

A Study of the Living Qur'an: Understanding Wasilah Among the Suluk Naqshbandiyah Congregation in Pasaman Barat

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Abstract

This study aims to examine in depth the interpretation and practice of Qur'anic verses related to the concept of *wasilah* within the spiritual life of the Naqshbandi *suluk* community in West Pasaman Regency. Employing the Living Qur'an approach, this research seeks to explore how the sacred text of the Qur'an is not only read and understood theoretically but also actualized in tangible ritual and spiritual experiences within the Sufi order. The main focus of this study is the community's interpretation of two Qur'anic verses Surah Al-Mā'idah [5]:35 and Surah Al-Isrā' [17]:57 and how the meanings of these verses are internalized and applied across various aspects of spiritual life, including in the spiritual literature used by the followers. This research adopts a qualitative methodology with a phenomenological approach, allowing the researcher to understand the subjective religious experiences of the participants. The findings reveal that *wasilah* is understood as a means of drawing closer to Allah through the guidance of a *mursyid*, the practice of *dhikr*, and a consistent and structured journey of self-purification through *suluk* practices.

Living Qur'an; Wasilah; Suluk Naqshbandiyah

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji secara mendalam pemaknaan dan praktik ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an yang berkaitan dengan konsep wasilah dalam kehidupan spiritual jama'ah suluk Tarekat Naqshbandiyah di Kabupaten Pasaman Barat. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan Living Qur'an, studi ini berupaya menelusuri bagaimana teks suci Al-Qur'an tidak hanya dibaca dan dipahami secara teoritis, tetapi juga dihidupkan dalam bentuk pengalaman ritual dan spiritual yang konkret dalam lingkungan tarekat. Fokus utama penelitian ini adalah pada penafsiran jama'ah terhadap dua ayat Al-Qur'an, yaitu QS. Al-Mā'idah [5] ayat 35 dan QS. Al-Isrā' [17] ayat 57, serta bagaimana kandungan makna ayat-ayat tersebut diinternalisasi dan diterapkan dalam berbagai aspek kehidupan spiritual, termasuk dalam literatur rohani yang digunakan oleh jama'ah. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologis, yang memungkinkan peneliti memahami pengalaman keagamaan secara subjektif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa wasilah dimaknai sebagai sarana untuk mendekatkan diri kepada Allah melalui bimbingan mursyid, amalan dzikir, dan proses penyucian jiwa melalui praktik suluk secara terarah dan berkesinambungan.

Kata Kunci: Living Qur'an; Wasilah; Suluk Naqshbandiyah

INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an is a divine revelation from Allah, delivered through His Messenger to all of humanity. It serves as glad tidings and contains comprehensive guidance for worshipping Allah alone. Additionally, it includes warnings intended to direct and guide mankind toward the path of righteousness (Manna', 2016). Indeed, the primary source of guidance for human life is the Noble Qur'an. It contains promises for those who follow it with sincere faith, leading them to a life of

dignity and honour. This obedience is ultimately aimed at attaining the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala. Among the deeds beloved to Allah is drawing closer to Him through means that He approves of. As Allah states in the Qur'an:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

"And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me." (Surah Adz-Dzariyat [51]: 56)

This verse emphasizes that the fundamental purpose of human creation is to worship Allah, serve Him, and seek His forgiveness alone. Worship, in this context, entails complete obedience and submission to all that Allah has commanded. It is not limited to ritual acts, but encompasses a broad spectrum of human life. Acts of worship include the relationship between humans and Allah commonly referred to as *ubudiyah* as well as interpersonal dealings (*mu'amalah*), and even one's interaction with the natural world. All of these, when carried out in accordance with divine guidance, are considered forms of worship (Rosidin, 2020).

The Qur'an is not only revered as a holy book containing divine guidance for Muslims, but it is also manifested in various aspects of human life through its implementation and interpretation. This dynamic interaction with the Qur'anic text is referred to as the Living Qur'an, a concept that highlights how the Qur'an is actively brought to life through religious rituals, social practices, and everyday experiences. Over the past two decades, the Living Qur'an has emerged as a significant area of academic inquiry, particularly among scholars of Qur'anic studies in Indonesia (Riza, 2025). This discourse has been widely explored in various academic forums, including seminars, research projects, and scholarly publications. At the core of the term *Living Qur'an* is the concept of *al-Qur'an al-hayy*, or the "living Qur'an," which refers to the Qur'an not merely as a text to be read or interpreted, but as a divine message that is actively embodied in the daily practices and lived experiences of Muslims.

An intriguing aspect of the study of the Living Qur'an is the understanding and practice of the concept of *wasilah*, commonly referred to as *tawassul* (seeking a means). In Islam, prayer (*du'a*) is highly encouraged as it is a form of worship that draws a person closer to Allah SWT. Within this act of supplication, the mention of an intermediary or means, known as *wasilah*, is often present. This reflects a nuanced theological and spiritual practice embraced by many Muslims (Fatonah, 2021). This practice of *wasilah* is one of the methods of praying and one of the ways of *tawajjuh* to Allah SWT. The real purpose of *tawassul* is Allah SWT, and to reach Allah, something is needed to act as an intermediary, such as names and attributes and other righteous deeds (Mahda & Bashori, 2024).

Tasawuf or Sufism, as the core dimension of spirituality in Islam, emphasises the purification of the soul through various rituals and specific practices in order to draw closer to Allah. Among the various Sufi orders that exist, the *Naqshbandi* Order stands out for its structured spiritual guidance and strong discipline, particularly through the practices of *suluk* (spiritual retreat) and *tawajjuh* (meditative concentration) (Sari & Naldo, 2024). In the study of *Suluk* and *Tarekat*, it is emphasised that, in essence, religion begins with *ma'rifat* to Allah SWT, that is, knowing and remembering Him with all one's heart. This *ma'rifat* is not merely intellectual knowledge, but a deep inner awareness of the presence and attributes of Allah. This process also involves self-

knowledge, as in the Sufi perspective, knowing oneself is the path to knowing God (Rahima & Salam, 2023).

People who practise *suluk* are generally followers of a particular *ṭariqah* (Sufi order). The term *suluk* itself is nearly synonymous with *ṭariqah*, as both refer to a method or spiritual path to reach Allah (Betri et al., 2024). The term 'suluk' in this article refers to the activities and systems practised in the Naqshbandi Order. The Naqshbandi Suluk adheres to six core principles in pursuing the spiritual path, namely: *ma'rifat* (knowledge of Allah), *yaqin* (certainty), *sakha* (generosity), *shidq* (truthfulness), *syukur* (gratitude), and *tafakkur* (contemplation) (Nasir, 2024). These principles serve as spiritual guidelines that guide saliks (spiritual seekers) towards spiritual perfection and intimacy with Allah.

The Naqshabandiyah Tariqat is one of the Sufi Tariqats with a large following in Indonesia, including in the Pasaman Barat region. In the teachings of this order, suluk or spiritual journey is an integral part of drawing closer to Allah. One concept that frequently emerges in their spiritual practices is *wasilah*, which refers to an intermediary in prayer or drawing closer to Allah through various means, such as a spiritual guide (mursyid), *zikir*, and prayer. This practice of *tawaasul* is common in Muslim communities, particularly among the spiritual community of the Naqshabandiyah Tariqat in Pasaman Barat District. The Naqshabandiyah spiritual community in Batang TIPO Village, Simpang Empat, Pasaman Barat, is one such community that strongly incorporates the concept of *wasilah* into their spiritual practices.

In their daily lives, this congregation uses various forms of *wasilah* such as prayer, *zikir*, and *tawassul* through a shaykh or wali as intermediaries to attain the blessings and pleasure of Allah. Although there are variations in the understanding of means among Muslim communities, within the Suluk Naqshabandiyah community, the use of means is highly valued as part of a tradition passed down through generations.

Understanding of *wasilah* is often a topic of discussion in Islamic studies. On the one hand, this concept is accepted and practised by many Sufis as part of the path to closeness to Allah. However, on the other hand, there are perspectives that question the legitimacy of this practice from an Islamic theological standpoint. Therefore, it is important to investigate how the Naqshbandiyah Pasaman Barat spiritual congregation understands the concept of *wasilah* within the context of the Living Quran, as well as how this concept is implemented in their spiritual lives.

It is very important to examine how *wasilah* influences the lives of the congregation of a tariqat. The Naqshabandiyah tariqat in Hutarimbaru Village is one form of tariqat which, based on the research results of Muhammad Nasir, shows high effectiveness for all levels of society. This is due to the teachings of the order, which emphasise the mastery of knowledge and the practice of *zikir*, aimed at purifying the heart and drawing closer to Allah SWT. (Nasir, 2024). In terms of content, the teachings are simple and easy to practise, making them accessible and applicable to people from all walks of life, regardless of age, educational background, or profession.

Human beings, characterized by inherent limitations, weaknesses, and the propensity for error, are fundamentally incapable of establishing a direct relationship with the Most Sacred and Transcendent Being, namely Allah SWT. In His mercy, Allah has provided a means of access through the intermediaries of His Messengers, who function as spiritual and communicative

conduits between humanity and the Divine (Betri et al., 2024). In this context, *wasilah* is not solely understood as a physical entity or figure, but also encompasses internal means such as *zikir*, supplication (*du'a*), and other spiritual practices that serve to bridge the servant's aspiration to attain closeness to Allah SWT. Accordingly, this study aims to explore the conceptualization of *wasilah* within the Naqshabandiyah Sufi congregation in Pasaman Barat, examining both the interpretive approaches to Qur'anic verses related to *wasilah* and the practical implementation of *wasilah* in their spiritual exercises.

METHOD

This research is categorized as field research because it was conducted directly at the location where the phenomenon occurred, with the aim of exploring and understanding the realities surrounding a specific issue. The approach used was a case study with qualitative methods, an approach that produces descriptive data in the form of oral and written narratives obtained from informants or research subjects.

This study was conducted in Pasaman Barat Regency, West Sumatra Province. The regency's administrative centre is located in Simpang Ampek. This area is crossed by the equator, precisely at latitude 0⁰, which gives it unique geographical characteristics. The total area of Pasaman Barat Regency spans approximately 3,887.77 km², with a marine water area of around 800.47 km², highlighting its geographical potential and natural resources. The Naqsyabandiyah Tariqat is one of the well-known and widely appreciated Tariqat among the community in Simpang Empat, Pasaman Barat Regency, West Sumatra (Siregar, 2018). Its existence not only reflects the richness of Islamic spiritual traditions in the region, but also demonstrates its important role in the religious and social life of the local community.

This study focuses on analysing the meaning of *wasilah* and implementation of *tawassul* practices in the Naqshabandiyah Sufi tariqat ritual. Data analysis was carried out through three main stages that ran simultaneously, namely: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data validity was obtained through a triangulation process or re-examination of the data that had been collected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Definition of Wasilah

The terms '*wasilah*' and '*tawassul*' are two inseparable concepts. "*Wasilah*" means an intermediary or a means, while '*tawassul*' refers to the act of seeking proximity to Him (Allah) through an intermediary (*wasilah*). *Tawassul* has been a practice since the advent of Islam, which is why there are numerous textual evidences (*dalil naqli*) discussing this concept. Before delving too deeply into the topic, it is essential to first clarify the meaning of *tawassul*. The term '*wasilah*' originates from the Arabic word (الوسيلة), which has multiple meanings, including: a position by the king's side, rank, and drawing closer to Allah the Almighty (Munawwir, 1997). Meanwhile, the terminological meaning is to do things that can bring one closer to Allah SWT by performing acts of worship that are pleasing to Allah and following His prophets and messengers (Djaelani, 1996). *Tawassul* is also interpreted as seeking forgiveness from Allah through an intermediary, whether in the form of righteous deeds, worship, or through a righteous person whom we consider to be

closer to Allah. Thus, tawassul serves as the gateway and intermediary for prayers to reach Allah SWT.

As stated by M. Nashiruddin al-Albani, the term tawassul is an Arabic phrase found in the Quran and Hadith, and is frequently mentioned by Arabs in their daily lives. It signifies drawing near to the desired goal and achieving it through great effort. Ibn Atsir, as cited by al-Albani in his book *al-Nihayah*, defines 'wasilah' linguistically as an approach, an intermediary, and something that can be used to draw closer to a particular matter (Al-'Ulyani, 2003).

From the perspective of *usul fiqh*, *تواصل* (intermediary) is a general term, meaning various intermediaries. The word *al-wasilah* can mean anything that Allah has made a means of closeness to Him and an intermediary for the fulfilment of needs from Allah. It can be used as a means if it is given status and glory by Allah (Nurhikmah, 2020).

Efforts to draw closer to Allah SWT are an integral part of a Muslim's life journey (Badaruddin & Mahyuddin, 2022). One of the ways provided by Allah SWT to achieve spiritual closeness is through the use of *wasilah* or intermediaries in worship. In the Sufi tradition, the concept of tawassul has an important position and is closely related to the practice of tarekat life. Every ritual performed within a tarekat is strongly connected to the values of tawassul in Islam, as reflected in various aspects such as the practice of *zikir*, spiritual lineage, and the recitation of *hizb* and *manāqib*. Thus, it can be understood that within a Tarekat or Suluk, the role of *wasilah* is highly fundamental.

Understanding Wasilah According to Suluk Naqshabandiyah in West Pasaman

Wasilah and *tawassul* are terms that are familiar among Muslims as efforts made to draw closer to Allah (Nurmayanti & Rofi'i, 2025). One of the places that practises *tawassul* is the Suluk Naqshabandiyah congregation, which is the name of a religious order located in Batang Tipu Village, Simpang Empat, West Pasaman Regency.



Figure 1. The location of *Persulukan/Mushalla* Maulana Shiddiqin, Batang Tipu

In the Naqshbandiyah suluk, there is a figure known as the Mursyid, who serves as the leader of the suluk community and acts as a teacher guiding students to achieve closeness with Allah SWT. The Mursyid who leads this suluk community is Sheikh H. Muhammad Shaleh Tuanku Khalifah Al-Khalidi Naqshbandi. There is also what is known as a Khalifah, who is similar to a Mursyid but ranks below the Mursyid in terms of authority, or can be said to be a deputy to the *Mursyid*.



Figure 2. Chairman of Suluk Naqshbandiyah Maulana Shiddiqin Mosque

In Naqshbandiyah Sufism, *wasilah/tawassul* is a familiar concept, and there is no difference between *wasilah* and *tawassul* in Sufism; they refer to it as *rabithah*. Etymologically, *Rābiṭah* comes from the Arabic word *الرابطة* (connection and bond) (Nur, 2021). According to the term explained by Maulana Sheikh Muhammad Amin al-Kurdi, *Rābiṭah* mursyid is an effort to maintain the honour of the mursyid with full respect in order to obtain spiritual enlightenment from him. In other words, *Rābiṭah* mursyid is the attachment of the student's heart to the mursyid's heart, accompanied by a readiness to receive blessings from him.

According to Sheikh Muhammad Shaleh Tuanku Khalifah Al-Khalidi Naqshbandi, *Rabithah* is *tawassul* to teachers or saints of Allah, as well as the companions, and ultimately to the Prophet Muhammad. The practice of *Rabithah* involves briefly gazing at or visualising the face of the spiritual teacher while engaged in *dhikr*, whether the teacher is still alive or has passed away. *Rabithah* is an essential aspect of one's spiritual practice that is never overlooked when following a spiritual path or *tarekat*.

This study is based on verses from the Qur'an about Wasilah found in Surah Al-Maidah verse 35 and Surah Al-Isra' verse 57.

a. QS. Al-Ma'idah [5] verse 35

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

"O you who believe! Fear Allah and seek the means (*wasilah*) of drawing near to Him, and strive in His cause so that you may attain success." (Qur'an, Surah al-Ma'idah [5]: 35)

Based on interviews conducted by researchers with Sheikh Muhammad Shaleh Tuanku Khalifah Al-Khalidi Naqshabandi as *mursyid*, this verse is not merely a call to piety, but more broadly a guide on how a servant should pursue a spiritual path in a focused manner. "Seek the Means" in this verse is understood as a clear command for every believer to follow the path already indicated by the scholars who can guide them towards closeness to Allah SWT.

He also emphasised that the concept of *wasilah* in the Qur'an, as in Surah Al-Ma'idah verse 35 ("O you who believe! Fear Allah and seek *wasilah* to Him"), is valid and correct, and the Qur'an is the foundation of the teachings of the Naqshbandi Order, which states, 'If it deviates from the Qur'an, its perspective is invalid and not recognised. This verse is also in line with the teachings of the Naqshbandi Order."

Then he said that the verses of *wasilah* should not be interpreted as intermediaries that replace the role of Allah, but as means prescribed to obtain His mercy and guidance. They also emphasised the importance of etiquette in seeking *wasilah*, namely with sincerity and obedience to the spiritual guide. He also stated that *wasilah* can take the form of: remembrance (*dzikir*) taught through a chain of transmission, obedience to the spiritual guide, as a form of etiquette towards the path of knowledge and spiritual guidance provided, and structured spiritual training witnessed by the spiritual guide.

The above verse can also be understood as a means of drawing closer to Allah through the guidance of a *mursyid*. They believe that a *mursyid* who has a clear chain of knowledge can be a means for students to achieve *makrifat*. The *mursyid* also acts as a link for a student so that he can draw closer to Allah through the guidance of the *mursyid*.

In line with the opinion of Ustadz Ijaf, the caliph of the Naqshbandiyah order, this verse serves as the primary foundation for the spiritual journey of the order. According to him, 'seek the means' implies that worship alone is insufficient without valid and authentic guidance. The means can be understood as a tool to attain the station of gnosis, which can only be achieved through the guidance of a teacher and spiritual discipline. In practice, *wasilah* can mean our obedience to what the teacher conveys, practising the path with proper etiquette, and performing *dhikr* under the guidance and authorisation of the teacher or *mursyid*. This caliph also explains that the methods of the Naqshbandi order, such as *khafi dhikr* (*dhikr* in the heart), are forms of *wasilah* that are directly connected to Allah. He also cited the story of Prophet Adam's *tawassul* by mentioning the name of Prophet Muhammad when he sought forgiveness from Allah for his mistake. He also cited a hadith

explaining that the Companions also sought *tawassul* through the Prophet Muhammad during his lifetime and after his passing through prayers and supplications to Allah.

b. QS. Al-Isra' [17] Ayat 57

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ يَبْتَغُونَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيلَةَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ وَيَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَهُ وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَهُ إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ كَانَ مَحْذُورًا

"Those whom they call upon seek a means of access to their Lord as to which of them is nearest. They hope for His mercy and fear His punishment. Indeed, the punishment of your Lord is ever to be feared."
(Qur'an, Surah al-Isra' [17]: 57)

Based on interviews conducted by researchers with Sheikh Muhammad Shaleh Tuanku Khalifah Al-Khalidi Naqshabandi, a *mursyid*, he interpreted this verse as reinforcing the belief that even prophets, angels, and saints seek *wasilah* to Allah. This proves that seeking spiritual intermediaries is not *syirik* but part of the *sunnah*. This verse also refutes the understanding that all intermediaries are *bid'ah* or misleading. Because this verse shows that even the best of creatures also seek intercession, whether through deeds, sincerity, or guidance.

According to Ustadz Ijaf, as the caliph in this spiritual path, this verse indicates that seeking a means (*wasilah*) is an act even performed by noble beings of higher spiritual rank before Allah. Therefore, for a disciple of the order, seeking a means is a form of self-awareness and humility in pursuing the path to Allah. *Wasilah* is not merely a means of access but also a test of patience, steadfastness, and humility for the disciple. Through *wasilah*, Allah grants the path to His mercy.

Implementation of Understanding the Verses of Wasilah in the Practice of the Naqshabandiyah Tariqat

Based on direct interviews conducted by researchers with *Mursyid* and *Khalifah* of the Naqshabandiyah order on 24 March 2025 at the Musholla Maulana Shiddiqiin village of Batang Tipo, West Pasaman, the implementation and practice of *wasilah* is as follows:

a. The Role of the Murshid and Khalifah in Spiritual Guidance

The guidance provided by the *mursyid* and *khalifah* in the Naqshabandiyah Tariqat is a spiritual development process aimed at guiding students in drawing closer to Allah. The *mursyid*, as the leader of the *tariqat*, and the *khalifah*, as his representative, provide guidance in the form of teaching, *talqin zikir*, and advice on morals and worship. They are also advised to follow the qualities of the *mursyid* as long as they remain within the bounds of goodness.

Spiritual guides also play a very important role as a means of bringing their students closer to Allah. 'Students must be guided and not left to their own devices.' Spiritual guides guide their students through good deeds as a form of guidance, where every action and moral behaviour they exemplify becomes a means for students to draw closer to Allah. Through setting an example in modest attire, fostering the habit of praying in congregation at all times, speaking gently and never harshly especially to students maintaining consistent ablution, and never ceasing remembrance of Allah, the spiritual guide must also be patient and steadfast. This guidance helps students navigate their spiritual journey correctly in

accordance with Sufi teachings, enabling them to achieve purity of heart and a deeper understanding of the knowledge of Allah.

b. *Dzikr* and *Rabithah*

Dzikr in the tariqat is performed by incorporating *rabithah* to seek intercession from the Prophet Muhammad SAW, the saints, and the mursyid as a form of respect and supplication for the acceptance of their worship by Allah. This *rabithah* can be performed before beginning to recite the prescribed *Dzikrs*. Before performing *Dzikr*, the members of the spiritual community gathered at the Maulana Shiddiqin mosque perform several *Dzikr* practices such as:

- 1) Purify from all impurities and be in a state of wudhu.
- 2) Performing the sunnah prayer of wudhu
- 3) Performing the sunnah prayer of Repentance (*taubat*)
- 4) Performing Sunnah prayers as a means of seeking divine guidance (*hidayah*)
- 5) Sit cross-legged (*Tawarruk*) facing the qibla and in a sacred place.
- 6) Hold the prayer beads and recite the *istighfar* (prayer of forgiveness) 5 times, 15 times, or 25 times, asking for forgiveness for all sins that have been committed.
- 7) Read Al-Fatihah once.
- 8) Recite Surah Al-Ikhlâs 3 times, then supplicate to Allah to bestow the reward of this recitation upon:
 - a) The reward of the first recitation is dedicated to the Prophet Muhammad, as a means of seeking blessings (*tabarruk*)
 - b) The reward of the second recitation is dedicated to one's parents, as a means of seeking blessings (*tabarruk*).
 - c) The reward of the third recitation is dedicated to all the spiritual teachers (*mashayikh*) of the Naqshabandi Tariqat.
- 9) Close both eyes, press your lips together, and stick your tongue to the roof of your mouth so that you are completely focused and your intentions are directed solely towards Allah.
- 10) Engaging in *Rabitah Qubur*: Contemplating the Self as Already Deceased
- 11) Performing '*Rabitah Mursyid*' binds the heart of the perfect teacher who has perfect love for Allah and whose prayers ask for blessings from Allah. The teacher is an intermediary to convey to his students. Everything comes from Allah; the teacher is only a cause.
- 12) Pray to Allah by reading *إِلَهَ أَنْتَ مَقْصُودِي وَرِضَاكَ مَطْلُوبِي*
- 13) Recite the dhikr '*Allah*' 500 times daily, both during the day and at night.

Kaifiyat plays a central role in the implementation of *wasilah suluk*. Every congregation is encouraged to carry out all the *kaifiyat* that have been established precisely, because *kaifiyat* is not merely technical, but reflects spiritual etiquette and respect for the spiritual traditions that have been passed down. In the context of *tawassul* through the recitation of *hizib*, deviations such as reducing the number of repetitions that have been determined are not necessarily considered an absolute violation. However, deviations from the established

kaifiyat have the potential to reduce the perfection of the act and the spiritual faḍīlah (virtue) that accompanies it (Hipzon, 2024).

This is closely related to the practices of dhikr and *rabiṭah* in the tariqa. From a Sufi perspective, dhikr is not merely the repetition of words, but a spiritual practice that is subject to certain rules of *kaifiyah* including procedures, etiquette, and the continuity of the spiritual chain of transmission from teacher to student. Therefore, maintaining kaifiyat is a form of safeguarding the spirit and etiquette of *suluk*, which not only connects the disciple to Allah but also connects them to the blessings of the *masyayikh* through the preserved *rabiṭah* channel.

Then, perform dhikr while maintaining rabithah. Glance at or visualise the face of the teacher, whether he is still alive or has passed away, as commonly referred to in the teachings of the tariqa. In the teachings of the Naqshbandi tariqa, there are several maqams that must be purified to achieve the perfection of dhikr. These maqams (places) are found in seven locations, namely:

- 1) *Maqām al-Qalbi*, located on the left side of the chest, approximately two finger-widths below the left breast.
- 2) *Maqām al-Rūḥ*, located on the right side of the chest, approximately two finger-widths below the right breast.
- 3) *Maqām al-Khaṭī*, located on the left side of the chest, approximately two finger-widths above the left breast.
- 4) *Maqām al-Sirr*, located on the right side of the chest, approximately two finger-widths above the right breast.
- 5) *Maqām al-Akḥfā*, located in the center of the chest.
- 6) *Maqām Nafs al-Nāṭiqah*, located between the center of the forehead and the eyes.
- 7) *Kullu al-Jasad*, located at the crown of the head, representing the integration of the whole being.

These maqams need to be filled with dhikr. In the Naqshbandiyyah order, there are seven levels of dhikr that are taught to fill these seven maqams, namely:

- 1) *Ismu Dzat (toriqoh zikr)*, which involves reciting the word ‘Allah’ 5,000 (five thousand) times. Among the stations where this dhikr is recited are: the station of the heart (*maqam qolbi*) 5,000 (five thousand) times a day and night. The heart is the first to be purified because it contains many spiritual ailments that must be cleansed, such as envy, jealousy, and resentment. This *ismu dzat* dhikr is specifically dedicated to the heart alone. This dhikr is typically performed when first beginning the spiritual practice of suluk.
- 2) *Dzikir Lathaif*, this dzikir encompasses all existing maqams. It begins with reciting the dzikir 5,000 times, followed by the *ruh maqam* 1,000 times, the *khafi maqam* 1,000 times, the *sirr maqam* 1,000 times, the *akhfa maqam* 1,000 times, the *nafsun natiqah* station 1,000 times, and the *kullu jasad* station 1,000 times. When all the dzikirs are added together, they total 11,000, commonly referred to as the 11 (Eleven) dzikir. The inner tongue is trained to recite the dzikir. This Eleven Dzikir is performed in one sitting without interruption and must be done while in a state of wudhu. This dzikir is also known as

the Lathaif Dzikir. It is performed with eyes closed, the tongue pressed against the roof of the mouth, and the gaze directed inward toward the inner self reciting the word 'Allah.' If this dhikr is interrupted before the count reaches eleven thousand, then the dhikr is considered invalid and must be repeated from the beginning.

- 3) Nafi Isbat, which is dhikr by reciting the phrase "la illahaillallah" in a single breath, with the essence of the dhikr imagined as follows: "la" is drawn from the navel and continued upward to the head, then the recitation of "ilaha" is directed to the right shoulder, "illa" to the chest, and "Allah" is struck into the heart. Thus, the journey of this remembrance is akin to the shape of the letter لا. This Nafi Isbat remembrance consists of four letters: لا, إله, إلا, الله
- 4) Wuquf Dhikr: This dhikr is performed by remaining silent, standing still, and not moving the tasbeih. Those who perform wuquf dhikr remain silent and do not recite any dhikr. The seekers remain silent like those in Wuquf, performing zikr on the plain of Arafah and gazing as though witnessing the presence of Allah approaching. Wuquf zikr is a form of rest, allowing the joints of the body to relax. It involves bringing forth all the subtle faculties and all parts of the body, as well as invoking the essence that has no equal: 'Allah, Allah.'
- 5) Muraqabah Maiyah Dhikr. Dhikr from the higher station to the lower station, reciting 'Hu Allah.' Imagine performing dhikr while walking from the station of the heart to the station of the secret, from the station of the heart to the station of the spirit, continuing until the station of the speaking desire, then descending back to the station of the heart, the most hidden station. This dhikr is recited as many times as possible, with no specific limit on the number of times it is recited.
- 6) Dzikir Tahlil, which is reciting the phrase la illahaillah, the path of maqam that is traversed by dzikir tahlil is qalbi, khafi, sirr, ruh, qalbi. It starts from maqam qalbi, then moves upwards through khafi, sir, ruh and back again to qalbi. The faster one recites the phrase 'la illahaillah,' the path traversed is only the heart and spirit. If compared to the pillars of Hajj, it is like running between Safa and Marwah. For those on the spiritual path, Safa and Marwah are the heart and spirit. This dhikr is recited continuously until it is completed seven times. One completion consists of 70,000 tahlils, and it must be recited at least seven times. During the spiritual journey, the tahlil remembrance that must be recited is 490,000 times. The remembrance is recited aloud, spoken by the tongue and heard by the ears, not in the heart. This tahlil is carefully counted using a tasbeih with 100 beads, using 100 small stones and 7 large stones. The tahlil is the pinnacle of all suluk dzikirs; it is typically performed from the 18th day of fasting until the conclusion of the suluk, when the salik return to their respective homes.

A lack of spiritual nourishment in humans can lead to emotional fragility and a downward spiral in life. To fill this inner void, dhikr is one of the easiest and most effective solutions. As a form of drawing closer to Allah, dhikr can bring peace of mind and protect

a person from psychological pressures such as stress (Zain et al., 2018). More than that, dhikr can be understood as a form of spiritual mediation and a natural means of calming the soul. In essence, every human being is created with a pure heart and soul. Their nature always directs them towards goodness and the straight path. Therefore, through dhikr, humans are invited to realign themselves with their nature and the divine consciousness embedded in their souls.

c. *Rabitah*

The argument for *rabitah* in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Maidah [5] verse 35, is as follows:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

"Those whom they invoke are themselves seeking a means of nearness to their Lord each striving to be the closest. They hope for His mercy and fear His punishment. Indeed, the punishment of your Lord is ever to be feared." (Qur'an, Surah Al-Isra [17]: 57)

The argument for *rabitah* in the hadith is as follows:

كُنْ مَعَ اللَّهِ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ مَعَ اللَّهِ فَكُنْ مَعَ مَنْ كَانَ مَعَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهُ يُؤْصِلُكَ إِلَى اللَّهِ (رواه ابو داود وطبرانی بسند متصل صحيح عن ابن مسعود رضي الله عنه)

"Be with Allah; and if you are unable to reach Allah, then be with those who are close to Him, for they will lead you to Him." (Melayu, 2000).

The purpose of establishing a spiritual connection is not to achieve any result, but rather to dispel doubts from the heart. This is possible when it is accompanied by love (*mahabbah*) for the spiritual guide. If it is devoid of love for the spiritual guide, then it will not be effective in dispelling doubts and worries. There are three ways to establish a spiritual connection, namely: a) Presenting *rabitah*, which means presenting the image of the *mursyid* before us; b) When the image of the *mursyid* is placed in the heart, then he is seen in his true form; c) *Fana'* (remembrance) of the connection is the highest rank and immediately results in *wuquf qalbi*, which leads to divine forgiveness. *Fana'* (remembering) in connection with the spiritual bond leads to *fana'* (remembering) in connection with the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and *fana'* (remembering) in connection with the Prophet Muhammad leads to *fana'* (remembering) in connection with Allah, and *fana'* (remembering) in connection with Allah leads to "*baqa lillab*" (eternal existence for Allah alone). This is the ultimate destination of the spiritual journey of the seeker.

The closest path to Allah is to surrender oneself to Allah ta'ala, which is *mahabbah* to the *mursyid*, meaning to commit oneself to the sheikh who has conveyed the maqam '*baqa billah*'. Then *mahabbah* to the *mursyid* is the path of *rabitah*, as well as continuing to perform *dzikrullah*.

d. *Tawajjuh*

The various techniques in the *Sufi* tradition are based on the expansion of consciousness and spiritual sensitivity. Thus, the *Sufi* approach does not merely direct attention to information, as emphasised by attention economists. One of the core techniques in *Sufi* practice is *tawajjuh*, which William Chittick describes as a process of

inner alignment, spiritual orientation, concentration, or spiritual awareness. Chittick prefers the literal meaning of the term, which is “to turn one's face towards something” (Doyle, 2023). In the context of Sufism, tawajjuh refers to a spiritual concentration practice involving a *murshid* (spiritual guide) and his *murid* (disciple), wherein the disciple directs focused attention towards the *himmah* (spiritual energy or aspiration) of the teacher. This practice often includes the visualization of the name of Allah inscribed on the teacher's forehead, serving as a focal point for meditative concentration. When performed correctly within the framework of an authentic *ṭarīqah* (Sufi order), this exercise is believed to facilitate access to *ḥaqīqat al-tawajjuh*, the true essence of spiritual orientation and divine connection.

Tawajjuh is one form of religious ritual practice that has developed within Muslim communities, particularly in the Indonesian archipelago. Religious life itself can be understood as an attitude of acceptance and recognition of the existence of supernatural forces believed to have extraordinary influence. This belief not only shapes individual and collective behaviour, such as in the performance of prayers and various other forms of worship, but also has a profound impact on the psychological and mental condition of society. Among these influences are the emergence of resignation, fear, positive beliefs, and optimism in living life (Farhan & Ramazana, 2024).

A study made by Shaykh Ahmad Zaruq on various definitions put forward by Sufi scholars shows that even though there are almost two thousand definitions, they can all be summed up in one core meaning, which is sincerity of heart in directing oneself completely to Allah (Mahmood et al., 2020). This finding represents that tawajjuh, which is the complete focus of one's consciousness and heart on Allah, is the main foundation that forms the essence of Sufism teachings. In this framework, tawajjuh is not only interpreted as the first step in the process of purifying the soul, but also becomes the core of a salik's entire spiritual journey. In the end, consistency in tawajjuh gives rise to the highest spiritual experience in the form of *mushahadah* (spiritual witnessing) and *ihsan* (the presence of the heart with Allah in all circumstances), which is the ultimate goal in Sufism.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the Suluk Tarekat Naqshbandiyah congregation in West Pasaman interprets the concept of *wasilah* as a means of drawing closer to Allah through the guidance of a *mursyid*, *dzikir*, *rabithah*, and structured *suluk* practices. The Living Qur'an approach is used to understand how the sacred text is not only interpreted textually, but also brought to life in real spiritual practices. Two key verses serve as the foundation: Surah Al-Mā'idah [5]: 35 and Al-Isrā' [17]: 57. Both are interpreted as divine commands to embark on a spiritual path under spiritual guidance.

For the congregation, the *mursyid* is regarded as a guide to the *wasilah* because he possesses scholarly credentials and spiritual capacity to guide students to attain *maqam ma'rifat* (the station of gnosis). The practices of *dhikr* and *rabithah* are carried out with discipline and in a specific manner, supported by a belief in *barakah* (blessings) and *sanad* (chain of transmission) that connect them to

the Prophet Muhammad and Allah. Additionally, the practice of *tawajjuh* that is, the inward focus on the spiritual guide also plays a crucial role in the spiritual journey.

This study shows that understanding of wasilah in the context of the Naqshabandiyah Tariqat does not stop at the theoretical or argumentative dimension alone, but is rooted in the spiritual life of the congregation from generation to generation. They do not see wasilah as a substitute for the role of God, but as a path that is pleasing to Him to attain His mercy, as long as it is carried out with sincerity and high manners.

The limitation of this study lies in its scope, which only covers one suluk congregation in West Pasaman. Therefore, generalisations about all tarekat practices in Indonesia must be made with caution, given the variations in understanding and practice between tarekat and regions. Recommendations for further research include expanding the study to other tarekat communities, including comparisons between tarekat, as well as examining the psychological and social dimensions of wasilah practices in shaping the character and inner peace of their followers. Interdisciplinary studies are also needed to make the understanding of the Living Qur'an more comprehensive and relevant in the context of contemporary Muslim life.

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