Ja'far Ja'far, and Muhammad Iqbal, "Ulama and Radicalism in Contemporary Indonesia: Response of Al Washliyah's Ulama on Radicalism," *Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 21, no. 1 (2021); Mhd Syahnan and Ja'far Ja'far, "Examining Religious Moderation of the Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah Fatwa Council," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 15, no. 1 (2021): 21–46.

¹⁹ Abdurrahman Sjihab, "Memperingati Al Djamijatul Washlijah 21 Tahun," in *21 Tahun Al Dj. Washlijah* (Medan: Pustaka Al Washlijah, 1951), 1–20.

²⁰ Pengurus Besar Al Djamijatul Washlijah, "Riwayat Ringkas Pedjuang2 Al Dj. Washlijah," in *Peringatan Al Djamijatul Washlijah ¼ Abad 30 Nopember 1930-30 Nopember 1955*, ed. Nukman Sulaiman (Medan: Pengurus Besar Al Djamijatul Washlijah, 1956).

²¹ Muaz Tanjung, *Maktab Islamiyah Tapanuli 1918-1942: Menelusuri Sejarah Pendidikan Islam Awal Abad Ke20 Di Medan* (Medan: IAIN Press, 2012); Hasan Asari and Muaz Tanjung, "History of Maktab Al-Islamiyah Tapanuli," *Heritage of Nusantara: International Journal of Religious Literature and Heritage* 8, no. 2 (2019).

²² Pengurus Besar Al Djamijatul Washlijah, *Tafsir Anggaran Dasar Al Djamijatul Washlijah*, ed. Nukman Sulaiman (Medan: Pengurus Besar Al Djamijatul Washlijah, 1950).

²³ Mahmud Yunus, *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Hidakarya Agung, 1993).

²⁴ Ja'far Ja'far, "Tarekat Dan Gerakan Sosial Keagamaan Shaykh Hasan Maksum," *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf dan Pemikiran Islam* 5, no. 2 (2015).

Deli and a student of Shaykh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi at the Masjidil Haram in Mecca.²⁵ Some of them were Ismail Banda (d. 1951),²⁶ Abdurrahman Sjihab (d. 1955),²⁷ M. Arsjad Th. Lubis (d. 1972),²⁸ and Yusuf Ahmad Lubis (d. 1980).²⁹ Thus, they were students of ulama who had studied with a number of prominent ulama in *Haramain* (Mecca and Medina).³⁰ This organization has made significant contributions in the fields of education,³¹ *da'wah* (Islamic preaching),³² and social affairs.³³ In subsequent eras, they became influential ulama and leaders of Muslims in Indonesia,³⁴ has participated in seizing, defending and building the independence of the Republic of Indonesia.³⁵ The members of this organization were originally Mandailing people in Medan and its

²⁵ Matu Mona, *Riwayat Penghidoepan Al-Fadhil Toean Sjech Hasan Ma'soem: Biografie Sedjak Ketjil Sampai Wafatnya* (Medan: Syarikat Tapanoeli, n.d.); Majelis Ulama Sumatera Utara, "Riwayat Hidup Almarhum Syekh Hasan Ma'sum (1884-1937)," in *Sejarah Ulama-Ulama Terkemuka Di Sumatera Utara* (Medan: Majelis Ulama Sumatera Utara, 1983), 119–137.

²⁶ Ja'far Ja'far, "Merantau Demi Republik: Kehidupan Dan Perjuangan Ismail Banda (1909-1951)," *Islamijah: Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 1, no. 2 (2020); Ja'far Ja'far, *Biografi Dan Karya Ismail Banda* (Medan: Centre For Al Washliyah Studies (Pusat Kajian Al Washliyah), 2021).

²⁷ Ja'far Ja'far, *Sang Ulama Pemimpin: Biografi Abdurrahman Sjihab* (Medan: Perdana Publishing and CAS, 2021); Ja'far Ja'far, "Ulama Mandailing Awal Abad Ke-20: Gerakan Religius Dan Politik Abdurrahman Sjihab (1910-1955)," *Islamijah: Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 1, no. 1 (2020).

²⁸ Ja'far Ja'far, "Peran M. Arsjad Th. Lubis Dalam Pengembangan Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman," *Dialogia: Jurnal Studi Islam dan Sosial* 18, no. 2 (2020).

²⁹ Khairuddin Said, *Pemikiran Islah Yusuf Ahmad Lubis Di Indonesia: Analisis Berdasarkan Korpus* (Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Malaya, 2012); Ja'far Ja'far, "Tradisi Intelektual Ulama Mandailing Abad Ke-20: Dedikasi Dan Karya-Karya Yusuf Ahmad Lubis (1912-1980)," *Islamijah: Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 1, no. 3 (2020); Khairuddin Said and Zulkifli Mohd. Yusoff, "Yusuf Ahmad Lubis Dan Gagasan Pembangunan Jati Diri Umat," in *Prosiding Nadwah Ulama Nusantara (NUN) V: Ulama Dan Cabaran Idealisme Semasa. Jabatan Pengajian Arab Dan Tamadun Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: , Fakulti Pengajian Islam, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2013).

³⁰ Mhd. Syahnan, Asrul Asrul, and Ja'far Ja'far, "Intellectual Network of Mandailing and Haramayn Muslim Scholars in the Mid-19th and Early 20th Century," *TEOSOFI: Jurnal Tasawuf dan Pemikiran Islam* 9, no. 2 (December 1, 2019): 257–281.

³¹ Dja'far Siddik and Rosnita Rosnita, "Gerakan Pendidikan Al-Washliyah Di Sumatera Utara," *Ulumuna: Journal of Islamic Studies* 18, no. 1 (2014): 59–80.

³² M. Arsjad Th. Lubis, "Penjiaran Islam Al Dj. Washlijah," in *21 Tahun Al Dj. Washlijah* (Medan: Pustaka Al Washlijah, 1951).

³³ Pengurus Besar Al Djamijatul Washlijah, "Riwayat Ringkas Dan Pendjelasan Madjlis Anak Miskin Dan Jatim Pijatu Al Djamijatul Washlijah," in *21 Tahun Al Dj. Washlijah* (Medan: Pustaka Al Washlijah, 1951).

³⁴ Ja'far Ja'far, "Pemikiran Politik Islamisme Moderat Al Jam'iyatul Washliyah," *Al-A'raf: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam dan Filsafat* 16, no. 2 (2019).

³⁵ Udin Sjamsuddin, "Tjattetan Ringkas Dari Sedjarah Perkembangan Organisasi Al Djam. Washlijah," in *21 Tahun Al Dj. Washlijah* (Medan: Pustaka Al Washlijah, 1951), 21–24.

³⁶ Ja'far Ja'far et al., "Discovering the Legacy of Mandailing Ulama: Education, Intellectuals, and Politics in North Sumatra in the Early 20th Century," *Ulumuna: Journal of Islamic Studies* 26, no. 2 (2022): 296–336.

surroundings.³⁶ As a moderate organization, Al Washliyah rejects radicalism and terrorism.³⁷

Al Washliyah is an Islamic organization that aims to promote, prioritize, and increase the spread of Islam. This goal was set on November 30, 1930, and has subsequently been changed to “strive to fulfill the demands of Islam.”³⁸ Islam serves as the foundation of this organization. Al Washliyah has been established as an Islamic organization that adheres to the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah school³⁹ and the Shâfi'iyah school.⁴⁰ In 1933, Al Washliyah established Madjlis Al-Fatwa (later renamed the Al Washliyah Fatwa Council),⁴¹ to provide guidance and decisions on religious matters and other challenging issues.⁴²

Two years after its official establishment, Al Washliyah established several educational institutions, including madrasahs and schools. In 1955, Udin Sjamsuddin reported that Al Washliyah managed 296 Madrasah Tjihiziyah, 301 Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, 14 Madrasah Tsanawiyah, 3 Madrasah Al-Qismul 'Aly, 1 Madrasah Takhassus, 37 Sekolah Rakyat, 7 SMP, 2 SMEP, 3 SGB, and 4 PGA. At that time, the number of teachers in Al Washliyah was 700, and the student population was 70,000.⁴³ These numbers increased in subsequent years. The data reveals that the majority of Al Washliyah's educational institutions are madrasahs.⁴⁴ This is because Al Washliyah, as an Islamic organization, aims to advance,

³⁷ Ja'far Ja'far, “Respon Al Jam'iyatul Washliyah Terhadap Terorisme,” *Akademika: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 22, no. 1 (n.d.): 1–26, <https://e-journal.metrouniv.ac.id/index.php/akademika/article/view/561>.

³⁸ Udin Sjamsuddin, *Chutbah Pengurus Besar Memperingati Ulang Tahun Al Djamijatul Washlijah Seperempat Abad 30 November 1930-30 November 1955* (Medan: Pengurus Besar Al Djamijatul Washlijah, 1955), 4-5.

³⁹ Ja'far Ja'far, “Al Jam'iyatul Washliyah Dan Pelestarian Akidah Ahl Sunnah Wa Al-Jamâ'ah Di Indonesia,” *Islamica: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 14, no. 1 (2019).

⁴⁰ Ja'far Ja'far, “Peran Al Jam'iyatul Washliyah Dalam Merevitalisasi Madhhab Shafi'i Di Era Kontemporer,” *Justicia Islamica: Jurnal Kajian Hukum dan Sosial* 13, no. 1 (2016).

⁴¹ Ja'far Ja'far, “Respon Dewan Fatwa Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah Terhadap Isu Akidah Dan Syariah Di Era Global,” *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam* 10, no. 1 (2016).

⁴² Ibid.; Dewan Fatwa Al Washliyah, *Keputusan-Keputusan Dewan Fatwa Al Jam'iyatul Washliyah 1930-2020*, ed. Ja'far Ja'far, Imam Yazid, and Irwansyah Irwansyah (Medan: Perdana Publishing and Dewan Fatwa Al Washliyah, 2020); Ja'far Ja'far, *Dewan Fatwa Al Jam'iyatul Washliyah*, ed. Imam Yazid and Irwansyah Irwansyah (Medan: Perdana Publishing and Dewan Fatwa Al Washliyah, 2020).

⁴³ Udin Sjamsuddin, *Chutbah Pengurus Besar Memperingati Ulang Tahun Al-Djam'ijatul Washlijah Seperempat Abad (30 November 1930-30 November 1955)* (Medan: Pengurus Besar Al Djamijatul Washlijah, 1955), 7.

⁴⁴ Hasan Asari, “Ulamâ' Training and Modernizing Al Washliyah Madrasah,” *Journal of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Societies* 3, no. 2 (2019): 22; Ja'far Ja'far, “Khazanah Kitab Kuning Di Madrasah Al Jam'iyat Al Washliyah,” *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam Al-Thariqah* 2, no. 2 (2017); Ja'far Ja'far, “Peran Ulama Al Washliyah Dalam Pengembangan Ilmu Agama,” *Islamijah: Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 2, no. 1 (February 24, 2021): 16, <http://jurnal.uinsu.ac.id/index.php/islamijah/article/view/11291>.

emphasize, and promote the spread of Islam. With its Sunni belief and adherence to the Shâfi'i school, Al Washliyah utilizes madrasas as the primary means for advancing its organizational ideology.

In the context of this study, Al Washliyah ulama, through the madrasas, have taught the Quran and its tafsir. In Madrasah Tajhiziyah during the 1950s, Al Washliyah students received instruction in the basics of Quranic studies, specifically *al-Qirâ'ah*, and *al-Qur'ân*. Similarly, in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, they were taught lessons on the *Qur'ân*, *Tajwid*, and *Ma'na al-Qur'ân*. In Tsanawiyah Madrasah, subjects such as *Tafsîr* and *Ushûl al-Tafsîr* were included in the curriculum. Additionally, students were taught Arabic language subjects, including *al-Balâghah*, *al-Nahwu*, *al-Sharf*, *al-Muḥadatsah*, *al-Khatt*, and *al-Lughah*. The books studied included *Tafsîr Jalâlain*, and *Nazam al-Zamzami*.⁴⁵ In the *Peringatan Al Djamijatul Washliyah ¼ Abad (Commemoration of Al Djamijatul Washliyah's ¼ Century)*, the books studied by Al Washliyah students during the 1955 era in the study of the Quran and tafsir were mentioned. At the levels of Madrasah Tajhiziyah and Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, students studied the Holy Quran and learned the science of tajwid by reading *Pelajaran Tajwid* by M. Arsjad Th. Lubis, and *Hidâyat al-Mustafid*. At the Madrasah Tsanawiyah level, *Tafsîr Jalâlain* was studied. At the Al-Qismul 'Ali Madrasah level, students studied *Anwâr al-Tanzîl wa Asrâr al-Ta'wîl* by Qadhi Nashr al-Dîn al-Baidhâwî, *Lubâb al-Ta'wîl fi Man al-Tanzîl* by 'Ala' al-Dîn 'Ali Muḥammad al-Khâzin, *Madârik al-Tanzîl wa Haqâ'iq al-Ta'wîl* by Abi al-Barakat al-Nasafi, and *Tanwîr al-Miqbas: Tafsîr Ibn Abbâs* by Abu Thahir al-Fairuz Abadi. Furthermore, students also studied books on the science of the Arabic language, such as *Durus al-Lughat al-'Arâbiyah*, *al-Muthala'at al-Ḥaditsah*, *Lughat al-Takhatub al-Musawwarah*, *Muḥadatsat al-Awwaliyah*, *Madârij al-Insya'*, *Ta'lim al-Insya'*, *Matn Ajrumiyah*, *Fusul al-Fikriyah*, *Mutamminah*, *Amtsilat al-Mukhtalifah*, *Matn al-Bina wa al-Asas*, *Matn al-Maqshud*, *Qawâ'id al-Lughah al-'Arâbiyah*, *Jawâhir al-Balâghah*, and *Qirâ'at al-Râshidah*.⁴⁶ Arabic lessons were also provided to enable students to read and understand tafsir books during this era.

The data presented above demonstrate that Al Washliyah has placed significant emphasis on the study of tafsir in Indonesia. Ulama within Al Washliyah have introduced and taught Arabic books on the study of the Quran and the science of tafsir. Arabic lessons have also been included, and a range of books on Arabic studies have been introduced. The objective is to enable Al Washliyah students to read and comprehend Arabic books, particularly in the field of Quranic exegesis. Additionally, Al Washliyah

⁴⁵ M. Husein Abd. Karim, *21 Tahun Al Dj. Washliyah* (Medan: Pustaka Al Washlijah, n.d.), 132-136.

⁴⁶ Pengurus Besar Al Djamijatul Washlijah, "Lembaga Peladjaran Al Djamijatul Washlijah," in *Peringatan Al Djamijatul Washlijah ¼ Abad* (Medan: Pengurus Besar Al Djamijatul Washlijah, 1956), 6-9.

ulama have carefully selected and taught books authored by classical ulama from the Sunni school. While *Tafsîr Jalâlain* has been taught, other books such as *Anwâr al-Tanzîl wa Asrâr al-Ta'wîl*, *Lubâb al-Ta'wîl fi Man al-Tanzîl*, *Madârik al-Tanzîl wa Haqâ'iq al-Ta'wîl*, and *Tanwîr al-Miqbas: Tafsîr Ibn 'Abbâs* have also been included in the curriculum. This demonstrates that Al Washliyah ulama are open-minded and innovative, as they have moved beyond the common practice in many madrasas of relying solely on *Tafsîr Jalâlain* as the primary reference for teaching tafsir. However, it should be noted that teachers in Al Washliyah madrasas have also continued to teach *Tafsîr Jalâlain*,⁴⁷ and *Hâsiyah al-Shâwi 'ala Tafsîr al-Jalâlain* by Ahmad bin Muhammad al-Shâwi alongside other tafsir books.

Furthermore, Al Washliyah ulama established an Islamic university namely Al Washliyah University (UNIVA) Medan. This campus was officially inaugurated in Medan on May 18, 1958, with the primary objective of preparing Islamic scholars (or *ulamâ'*) for the future.⁴⁸ As a result, students enrolled in this university until the 1980s were offered a wide range of courses in the field of Islamic sciences, including Quranic exegesis. Proficiency in Arabic was considered an essential requirement for students at this Islamic campus during this period. All compulsory textbooks are Arabic books, including those related to the Quranic exegesis. For instance, students enrolled in the Faculty of Sharia were obliged to study courses such as *Muqaddimah li 'Ilm al-Tafsîr*, *'Ulum al-Qur'ân*, and *Tafsîr Ahkâm*. Likewise, students in the Faculty of Tarbiyah were required to learn subjects like *'Ulûm al-Tafsîr wa al-Hadîth*, and *al-Tafsîr*. Similarly, students pursuing studies in the Faculty of Ushuluddin also studied *Muqaddimah 'Ilm al-Tafsîr wa al-Hadîth*, and *al-Tafsîr*. Notable lecturers who taught these courses included *al-Fadhil* Adnan Lubis and Shaykh Jamaluddin, among others.⁴⁹

Medan Islam and Quranic Exegesis

In addition to the teaching of tafsir books in madrasas, Al Washliyah ulama have also made a tafsir section within the Medan Islam magazine. Medan Islam is the official magazine of Al Washliyah. It was first published on November 1, 1933, under the leadership of two Al Washliyah ulama, namely Abd. Wahab and Yusuf Ahmad Lubis. Subsequently, the magazine was led by other Al Washliyah ulama, including M. Arsjad Th. Lubis and H. A. Qadir. This magazine is renowned for featuring numerous articles on tafsir studies, authored by Al Washliyah ulama of that time. In addition to tafsir, the magazine also

⁴⁷ Interview with Imam Yazid, Arwin Juli Rakhmadi Butar-butur, and Fathimah Ibrahim, June 22, 2023. They are former students of Madrasah Al-Qismul 'Ali Al Washliyah.

⁴⁸ Universitas Al-Washliyah, *Lustrum VI Universitas Al Washliyah 18 Mei 1958-18 Mei 1988*, ed. Nukman Sulaiman (Medan: UNIVA Medan, 1988), 63.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 45, 358-360.

encompassed other sections such as hadith, history, comparative religion, and updates on the development of Al Washliyah outside of Medan.

During the period from 1933 to 1939, *Medan Islam* magazine published a series of articles on the Quranic exegesis. Here are some of the titles of the articles that were published in the magazine:

1. "Tafsir Soerah El-Dloeha" by H. Abdullah Siradj.
2. "Soerat Al-Zalزالah" by Abdoel Wahab.
3. "Di Sekeliling Al-Quran" by Zainal Arifin Abbas.
4. "Soeratul Hamazah" by Abdoel Wahab
5. "Soeratul Lahab" by Abdoel Wahab
6. "Al-Qoeranoel Karim" by Abdul Halim Hasan
7. "Soeratul Baqarah" by A.W. (Abdoel Wahab)
8. "Ilmoe Tafsir" by Adnan Lubis.

The eight articles above were written by Al Washliyah ulama and Islamic scholars from the Al-Ittihadiyah organization. Additionally, most of the article titles above were published in series, especially the articles entitled "Tafsir Soerah El-Dloeha," "Soeratul Baqarah," and "Ilmoe Tafsir," which were published in several series. This confirms that Medan Islam has become one of the platforms for the development of Quranic exegesis studies in Indonesia. Moreover, the magazine has also published several articles on errors in Christianity dogma, serving as further evidence that the magazine has become a medium for anti-Christian propaganda in East Sumatra. Chalidjah Hasanuddin stated that the goal of Medan Islam is "to educate members in the field of Islamic knowledge, but equally important is the propagation of Islam in areas where there are few or no Muslims." Therefore, individuals chosen to lead the magazine have always tended to be strong-minded and strongly anti-Christian.

Additionally, one of the Al Washliyah ulama also published an Islamic magazine called *Dewan Islam*. This magazine was led by M. Arsjad Th. Lubis and was not part of Al Washliyah's official program. However, it was led by an Al Washliyah ulama and published articles by Al Washliyah ulama. Therefore, this magazine can be categorized as an Al Washliyah magazine or, at the very least, a magazine closely related to the Al Washliyah organization. It was first published in the month of Zulqa'edah 1353/February 1935. The full name of the magazine is *Dewan Islam: Madjallah Boelanan Berdasarkan Islam*. M. Arsjad Th. Lubis served as the editor-in-chief, while Moehammad Sa'ad was the administrator. The magazine's office was located on Jalan Japaris, Medan, and it was printed by Indische Drukkerij Medan. The magazine covered news and featured numerous articles on Islamic themes, including Quranic exegesis. For example, the editor-in-chief

of the *Dewan Islam*, issue 44, August 1938, published an article on the interpretation of Surat al-Anfâl verses 2-4, and an article on Surat al-Azhâb verse 40 in the previous issue.

Al Washliyah Ulama and Quranic Exegesis

Al Washliyah ulama, such as M. Arsjad Th. Lubis, Adnan Lubis (d. 1966), Yusuf Ahmad Lubis, Nukman Sulaiman, and Hamdan Abbas have authored several books on the Quran and Quranic exegesis. They were all students of Shaykh Hasan Ma'sum, who taught Quranic exegesis at Madrasah al-Hasaniyah and Masjid Raya al-Mashun in Medan during the early 20th century. Although their works of tafsir were not officially published by Al Washliyah, they were published by various publishers in Medan such as Islamiyah. However, these works became important references for students of Al Washliyah.

Al Washliyah ulama played a significant role in preserving and advancing the study of Quranic exegesis in East Sumatra during the early 20th century. Shaykh Hasan Ma'sum, their esteemed teacher, taught *Tafsîr Jalâlain* at Madrasah Al-Hasaniyah and Masjid Raya al-Mashun in Medan during that era. His efforts were followed by his students through the Al Washliyah organization where the teachers at the madrasa belonging to this organization also taught the tafsir book. Notably, Nukman Sulaiman, one of Shaykh Hasan Ma'sum's students, taught this subject for 13 years. Additionally, Sulaiman authored at least two books on Quranic studies titled *Lailatul Qadar (Menurut Al-Quran, Al-Hadith dan Ulama)* and *Al-Qur'an: Mukjizat yang Kekal*. Another student of Shaykh Hasan Ma'sum was M. Arsjad Th. Lubis, was known as a jurist (*fâqih*), but he also wrote at least three books on Quranic studies, namely *Pelajaran Tajwid Untuk Murid-murid Bahagian al-Tajhiziyah, Himpunan Doa Nabi-nabi dan Orang-orang Saleh dalam Al-Qur'an*, and *Pedoman Mati Menurut Al-Qur'an dan Hadis*. Shaykh Yusuf Ahmad Lubis, also a student of Shaykh Hasan Ma'sum, authored several books on the Quran and its interpretation, including *Tafsîr Soerat al-Ma'oen*, *Tafsîr Surah Wa al-Ashr*, *Tafsîr Surah Nur*, *Tafsîr Surah al-Fatihah*, and *Pendjelasan Kitab Suci Al-Qur'an (Tentang Yesus/Kristen/Pendeta2nya)*. M. Arsjad Th. Lubis and Yusuf Ahmad Lubis also produced one book entitled *al-Qur'an: Pedoman Hidup & Mukjizat Nabi yang Besar*. Another prominent Al Washliyah ulama, Adnan Lubis, focused extensively on the study of the Quran and its interpretation. He produced two books entitled *Tafsîr al-Qur'an al-Karim: Surat Jaasin* and *Tafsîr Djuz Amma: 'Amma Yatasa'alun*. Adnan Lubis also contributed several articles on Quranic interpretation, which were published in well-known Islamic magazines in Medan, namely *Medan Islam*, and *Al-Islam*. For example, "Surah al-Azhab" by Adnan Lubis in *Al-Islam*, No. 13, February 25, 1956. Adnan Lubis, born in 1966, was an alumnus of Nadwatul Ulama University in Lucknow, India. Additionally, Hamdan Abbas, an alumnus of Madrasah al-Shaulatiyah in Mecca, made a valuable contribution with at least one work titled *Ushûl Tafsîr*. Unfortunately, their works have not been republished.

Additionally, Al Washliyah's influential ulama in the contemporary era, namely M. Ridwan Ibrahim Lubis, Ramli Abdul Wahid, and M. Hasballah Thaib, also have made significant contributions to the study of the Quran and Quranic exegesis. M. Ridwan Ibrahim Lubis, who previously served as the General Chairman of the Executive Board of Al Washliyah (1986-1997), has authored books such as *al-Akhlaq al-Qur'an: Pembinaan Akhlaqul Qur'an Untuk Remaja*, *al-Akhlaq al-Qur'an: Pembinaan Akhlaqul Qur'an Untuk Para Pemimpin*, and *al-Akhlaq al-Qur'an: Pembinaan Akhlaqul Qur'an Untuk Pemuda dan Mahasiswa*. Ramli Abdul Wahid, the former Chairman of the Al Washliyah Fatwa Council (2015-2020), has also written a book on Quranic sciences titled *Ulumul Qur'an*. Furthermore, M. Hasballah Thaib, a student of M. Arsjad Th. Lubis, has authored several volumes of a book titled *Tafsir Tematik Al-Qur'an*. His son, Zamakhshari bin Hasballah Thaib, has also written multiple books on the Quran and its interpretation. Therefore, Al Washliyah ulama have contributed to the study of the Quran and its interpretation in Indonesia.

Conclusion

This study shows that Al Washliyah ulama in the early 20th century contributed to the development of Quranic exegesis studies in Indonesia. They utilized Al Washliyah madrasas to teach the books of tafsir, established Islamic magazines, namely *Medan Islam* (including *Dewan Islam*), to disseminate Islamic concepts according to the perspective of tafsir, and even wrote several works of tafsir. The tafsir paradigm they developed was the tafsir paradigm according to the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah school and the Shâfi'iyah school. This study also confirms that Al Washliyah and its ulama developed the paradigm of *bayani* epistemology. On the other hand, Al Washliyah did not develop *burhani* and *'irfani* epistemology. As an Islamic organization, Al Washliyah did not affirm the system of Sufism and Sufi orders adopted by the organization and its members, nor did it develop the discipline of Islamic philosophy, although several of its ulama are known to have written books on philosophy, such as Adnan Lubis and Yusuf Ahmad Lubis. This study also shows that Al Washliyah does not yet have an exegete (*mufassir*), although several of its ulama have written books on the interpretation of certain verses or chapters of the Quran. No ulama of this organization has succeeded in writing a complete book of tafsir. Of course, this should be a concern for the leaders of this organization in this era. The organization's educational institutions should be able to produce alumni who are qualified in certain fields of Islamic sciences, including the interpretation of the Quran.

In the context of Max Weber's social action motives, this study found three dominant motives for Al Washliyah ulama to teach and write books and articles on Quranic exegesis. The three motives are social action motives: instrumentally rational, value rational, and traditional. First, they have judged that Muslims need to understand the Quran correctly, especially tafsir according to the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah school. Their works on

tafsir are written in Indonesian to serve as guidelines and provide knowledge and enlightenment to Muslims in Indonesia. Teaching tafsir in Al Washliyah madrasas and publishing works on Quranic exegesis are their most rational efforts and choices to realize *dharurat al-khams*. Second, their teaching and their works have contained a wide range of religious values, but they only teach and write the interpretation of the Quran according to the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah and Shâfi'iyah paradigms because both are the organization's principles in the fields of creed (Islamic theology) and fiqh. Third, the data shows that Al Washliyah ulama have utilized and determined the books of tafsir by Sunni and Shâfi'iyah ulama as references in learning tafsir in Al Washliyah madrasas. Their works have also been influenced by the exegetical works of leading mufasirs in the Islamic world. In this case, they have acted as preservers of the traditional Islamic tafsir treasures. They are the successors of the tradition of interpretation developed by the Sunni-Shâfi'iyah mufasirs. In the context of power domination, Al Washliyah ulama have scientific authority in the field of tafsir and have been recognized by the members of the organization. As the successors to the tradition of tafsir according to the Sunni-Shâfi'iyah school, they have established the works of Sunni-Shâfi'iyah mufasirs as compulsory literature in Al Washliyah madrasas. The tafsir works have become the main reference as stipulated in the Al Washliyah madrasah education curriculum. The curriculum must be adhered to by the managers of Al Washliyah madrasas in Indonesia with the argument that the curriculum is the result of organizational decisions that must be obeyed without exception. The charisma of Al Washliyah ulama is certainly also highly recognized by the members of this organization. Therefore, their decisions about the tafsir literature that needs to be taught in Al Washliyah educational institutions and their works on the Quran and tafsir of the Quran have been accepted and followed by members of the organization voluntarily. Finally, of course, other researchers need to continue this research topic in the future. This study has not examined the thoughts of Al Washliyah ulama on certain concepts in the Quran. Several works of Quranic exegesis written by Al Washliyah ulama, especially by Adnan Lubis and Yusuf Ahmad Lubis, also need to be studied specifically by other researchers in the future, especially since this two ulama are quite influential in the Al Washliyah organization, an Islamic organization supported by millions of Muslims in Indonesia today.

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