

THE POLITICS OF AHL AS-SUNNAH: ADAPTING THARĪQAH ‘ALAWIYYAH IN INDONESIAN POLITICS

A Thesis

**Submitted to the Master’s Study Program of Islamic Studies Faculty of
Islamic Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of**

Master of Arts (M.A.)



by:

Ahmad Rizki

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UNIVERSITAS ISLAM INTERNASIONAL INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

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Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah is a Sufi order that was initially centered in Hadramaut, Yemen, but has now spread to Indonesia along with the Hadhrami diaspora and is closely associated with the Bā'alawī family. The founder of this order, Imam Faqīh Muqaddam, adopted a passive stance towards politics in the 12th century, setting an example for his followers, even though Imam Haddad later revitalized the order; this passive stance remains strong in Hadramaut to this day. In contrast, some figures of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* in Indonesia are now active in politics, with Habib Luthfi bin Yahya being one of the most prominent. On various occasions, he has expressed his active support for presidential candidates in Indonesian elections. Additionally, under Habib Luthfi, the practices of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* in Indonesia have undergone various adaptations in their rituals and teachings. This thesis will investigate how *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* adapts to the socio-political situation in Indonesia. The thesis aims to illustrate how Habib Luthfi adapts the teachings of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* to support his lineage, Sufism, and politics by answering two main research questions: How did the dynamics of adaptation occur within *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* to accommodate the socio-political conditions in Indonesia before and after independence? How does Habib Luthfi appropriate *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* in dealing with contemporary socio-political developments in Indonesia? This research is conducted through qualitative methods and a historical approach that integrates scientific literature studies with ethnographic research on the adaptation of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* in the socio-political dynamics of Indonesia. This thesis argues that Habib Luthfi has successfully adapted *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* to address the current socio-political dynamics in Indonesia. The thesis contends that *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* in Indonesia has undergone various adaptations and transformations in response to political dynamics, such as colonialism, which limited their activities in the Netherlands East Indies, as well as national issues that required them to assimilate into Indonesian society. A contributing factor to this adaptation is the way Arab culture has acculturated with Indonesian culture. Habib Luthfi also successfully built a hierarchical relationship between the mursyid (spiritual guide) and the murid (spiritual disciple), placing him in a prestigious position within Indonesian Muslim society. His success is inseparable from the mutually beneficial relationship between Habib Luthfi, who, through his hierarchical influence, can maintain national stability, and the state, which assists Habib Luthfi in building his congregation.

Keywords: *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah, Habib Luthfi bin Yahya, Sufism, politics, Indonesia, adaptation.*

سياسة أهل السنة: تكيف طريقة العلوية في السياسة الإندونيسية

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ماجستير في الدراسات الإسلامية

ملخص البحث

الطريقة العلوية هي طريقة صوفية كانت تتمركز في البداية في حضرموت، اليمن، لكنها انتشرت الآن في إندونيسيا مع انتشار الشتات الحضرمي وترتبط ارتباطًا وثيقًا بعائلة باعلوي. مؤسس هذه الطريقة، الإمام فقيه المقدم، تبنى موقفًا سلبيًا تجاه السياسة في القرن الثاني عشر، مما جعله قوة لاتباعه، على الرغم من أن الإمام الحداد قام فيما بعد بإحياء الطريقة؛ ولا يزال هذا الموقف السلبي قويًا في حضرموت حتى اليوم. وعلى النقيض من ذلك، فإن بعض الشخصيات في الطريقة العلوية في إندونيسيا الآن نشطة في السياسة، ويعد الحبيب لطفى بن يحيى من أبرزها. في مناسبات مختلفة، عبر عن دعمه النشط للمرشحين الرئاسيين في الانتخابات الإندونيسية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، شهدت ممارسات الطريقة العلوية في إندونيسيا تحت إشراف الحبيب لطفى عدة تكيفات في طقوسها وتعاليمها. ستحقق هذه الأطروحة في كيفية تكيف الطريقة العلوية مع الوضع الاجتماعي والسياسي في إندونيسيا. تهدف الأطروحة إلى توضيح كيف يقوم الحبيب لطفى بتكييف تعاليم الطريقة العلوية لدعم نسبه، التصوف، والسياسة من خلال الإجابة على سؤالين رئيسيين: كيف حدثت ديناميكيات التكيف داخل الطريقة العلوية لتلبية الظروف الاجتماعية والسياسية في إندونيسيا قبل وبعد الاستقلال؟ كيف يتعامل الحبيب لطفى مع الطريقة العلوية في مواجهة التطورات الاجتماعية والسياسية المعاصرة في إندونيسيا؟ تم إجراء هذا البحث باستخدام منهجيات نوعية ونهج تاريخي يدمج دراسات الأدب العلمي مع بحث إثنوغرافي حول تكيف الطريقة العلوية في الديناميات الاجتماعية والسياسية في إندونيسيا. تجادل هذه الأطروحة بأن الحبيب لطفى قد نجح في تكيف الطريقة العلوية لمواجهة الديناميات الاجتماعية والسياسية الحالية في إندونيسيا. تدعي الأطروحة أن الطريقة العلوية في إندونيسيا قد خضعت لعدة تكيفات وتحولات استجابة للديناميات السياسية، مثل الاستعمار الذي قيد أنشطتها في الهند الشرقية الهولندية، وكذلك القضايا الوطنية التي تطلبت منها الاندماج في المجتمع الإندونيسي. أحد العوامل التي ساهمت في هذا التكيف هو كيفية تفاعل الثقافة العربية مع الثقافة الإندونيسية. نجح الحبيب لطفى أيضًا في بناء علاقة هرمية بين المرشد الروحي والمريد، مما وضعه في مكانة مرموقة في المجتمع الإسلامي الإندونيسي. نجاحه لا يفصل عن العلاقة المتبادلة بين الحبيب لطفى، الذي من خلال تأثيره الهرمي يمكنه الحفاظ على الاستقرار الوطني، والدولة التي تساعد الحبيب لطفى في بناء جماعته.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الطريقة العلوية، الحبيب لطفى بن يحيى، التصوف، السياسة، إندونيسيا، التكيف.

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TRANSLITERATION GUIDE

Arabic	Roman	Arabic	Roman	Arabic	Roman
ا	a	س	s	ل	l
ب	b	ش	sh	م	m
ت	t	ص	s	ن	n
ث	th	ض	d	و	w
ج	j	ط	ṭ	ه	h
ح	ḥ	ظ	ẓ	ي	y
خ	kh	ع	‘		
د	d	غ	gh		
ذ	dh	ف	f		
ر	r	ق	q		
ز	z	ك	k		

Short Vocal

Arab Alphabet	Roman Alphabet	Arabic Example	Transliteration
َ	a	جَلَسَ	<i>jalasa</i>
ِ	i	رَكِبَ	<i>rakiba</i>
ُ	u	كُتِبَ	<i>kutiba</i>

Long Vocal

Arab Alphabet	Roman Alphabet	Arabic Example	Transliteration
يَا	ā	جَرَى	<i>jarā</i>
يِ	ī	سَلِيم	<i>salīm</i>
وِ	ū	سُجُود	<i>sujūd</i>

Diphthong

Arab Alphabet	Roman Alphabet	Arabic Example	Transliteration
و	aw	مَوْلَا	<i>mawlā</i>
ي	ay	غَيْب	<i>ghayb</i>

Notes:

1. Consonant with shaddah (ّ) for instance, أُمَّة is written as *ummah* (double letters).
2. Arabic letter *hamzah* (ء) at the beginning of a word is transliterated into “a” not into “‘a”. For instance, أحمد is written as *aḥmad* not ‘*aḥmad*.
3. Arabic Script of *alif-lam qamariyah* (ال) is written as “al” at the beginning of words and *alif-lam shamsiyah* (ا) is written in accordance with the first letter at the beginning of words. For Instance:
المَائِدَة : al-māidah
الرَّحْمَن : ar-rahmān
4. Arabic letter *ta’ marbutah* (ة) is written as “h” when it is located at the end of the words, such as البَقَرَة is written *al-baqarah*. When located in the middle of a sentence is written as “t”, such as أُمَّة وَسَطًا is written as *ummatan wasaṭan*.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Sufism, a mystical tradition in Islam, has a long and complex history in Indonesia. Its emergence in Indonesia is a multifaceted narrative linked to trade, marriage, and dedicated Sufi teachings. The initial introduction of Sufi principles is believed to have occurred through Middle Eastern Sufis who arrived in Aceh, Sumatra, in the early 10th century or earlier. These Sufi figures played a crucial role in spreading Sufi teachings throughout the Indonesian archipelago, utilizing existing trade routes and building relationships through marriage with local communities. They created a distinctively Indonesian interpretation of Islam by fusing Sufi teachings with regional customs. As evidenced by artifacts resembling those from West Sumatra found in Java, Sulawesi, and Maluku, the spread of Sufism signified not just a theological movement but also a cross-cultural exchange. These artifacts offer hard evidence of the Sufis' significant contributions to Indonesia's social and religious development, which have had a long-lasting impact on the nation's cultural environment.¹

The political climate of the time, which was characterized by long-standing cordial ties between Sufi academics and the monarchs of the Nusantara kingdoms, is intimately linked to the spread of Sufism in Indonesia. In the past, these leaders cultivated relationships with powerful Sufi ulama who shaped Muslim societies in an attempt to gain legitimacy. The monarchs frequently took on the role of patrons, giving *waqfs* (charitable endowments) to aid in the expansion of Sufi establishments like pesantren. Notable Sufi scholars were also assigned to important posts in the government administration. In exchange, the ulama strengthened the sultans' standing in their communities by associating them with larger Islamic intellectual movements. Sufi authority and political power had mutual benefits, which aided in the development and expansion of Sufism throughout Indonesia.²

The primary locations for spreading Sufi teachings and practices throughout the archipelago are *rubat*, *majlis*, and pesantren, traditional Islamic educational institutions. These institutions have grown into all-encompassing Islamic learning institutes over time, providing education in sharia (Islamic law) as well as other Islamic subjects. These establishments either house academics and their pupils or promote close communication and direct knowledge transfer. Beyond traditional classroom learning, these institutes play a vital role in disseminating Sufi teachings, which encompass spiritual practices like *wirid* (special prayers) and *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah). These activities help deepen the disciples' spiritual understanding and experience, as well as strengthen their connection to the *Thariqah* (Sufi order) and the broader Sufi tradition.³

¹ Nurhayati Abd Rasyid and Nurdin Nurdin, "The Diaspora of The Sufis in Indonesia: Moving From Western To Eastern Islands," *International Journal of History and Philosophical Research* 9, no. 1 (2021): 33–45, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3856582>.

² Nurhayati Abd Rasyid and Nurdin Nurdin, "The Diaspora of The Sufis in Indonesia, 33–45.

³ Ismail Fajrie Alatas, "A Ḥadramī Sufi Tradition in The Indonesian Archipelago The Itineraries of Ibn Yahyā (1794–1849) and the Ṭariqa 'Alawiyya," in *Buddhist and Islamic Orders in Southern Asia: Comparative Perspectives* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2019), 20–47.

Additionally, Sufi learning centers, as mentioned earlier, are often affiliated with specific *Thariqah*, or Sufi orders, which have a lineage (chain of initiation) connecting them to earlier Sufi figures. This affiliation means that these *pesantrèn* follow the teachings and practices of that *Thariqah* and are led by a sheikh or spiritual teacher who is part of the *Thariqah's* lineage. The relationship between Sufi learning centers and *Thariqah* has several important implications. It first ensures that Sufi teachings and practices are passed down through the generations in a systematic and uniform manner. Second, Sufi learning centers and their adherents stand out from other Muslim groups because of their affiliation with a *Thariqah*, which provides them a unique identity. Third, the *Tharīqah* offers resources and credibility to the Sufi learning institutions by acting as a network and support system.⁴

Early in the 20th century, Islamic reform organizations that aimed to eradicate *Tharīqah* practices—which they saw as departing from fundamental Islamic teachings—posed a serious threat to Sufism in Indonesia. The *Tharīqah* ceremonies were frequently branded as superstitious or unconventional by these reform initiatives. Furthermore, when Western education institutions proliferated and were perceived as more beneficial for social and economic advancement, traditional Sufi learning centers began to lose their appeal. This change raised grave questions regarding the continued viability and applicability of Sufism in Indonesia in the contemporary day.⁵

In the second part of the 20th century, Sufism had a comeback in spite of these obstacles. It attracted the attention of thinkers, artists, and followers; it became a hot topic in Islamic study circles and gave rise to a surge of "Sufi literature." This renaissance was not accidental; scholars of *Tharīqah* made calculated adjustments to deal with the shifting circumstances.⁶ For instance, Sayyid 'Utsmān bin Yahya attempted to harmonize Sufi teachings with the objectives of the ruling class of the time. He urged adherents of *Tharīqah* to uphold peace and social order by refraining from overthrowing the government and stressed the significance of practicing Sufism correctly. Because of this strategy, Sayyid 'Utsmān now occupies a key role in the Netherlands East Indies administration.⁷

New organizations and forms also contributed to the resurgence of Sufism. Islamic study organizations, such as Majlis Ta'lim, have been instrumental in advancing Sufi customs by incorporating devotional rites like *wirid*. These *wirid* circles attracted a diverse range of people by offering a more casual and approachable way to participate in Sufi practice. Institutions like as the Islamic Center, founded by Habib Ali Kwitang, also

⁴ Alatas, "A Ḥadramī Sufi Tradition in The Indonesian Archipelago The Itineraries of Ibn Yahyā (1794–1849) and the Ṭariqa 'Alawiyya"; Chalmers, "The Islamization of Southern Kalimantan: Sufi Spiritualism, Ethnic Identity, Political Activism."

⁵ Ian Chalmers, "The Islamization of Southern Kalimantan: Sufi Spiritualism, Ethnic Identity, Political Activism," *Studia Islamika - Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies* 14, no. 3 (2007): 371–417.

⁶ Julia Day Howell, "Sufism and the Indonesian Islamic Revival," *Source: The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 60, 2001, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2700107>. Azyumardi Azra, "A Hadhrami Religious Scholar in Indonesia: Sayyid 'Uthmān," in *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s-1960s*, ed. Ulrike Freitag and William G. Clarence-Smith (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 249-263.

⁷ Nico Kaptein, "Arabophobia and the Aversion against the Tarekat: How Sayyid 'Uthmān Became Advisor to the Netherlands Colonial Administration," in *Hadhrami Diaspora in Southeast Asia: Identity Maintenance or Assimilation?*, ed. Ahmed Ibrahim Abu Shouk and Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 22-44.

provided courses and talks on Sufi thinking and practice, creating opportunities for different groups to investigate Sufism. Sufism's adaptation and development, which allowed it to interact with other facets of Indonesian society, have been essential to its survival. Sufism maintains a prominent position in Indonesia's varied religious landscape by offering a route to spiritual depth and human development.

Many studies have been conducted on Sufi *Tharīqahs*, including *Shadhiliyyah*, *Qadiriyya*, and *Naqshbandi*. Nonetheless, there have been very little studies conducted on *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* as a manual for Bā'alawī devotion. However, in the modern Muslim society of Indonesia, this *Tharīqah* is highly valued. Because of their direct ancestry from the Prophet Muhammad, Indonesian Muslims have the highest regard for scholars of this order, known as Bā'alawī. Furthermore, adherents of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* are dispersed throughout Indonesia, and its teachings have had a significant impact on the social and religious lives of Indonesian Muslims.

Regarding this, upon returning from the *kliwonan* gathering led by Habib Luthfi in Pekalongan, the author realized there were significant differences in the practice of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* in Pekalongan compared to Hadramaut during the author's undergraduate studies. Hadramaut, particularly the village of Tarim, is the birthplace of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*. In Tarim, scholars of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* generally encourage students to adhere to the teachings documented by previous scholars, especially Imam Haddad. Students in Tarim are free to study the teachings of *Tharīqah* from various Bā'alawi scholars there, as long as they align with the teachings of Imam Haddad as outlined in his books. Conversely, in Pekalongan, there exists a hierarchical relationship between Habib Luthfi and his disciples. This hierarchy becomes particularly interesting when viewed in the context of political contestation. This hierarchical structure creates certain dynamics in mobilizing masses, different from the more open and egalitarian approach observed in Tarim.

This thesis aims to fill this gap by studying Habib Luthfi bin Yahya. Specifically, it examines Habib Luthfi's adaptation of the Sufi path inherent in his lineage, *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*, in his efforts to solidify his position in lineage, Sufism, and politics. By observing Habib Luthfi's creative adaptation and manipulation of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*, we can understand the shifts in socio-political ideas among the followers of this tariqa in Indonesia. Therefore, these dynamics cannot be separated from the teachings of *Tharīqah* and the socio-political context.

1.2 Research Questions

This research will focus on answering the following questions:

1. How did *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* adapt to the evolving socio-political dynamics in Indonesia before and after independence?
2. And how does Habib Luthfi adapt the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* in response to contemporary socio-political developments in Indonesia?

1.3 Research Objectives

This study aims to answer two main questions related to the adaptation of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* in response to the socio-political dynamics in Indonesia before and after

independence, and the role of Habib Luthfi in adapting the *Tharīqah* to contemporary socio-political developments in Indonesia:

1. This research will explore how *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* has adapted in its efforts to maintain its existence, from historical aspects to the present. The emphasis will be on identifying the various adaptation strategies used by the scholars in this *Tharīqah*, such as their endorsement of policies and support for political candidates. Their impact on Indonesia's political dynamics will be examined, along with their influence at the local and national levels, in this analysis.
2. This study will look into Habib Luthfi's attempts to modify *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* to meet contemporary political issues. It will look at the tactics he uses, like using social media, interacting with followers, and changing the teachings of *Tharīqah*. Habib Luthfi's involvement in Indonesian politics will be examined, along with his relationships with other political players and his influence on the development of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*. With regard to the role and adaptation of Sufi orders within the intricate political dynamics of modern Indonesia, this method seeks to provide in-depth insights.

1.4 Literature Review

One of the key literatures in the study of the *Bā'alawi* family and its *Tharīqah* is the book "Hadhrami Traders, Scholars, and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s to 1960s" is a seminal work that emerged from the 1995 SOAS conference on the Hadhrami diaspora. It explores the political, economic, and social influence of the Hadhrami diaspora, focusing on their unique integration into various societies across the Indian Ocean while maintaining a distinct identity. The book examines the historical context and significance of Hadhrami migration, highlighting their role in broader historical developments in regions such as Southeast Asia, East Africa, and South Asia. This work fills a crucial gap in scholarly literature, offering a comprehensive study of this influential yet underrepresented community.⁸

The book "Hadrami Arabs in Present-day Indonesia: An Indonesia-oriented Group with an Arab Signature" by Frode F. Jacobsen discusses the Hadrami Arab community in Indonesia, focusing particularly on how they migrated, adapted socio-culturally, and formed their identity. Jacobsen explains that although this Hadrami community has integrated into Indonesian society, they have maintained distinct Arab cultural traits, especially in terms of religion, social practices, and family life. The book highlights that the Hadrami people in Indonesia have become an Indonesia-oriented group while still preserving their Arab signature in their daily lives. This work provides valuable insights into how diaspora communities like the Hadrami navigate change while maintaining their cultural identity.⁹

In the study of Sufism, there is an article by Julia Day Howell (2001) titled "Sufism and the Indonesian Islamic Revival" that examines the resurgence of Sufism in Indonesia in the late 20th century. The article demonstrates that Sufism persisted despite the pressures

⁸ Ulrike Freitag and William G. Clarence-Smith, eds., *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars, and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s to 1960s, Social, Economic and Political Studies of the Middle East and Asia*, vol. 57 (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

⁹ Frode F. Jacobsen, *Hadrami Arabs in Present-day Indonesia: An Indonesia-oriented Group with an Arab Signature* (London: Routledge, 2009).

of modernization and Islamic reform movements. *Pesantren* and *tharīqah* continue to be significant centers for Sufi practices, attracting not only the elderly in rural areas but also educated urban communities. The article also highlights the emergence of Neo-Sufism, a more modern form of Sufism relevant to contemporary life. Overall, the article concludes that Sufism remains a significant part of the Islamic revival in Indonesia, providing a spiritual dimension in an increasingly modern society.¹⁰

In the article "Rethinking Diasporic Returns: Ḥaḍramī Trajectories in Indonesia's Religio-political Field," the authors, Ismail Fajrie Alatas and Martin Slama, introduce a fresh perspective on the phenomenon of diasporic return by presenting the concepts of re-embedding and re-encountering. Through the analysis of two national figures, Habib Luthfi and Anies Baswedan, the article unravels the complexity of diasporic identity in Indonesia. The authors agree with the arguments put forward, considering that diasporic return is not necessarily tied to physical journeys to the ancestral homeland but can materialize through practices of re-embracing or re-encountering within local or national contexts. The significant contribution of this article lies in a deeper understanding of the dynamics of national politics and religion in relation to the diaspora.¹¹ However, criticism can be raised regarding the generalization from two case studies to the entire Hadhrami community in Indonesia, and further research may be needed to explore the concrete impact of diasporic return practices on Indonesia's national politics comprehensively.

Authors Zeffry Alkatiri and Nabel A. Karim Hayaze, in their article "Critical Literature Study on Habaib Identity in the Constellation of Islamic Studies in Indonesia from the Colonial Period to the Present," critique the limitations of research on Habaib. They highlight that while the roles and existence of Habaib are acknowledged, research on them is limited compared to other Islamic phenomena like the roles of Kiai and political Islamic movements in Indonesia. Despite this critical view, the authors assert that the presence of Habaib is growing, especially in Indonesia's democratic context. The article makes a significant contribution by emphasizing the need to reexamine the approach to Arab studies in Indonesia, particularly regarding Habaib. This emphasis provides valuable insights and encourages further research to understand the roles and identities of Habaib in the diverse Islamic landscape of Indonesia, which is crucial for a deeper understanding of the country's religious context.¹²

Arsyad Sobby Kesuma, Abdul Halim, and Nur Syam contribute to the discourse with their article titled "The Religious Politics of *Habaib* in Surabaya and Bangil, East Java: A Socio-Religio-Political Approach," which investigates the socio-religio-political activities of *Habaib* in East Java. The research highlights the transformation of *Habaib's* behavior from being a force for community integration to becoming a factor of disintegration. I agree with the findings of this article as it reflects the complex dynamics in the role of *Habaib*, emphasizing the polarization among them that can impact the broader society. The specific contribution lies in the explanation of the socio-political transformation of *Habaib* and its impact, providing a foundation for a deeper understanding of the social and political

¹⁰ Day Howell, "Sufism and the Indonesian Islamic Revival."

¹¹ Ismail Fajrie Alatas and Martin Slama, "Ḥaḍramī Trajectories in Indonesia's Religio-Political Field," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde* 178, no. 4 (2022): 410–39, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48696833>.

¹² Zeffry Alkatiri and Nabel A. Karim Hayaze, "Critical Literature Study on Habaib Identity in the Constellation of Islamic Studies in Indonesia from the Colonial Period to the Present," *Cogent Arts and Humanities* 9, no. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2022.2096286>.

dynamics in Indonesia. While the article offers valuable insights, it is crucial to continue exploring the factors driving these changes and their implications for the future socio-political landscape in Indonesia.¹³

The article "The Role of *Thariqah* in Awakening the Spirit of Nationalism (Study of the Thought and Movement of Habib Luthfi bin Yahya)," written by Gea Novita Rohma, explores the role of Habib Luthfi bin Yahya and *Thariqah* in fostering the spirit of nationalism by detailing the notion that *Thariqah* is a path towards Allah rooted in Islamic law. The research illustrates that *Thariqah* can strengthen nationalism through the belief that the homeland is a gift from Allah that must be safeguarded as an expression of gratitude. Habib Luthfi bin Yahya's movements in various sectors, including the economic, cultural, political, religious, social, and environmental realms, are considered concrete steps in shaping the spirit of nationalism. Although the article provides profound insights into the relationship between spirituality and nationalism, it is crucial to note that interpretations of the concept of nationalism can vary, and these perspectives must be understood within the context of specific religious values and viewed from a broader societal standpoint.¹⁴

Then there is the article "Arabs and 'Indo-Arabs' in Indonesia: Historical Dynamics, Social Relations and Contemporary Changes" by Sumanto Al Qurtuby, which provides a comprehensive overview of the origins, development, and historical dynamics of Arabs in Indonesia, as well as the responses of Indonesian society, particularly Muslims, to this group. While depicting the diversity of positive contributions Arabs have made to Indonesian Islam, Islamic culture, and Muslim politics, the article also notes a shift in the negative perception of Arabs in Indonesia, attributed to factors such as leaders' involvement in violence, the practice of temporary marriage, and issues related to Arabs abroad. While the article offers valuable insights, its emphasis on the negative image may require further assessment to fully comprehend the complex dynamics and variations in Indonesian society's responses to this group.¹⁵

The article titled "The History of Hadrami Arabic Community Development in Southeast Asia" by Imam Subchi discusses the crucial role of the Hadrami Arab community in the process of Islamization and development in Southeast Asia. The article provides a detailed account of the economic, educational, Islamic missionary, and political contributions made by Hadrami Arab traders from the southern Arab lands during the 18th to 20th centuries. The key to their successful adaptation to the local communities lies in their peaceful methods and respect for locality. The article focuses particularly on the role of the *Alawiyyin* from Hadramaut in the spread of Islam in Indonesia, highlighting their migration history and influence on the dissemination of Islam in the Southeast Asian region. While the article offers profound insights into the historical contributions of the Hadrami Arab community, the addition of specific details and concrete data is needed to

¹³ Arsyad Sobby Kesuma, Abdul Halim, and Nur Syam, "The Religious Politics of Habaib in Surabaya and Bangil East Java: A Socio-Religio-Political Approach," *Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies* 10, no. 2 (2022): 285–318, <https://doi.org/10.21043/qjijis.v10i2.12090>.

¹⁴ Psychotherapy Program and Gea Novita Rohma, "The Role of Tarekat in Awakening the Spirit of Nationalism... 127-140 (Gea Novita Rohma) | 127," *Journal of Sufism and Psychotherapy* 1, no. 2 (2021): 2797–779, <https://doi.org/10.28918/jousip.v1i2.149>.

¹⁵ Sumanto Al Qurtuby, "Arabs and 'Indo-Arabs' in Indonesia: Historical Dynamics, Social Relations and Contemporary Changes," *International Journal of Asia-Pacific Studies* 13, no. 2 (2017): 45–72, <https://doi.org/10.21315/ijaps2017.13.2.3>.

enrich understanding of their social and cultural impact in the region. Overall, this article makes a significant contribution to understanding the history of community and religious development in Southeast Asia.¹⁶

In the article titled "Urban Sufi and Politics in Contemporary Indonesia: The Role of Dhikr Associations in the Anti-'Ahok' Rallies," the author, Ken Miichi, discusses the role of Sufi groups in the anti-Ahok protests in Indonesia at the end of 2016. Miichi highlights how Islamist groups, despite being a minority, successfully mobilized the participation of middle-class individuals in the protests by creating an atmosphere resembling dhikr assemblies. The analysis of the response of *Majelis Rasulullah*, the largest Sufi dhikr association in Jakarta, indicates that the temporary alliance between Islamists and Sufis played a crucial role in the success of the protest actions. While the article contributes new insights into the political and religious dynamics in Indonesia, readers are advised to consider the limitations of the case study in Jakarta and the need for broader research coverage. Nevertheless, the understanding that the dichotomy between Islamists and Sufis does not always apply directly in Indonesia provides valuable insights. The article serves as a foundation for designing further strategies to comprehend the complexity of inter-religious group relationships in the country.¹⁷

Syamsul Rijal in his book "Defending Traditional Islam in Indonesia: The Resurgence of Hadhrami Preachers" examines the internal dynamics within the Hadhrami community from colonial times to the contemporary era. He discusses the shift in conflicts from traditional stratification to doctrinal disputes that have influenced their social and political dynamics. During the colonial era, the Hadhrami community united to demand equality and modern education in response to discriminatory Dutch policies. The emergence of reformist ideas, championed by Sheikh Ahmad Surkati advocating egalitarianism in Islam, also shaped these dynamics. Following independence, globalization introduced new challenges with the influx of transnational Islamic movements like Salafism and Shiism, deepening the polarization between traditionalists and conservatives within the community. Rijal also highlights that *habaihs* possess significant charisma and influence, capable of mobilizing large masses, often playing roles in politics through entities like the Indonesian Arab Union (PAI) or by receiving invitations from political officials to deliver lectures or prayers, enhancing the religious image of these officials in the public eye.¹⁸

Engseng Ho's "The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean" provides a comprehensive exploration of the history and migration of the Hadrami *sadah* (Habib) group, examining their intricate interactions with host communities in the Indian Ocean region from pre-colonial times to the Yemeni civil war in 1994. The book significantly enriches our understanding of the *sadah's* role in shaping the social and cultural dynamics of the region. However, some concerns include Ho's potential overemphasis on the *sadah* group in Hadrami history, potentially overlooking contributions

¹⁶ Imam Subchi, "The History of Hadrami Arabic Community Development in Southeast Asia," *Epistemé: Jurnal Pengembangan Ilmu Keislaman* 14, no. 2 (December 30, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.21274/epis.2019.14.2.229-256>.

¹⁷ Ken Miichi, "Urban Sufi and Politics in Contemporary Indonesia: The Role of *Dhikr* Associations in the Anti-'Ahok' Rallies," *South East Asia Research* 27, no. 3 (July 3, 2019): 225–37, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0967828X.2019.1667110>.

¹⁸ Syamsul Rijal, *Defending Traditional Islam in Indonesia The Resurgence of Hadhrami Preachers* (London and New York: Routledge, 2024).

from other groups like *masha'ikh* and *qaba'il*. There are also instances of free translations of Arabic terms, raising questions about accuracy. Despite these concerns, the book stands as a monumental work and a key reference on the migration of Hadrami *sadah* in the Indian Ocean region.¹⁹

In the exploration of literature on *Thariqah* “Alawiyyah and its development, particularly in the context of politics and identity, several key themes have emerged, providing profound insights into the complexity and transformation within the Hadhrami community in Indonesia. Studies on the return of the diaspora and identity formation by Alatas and Slama offer a fresh perspective on the Hadhrami identity in Indonesia. However, the critical studies by Alkatiri and Hayaze emphasize the limitations in research related to the identity of *Habaib*, highlighting the need for a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of the diaspora's return and identity formation on the socio-political engagement of the Hadhrami community.

Syamsul Rijal's book explores the resurgence of *Habaib* through religious contestation, providing a profound understanding of the internal dynamics of the Hadhrami community. Overall, the literature addresses aspects of nationalism and *Thariqah*, the history and influence of the Hadrami Arab community, and the interplay between politics and Sufi groups. It provides a comprehensive understanding but also highlights the need for further research to explore the intricate dynamics of the political activities of *Thariqah Ba'Alawi*, which are closely linked to the *habaib* community, a recognized religious authority in Indonesia.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

This research argues that Habib Luthfi successfully adapted and manipulated the *Thariqah 'Alawiyyah* from its previous traditions to address the existing socio-political dynamics and create a mutualistic symbiotic relationship between the *Thariqah* and politics. As a scholar of *Thariqah 'Alawiyyah*, Habib Luthfi effectively adapted the *Thariqah*, enabling it to mobilize many followers to support specific political parties or candidates. This support provided legitimacy and a mass base for the ruling regime, while the *Thariqah* gained access to resources from the government. A tangible example of this adaptation is the attribution of the *Thariqah 'Alawiyyah* lineage to Imam Ali bin Abi Thālib, which was previously more commonly associated with Imam 'Alawī bin Ubaidillah. Such adaptation gave the *Thariqah 'Alawiyyah* greater appeal and authority, as lineage in *Thariqah*, similar to in the science of hadith, gains strength the closer it is to the source. With this appeal and authority, Habib Luthfi was able to attract many followers and mobilize them to support Jokowi and Prabowo in their respective presidential elections. Habib Luthfi openly directed his followers to support these figures, while also receiving governmental positions and resource support to further develop the *Thariqah* institutions he leads.

In analyzing how Habib Luthfi adapts *Thariqah Alawiyyah* for its growth, my research refers to the Social Exchange Theory (SET) as articulated by Russell Cropanzano, which views social behavior as a result of exchange processes. This theory emphasizes that individuals in their social interactions tend to conduct a cost-benefit analysis, weighing the potential gains and losses from their social relationships.²⁰ In other words, the success of

¹⁹ Engseong Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean*, vol. 3 (California: University of California Press, 2006).

²⁰ Russell Cropanzano and Marie S. Mitchell, “Social Exchange Theory: An Interdisciplinary Review,” *Journal of Management*, December 2005, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206305279602>.

Habib Luthfi's adaptation of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* cannot be separated from its relationship with the ongoing socio-political dynamics. As a scholar of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*, Habib Luthfi leverages his social connections with political figures to gain various advantages. Specifically, political support grants *Tharīqah Alawiyyah* access to political, administrative, and financial resources crucial for expanding its influence within society. Within the framework of SET, this relationship can be seen as an exchange where *Tharīqah Alawiyyah* provides spiritual support and religious legitimacy to political figures, while these figures reciprocate by offering protection, material support, and extensive political networks to *Tharīqah Alawiyyah*.

1.6 Research Significance

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to understanding how figures like Habib Luthfi adapt this *Tharīqah* in facing contemporary socio-political dynamics. This study addresses essential gaps in the current literature by:

1. **Historical Socio-Political Transformations:** examining how *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* has evolved in response to socio-political changes from historical contexts to modern expressions; it illuminates the ways in which *Tharīqah* are changing and how they become involved in politics by supporting politicians and promoting policies; it also explores the ways in which their influence has influenced Indonesia's political climate on both a local and national scale.
2. **Habib Luthfi's Adaptation Strategies:** Considering Habib Luthfi's efforts to modify the teachings and practices of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* in order to make them more appropriate for contemporary socio-political issues. This includes tactics like connecting with adherents, changing rites and beliefs, and working with political figures.
3. **Internal and External Impacts:** evaluating how these adaptation attempts have affected the internal organization of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*, the religious rituals of its followers, and the identity and cohesiveness of the *Tharīqah* in relation to Indonesia's social and political environment.

The aim of this study is to provide significant insights on the function and adjustment of *Tharīqah* in Indonesia's complex socio-political environment. By connecting historical accounts with contemporary sociopolitical realities, it advances scholarly understanding by offering complex viewpoints on the enduring impact of Sufism on Indonesian society. Policymakers, academics, and practitioners who want to understand how religious traditions and political participation interact in modern-day Indonesia must pay close attention to this research.

1.7 Methods

This qualitative study combines several approaches to analyze the adaptation of the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* in response to socio-political dynamics. The research employs a historical anthropology approach to the study of traditions, aiming to understand the historical conditions that facilitate the production, preservation, and transformation of specific discursive traditions, as well as the efforts of practitioners to achieve coherence. Primary data collection is conducted through literature research and ethnography. Literature research aims to analyze the history and transformation of the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* in the context of socio-political dynamics. Additionally, the author accessed the

collection of internal records (accountability reports) of *Jam'iyyah Ahlith Thoriqoh al-Mu'tabaroh an-Nahdliyyah* (JATMAN) during the implementation of international Sufi conferences. JATMAN is a religious organization that serves as a platform for practitioners of *al-thariqah al-mu'tabaroh* teachings and is led by Habib Luthfi bin Yahya.

The majority of the data for this study is ethnographic. Field research was conducted from April to June 2024 in Jakarta and Pekalongan. These cities were chosen based on Habib Luthfi's significant influence in religious and socio-political aspects in those areas. In both cities, Habib Luthfi frequently holds religious activities that impact Indonesia's political dynamics. The author spent more time in Jakarta, attending various JATMAN activities, forums affiliated with Habib Luthfi, and the grand campaign rally of presidential candidates Prabowo-Gibran at Gelora Bung Karno Main Stadium (GBK), which was also attended by Habib Luthfi. Additionally, time was spent in Pekalongan, residing at Habib Luthfi bin Yahya's residence (*Ndalem*) and attending the International Sufi Conference organized by the World Sufi Assembly, a globally recognized organization dedicated to promoting the teachings and practices of Sufism, the mystical dimension of Islam.

The ethnographic research included in-depth interviews, informal conversations, and participatory observations. The author conducted in-depth interviews with the organizers of the International Sufi Conference, leaders of JATMAN, and *habaibs* close to Habib Luthfi. These interviews revealed their motivations, the relationship between the *Thariqah*, Habib Luthfi, and politics and their experiences in building religious institutions. To establish initial contacts with key informants, the author contacted acquaintances from Hadramaut during college who had relationships with these key informants.

The selection of Habib Luthfi was based on his popularity and significant influence in Indonesian politics. As a respected religious figure and influential spiritual leader within the *Thariqah 'Alawiyah* community, Habib Luthfi bridges the spiritual and political worlds. Politicians, community leaders, military officials, and other members of society are among those who find him popular in addition to *Thariqah* adherents. Habib Luthfi is well known for his engagement in a range of social and national activities as well as his capacity to articulate religious principles within the framework of modern politics. He is a prominent figure in Indonesian politics because of his broad impact and devoted following, which enable him to inspire the populace and provide moral and spiritual support to particular political candidates. Thus, it would be impossible to fully analyze *Thariqah 'Alawiyah's* influence on Indonesian politics without also looking at Habib Luthfi's strategic position.

This study provides important new insights into the ways Sufi groups such as the *Thariqah 'Alawiyah* adjust to contemporary socio-political shifts. The study describes the impact and adaptation tactics of well-known individuals like Habib Luthfi in addition to revealing the history and development of the *Thariqah* in the political arena using a combination of literature review and ethnographic investigation. As a result, this study adds to our knowledge of the function and importance of Sufi orders in Indonesia's current political environment.

1.8 Structure of Thesis

Each of the four aspects of this research, which focuses specifically on Habib Luthfi bin Yahya, examines how Sufism, tariqah, and politics interact and change within the framework of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*. The goal of each section is to offer a thorough and well-organized grasp of the topics covered.

The first chapter comprises a historical introduction, research questions formulated, research technique, and thesis structure.

Chapter two This section explores the evolution of *tharīqah* as a Sufi institution throughout history, presents significant personalities, and looks at their effects on society, culture, and politics. It mainly focuses on how *tharīqah* and politics interacted, including their opinions on the political issues of the day.

Chapter three The dynamics of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* are examined in this part in relation to Indonesian politics before and after independence, with a focus on how scholars of *tharīqah*, such as Sayyid 'Utsman bin Yahya and Habib Ali Kwatang, modified their texts to accommodate shifting socio-political environments. It provides the fundamental historical and modern understandings required to understand the problem.

Chapter four will examine the efforts made by Habib Luthfi to modify the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* in order to address modern political issues. This entails recognizing the adaptable tactics used by Habib Luthfi, like adjusting the tarekat teachings, interacting with his adherents, and making use of social media. Habib Luthfi's active participation in Indonesian politics, his contacts with other political figures, and his impact on the formulation of public policy and opinion will all be covered in the analysis. Additionally, this research will assess how these adaptation attempts have affected the internal organization of the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*, adherents' religious customs, and the order's identity and unity within Indonesia's social and political framework. With this approach, the study aims to provide in-depth insights into the role and adaptation of Sufi orders within the complex political dynamics of contemporary Indonesia.

CHAPTER II

THARĪQAH 'ALAWIYYAH: EMERGENCE, TRANSFORMATION, AND POLITICAL ATTITUDE

Theories that described *tharīqah* mainly in terms of social, political, or economic aspects, such as structuralist and functional theories, had an influence on early ethnographic investigations on the topic in Sufism. However, biases were frequently brought into this research due to the predominance of Western theories, particularly when the researchers had educational backgrounds from Western universities. This problem was made worse by the restricted access that non-Muslim Western anthropologists had to Sufi rites and *tharīqah* rituals, which resulted in research that was primarily concerned with the exterior features of *tharīqah*. As a result, the studies frequently ignored and misrepresented the internal and spiritual experiences that are essential to *tharīqah* practices. As such, it is imperative to carry out a thorough methodological assessment and create more inclusive research methodologies. The contributions of local (Muslim) researchers are essential to gain a more comprehensive and objective understanding of *tharīqah*, encompassing both the internal and external aspects that shape the spiritual experiences in its practices.

2.1 Tharīqah: An Introduction

The term "*sūfī*" refers to an individual who follows the path of Sufism. The origin of this word is still debated, but some common theories suggest it comes from the word "*sūf*" (wool), referring to the coarse woolen garments worn by early *sūfī* as a sign of simplicity; from the word "*saḥā*" (purity), as *sūfīs* are considered people with pure hearts; or from the term "*ahl al-suffah*" (people of the bench), referring to a group of the Prophet Muhammad's companions who lived simply on the bench of the mosque. A *sūfī* leads a life focused on spiritual enhancement and drawing closer to God. They strive to purify their hearts from negative traits and fill themselves with noble character.²¹

Tasawwuf, or Sufism, is the path to achieving *ma'rifah* (profound knowledge) about God. It represents the esoteric (inner) dimension of Islam, emphasizing spiritual aspects and direct experiences with God. *Tasawwuf* teaches the importance of *tazkiyatun nafs* (purification of the soul), *muhasabah* (self-introspection), and *riyadhah* (spiritual exercises). The primary goal of *tasawwuf* is to reach *maqam al-ihsan*, which means worshipping God as if one sees Him, and if one cannot see Him, then believing that God sees the worshiper. *Tasawwuf* instructs about the love of God, humility, patience, gratitude, and *tawakkul* (surrender to God's will).²²

Meanwhile, the term *Tharīqah* (plural: *thuruq*) literally means "path" or "method." In the context of Sufism, *Tharīqah* refers to a school or order that has specific methods and teachings to achieve the goals of Sufism. Each *Tharīqah* has a *sheikh* or *murshid* (spiritual guide) who leads and mentors its followers. Some well-known *Tharīqahs* include *Qadiriyyah*, *Naqshbandiyyah*, *Shadhiliyyah*, and *'Alawiyyah*. And each *Tharīqah* has its own

²¹ J. J. Spencer Trimmingham, *The Sūfī Orders in Islam* (New York Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Carl W. Ernst and Bruce B. Lawrence, *Sūfī Martyrs of Love: The Chishti Sūfism in South Asia and Beyond* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2002).

²² Yūsuf Khatār Muhammad, *Al-Mausū'ah Al-Yūsūfiyyah Fī Adillati Al-Sūfiyyah* (Damascus: Dār Al-Taqwā, 2003).

unique practices and liturgical recitations (*dhikr*). A *sūfī* typically follows one *Tharīqah* under the guidance of a *sheikh* or *murshid*.²³

The Role of *Tharīqah* in *Tasawwuf* is believed to make religion understandable and deeply felt as a necessity and pleasure both inwardly and outwardly in facing the God. With *murāqabah*, which is the closeness of the servant to their Lord, one is kept away from disgraceful acts and becomes a quality human being. *Tasawwuf* is a part of *sharia*, or in other words, *sharia* contains teachings of *tasawwuf*.²⁴ And *tasawwuf* is a study that cannot be separated from other studies such as *Fiqh* and *Tawhid*. The accentuation of the study of *Tawhid* is the core of the religion, which includes teachings of monotheism. Meanwhile, *Fiqh* is a study on *ijtihadi* matters that are practical, subsidiary, and essential and has an exoteric (outward) aspect.²⁵ On the other hand, the accentuation of *Tasawwuf* lies in the issues of spiritual taste and soul, having an esoteric aspect. Additionally, *Tasawwuf* is an individual's spiritual experience that cannot be felt by others, depending on one's perspective on the activities of the *sūfī*. It also has various systems of practice and support from social institutions, art, and scientific justification.²⁶

According to John Spencer Trimmingham, the first period of *Tasawwuf* between the eighth and ninth centuries was an "organic expression of religion on a personal level, as opposed to religion practiced institutionally based on authority."²⁷ In other words, it was a spontaneous personal attitude of religious followers, not based on obligation or coercion inherent in the religious teachings. Individual men and women devoted themselves personally and exclusively to serving God and experiencing the joy of His grace.²⁸ A *sūfī* lived an ascetic *sūfī* life independently, and in some extreme cases, they lived in total seclusion. In principle, the doctrine and spiritual methods of a Sufi ended within their lifetime and were not institutionalized or passed down to their children and disciples. Their activities mostly took place in their homes, in religious institutions such as *Zawiyah*, or *Tekke* in Turkish, or *ribat* in North Africa, and *khana* or *khaneqah* in the mountains and deserts. However, some lived as wanderers. These places were used to describe the frontier fortresses of Sufi warriors who defended the path of Islam to ensure it remained under guidance and for a considerable length of time. I believe that this indicates the early pattern of the formation of the *Tharīqah*.

During this period, several figures emerged, such as the woman from Basra, Iraq, Rabi'ah Al-Adawiyah (801 CE/185 AH), who spread the teachings of love for God (*Hubb al-Ilah*) by completely devoting herself to Allah SWT, abandoning any hope for the rewards of paradise and recompense, and purely fearing the threat of hellfire.²⁹ Furthermore, the discussions of *Fanā'* (Annihilation) and *Ittihād* (Union with God) brought forth three prominent figures: Al-Muhasibi (234 AH/849 CE), Al-Harraj (277 AH/891 CE), and Junayd al-Baghdadi (297 AH/910 CE), who developed *tasawwuf* both conceptually and contextually. During Junayd Al-Baghdadi's time, *tasawwuf* continued to evolve

²³ Yūsuf Khatār Muhammad, *Al-Mausū'ah Al-Yusūfiyyah Fī Adillati Al-Sūfiyyah*.

²⁴ Aly Mashar, "Tasawuf: Sejarah, Madzhab, Dan Inti Ajarannya," *Al-A'raf* XII, no. 1 (2015): 97–117.

²⁵ Syamsun Ni'am, *Tasawuf Studies: Pengantar Tasawuf*, ed. Rose KR (Sleman, Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media, 2014).

²⁶ Michael Laffan, "National Crisis and the Representation of Traditional Sūfism in Indonesia: The Periodicals Salafy and Sūfī," in *Sūfism and the 'Modern' in Islam*, ed. Julia Day Howell and Martin van Bruinessen (London: I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd, 2007), 6–18.

²⁷ J. Spencer Trimmingham, *The Sūfī Orders in Islam* (New York Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Carl W. Ernst and Bruce B. Lawrence, *Sūfī Martyrs of Love: The Chishtī Sūfism in South Asia and Beyond* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2002).

²⁸ A. J Arberry, *Sūfism: An Account of the Mystics of Islam*, ed. Routledge (London: Routledge, 2008); Syekh Fadhalla Haeri, *The Elements of Sūfism* (London, England: Zahra Publication, 1990).

²⁹ Che Zarina Binti Sa'ari, "Tokoh Sūfī Wanita Rabi'ah Al - 'Adawiyah: Motivator Ke Arah Hidup Lebih Bermakna," *Ushuluddin* 25 (2007): 29–43.

towards conceptual perfection in terms of terminology and the concept of intuition. Additionally, Al-Busthami (261 AH/875 CE) introduced his thoughts on *Fanā'* (Annihilation), *Liqā'* (meeting with God in a perfect form/*Insān Kāmil*), and *Wahdāt Al-Wujūd* (The concept that states that there is only one true existence, which is God). Meanwhile, Al-Hallaj (369 AH/980 CE) had teachings such as *Al-Hulul* (the disappearance of negative human desires and the growth of divine attributes that then unite within the human body) and *Haqīqah Muhammadiyah* (the source of everything that happens).³⁰

A significant phase in the institutionalization of *Tasawwuf* was marked during the 12th and 13th centuries. During this time, *Tharīqah* began to form around charismatic leaders who established specific spiritual methodologies, practices, and codes of ethics for their followers. These leaders, known as sheikhs, became central to the development of the *tharīqah*, providing spiritual guidance and initiating disciples into their respective *tharīqah*.³¹ One of the earliest and most influential *tharīqah* was the *Qadiriyya*, founded by Abdul Qadir al-Jilani (d. 1166) in Baghdad. Al-Jilani's teachings stressed the significance of spiritual discipline, ethical conduct, and the quest for Divine knowledge. His followers organized themselves into distinct communities, following a structured path (*tharīqah*) that facilitated their spiritual development.³² Similarly, the establishment of the *Suhrawardiyya tharīqah* by Abu Najib *al-Suhrawardi* (d. 1168) and later expanded by his nephew, Shihab al-Din Abu Hafs Umar al-Suhrawardi (d. 1234), illustrated the growing trend towards formal Sufi institutions.³³ The *Suhrawardiyya tharīqah*, with its intricate organizational framework and hierarchical structure, became a model for subsequent Sufi orders. This was followed by the emergence of several other *tharīqah*, culminating in the 17th century with the *Thariqa 'Alawiyyah* in southern Yemen, specifically in the city of Hadramaut.

The proliferation of *tharīqah* throughout the Islamic world resulted in a rich diversity of *tharīqah*, each with unique characteristics and regional adaptations.³⁴ The following is a table of the spread of Sufi *tharīqah* (12th to 20th century).

Table 2.1

The spread of Sufi tharīqah (12th to 20th century)

No	Tariqa	Figure	Time	Place	Major Dissemination
1	Qadiriyyah	Abdul-Qadir Gilani (d. 1166)	12 th Century	Baghdad, Iraq	Middle East, South Asia, North Africa
2	Suhrawardiyyah	Shihab Al-Din 'Umar bin 'Abdallah Al-Suhrawardi (d. 1234)	12 th Century	Iraq	Persia and Central Asia.
3	Chishtiyyah	Khwaja Abu Ishaq Shami Chishti (d. 966)	12 th Century	Chist, Afghanistan	India, South Asia
4	Rifa'iyyah	Ahmed al-Rifa'i (d. 1182)	12 th Century	Iraq	Middle East and North Africa

³⁰ Julian Baldick, *Mystical Islam: An Introduction to Sūfism* (London: I.B.Tauris & co, 1989), <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=zuAOVSMvzsYC>.

³¹ J. Spencer Trimmingham, *The Sūfī Orders in Islam*.

³² Abu Bakr Siraj ad-Din, *Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani: Founder of the Qadiri Sūfī Order* (Islamic Texts Society, 2000).

³³ Richard Gramlich, *Die schiitischen Derwischorden Persiens* (Steiner, 1981).

³⁴ Carl W. Ernst, *The Shambhala Guide to Sūfism* (Shambhala, 1997).

5	Ba'alawī (Alawiyyah)	Muhammad bin Ali Bā'alawī Al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam	12 th Century	Hadramaut, Yemen	Southeast Asia, East Africa
6	Firdausi and Shattari	Saif al-Dīn Bākhazī (d. 1260), Sharaf al- Dīn Manerī (d. 1381), 'Alī alias Shāh Muḥammad Bunyād Firdausī (d. 1781) and Shāh 'Abdullāh Shattārī (d. 1485),	15 th Century	Delhi in India	North India, South Asia
7	Shadhiliyyah	Abu-l-Hassan ash- Shadhili (d. 1258)	13 th Century	Morocco	North Africa, Egypt and Tanzania, the Middle East, Sri Lanka and
8	Mevleviyyah	Jalal ud-Din Rumi (d. 1273)	13 th Century	Konya in Turkey	Anatolia in Turkey, North America
9	Bektashi	Haji Bektash Veli (d. 1271)	13 th Century	Khurasan	Anatolia in Turkey
10	Khalwatiyyah	Umar al-Khalwati (d. 1397)	14 th Century	Persia / Iran	Middle East, North Africa and Turkey
11	Naqshbandiyyah	Baha-ud-Din Naqshband (d. 1390)	14 th Century	Bukhara, Uzbekistan	Central Asia, India and Turkey
12	Ni'matullahih	Shah Ni'matullah (d. 1431)	14 th Century	Mahan, Iran	Iran, India
13	Tijaniyyah	Abbas Ahmad ibn at- Tijani (d. 1815)	18 th Century	Algeria	West Africa, North Africa

In the table above, there are several *Tharīqah* along with their figures and majority dissemination.

After investigating the *tharīqah*, John Spencer Trimmingham presents the following general model to explain the development of the *tharīqah* in Sufism, which can be grouped as follows: (1) the *khānaqāh* stage (early Islam period to the 11th century), (2) the *tharīqah* stage (12th to 14th century), and (3) the *tā'ifah* stage (15th century onwards). However, in addition to this, the activities of the Sufis can be divided into 4 patterns, which are presented in the table below, and since the 13th century onwards, all 4 patterns can be observed in every region in every period. If we focus our attention on the social functions of the Sufis, we see that the group model in pattern (2), and the local *Tharīqah* in pattern (3) have played the most important roles. If this is indeed true, we will gain a more accurate understanding of the reality of Sufi society by viewing their expansion as a diversification of their activities, rather than as a series of developmental stages.

Table 2.1*The development of the tharīqah in Sufism*

For Form of organization	Name of organization	Characteristics of organization	Place of activities
4. Internationalized order	<i>Tharīqah</i>	permanent lineage is an indispensable element, transethnic, trans-tribal and shows trans regional proliferation, institutionalization of doctrines and rituals .	Dissociation of places of activities (<i>ribāṭ</i> , <i>zāwiyah</i> , <i>khanqah</i>) and the organization, <i>ribāṭ</i> and <i>zāwiyah</i> are the real centers of the activities .
3. Local order	<i>Tā'īfah</i> , <i>Zāwiyah</i>	Lineage can be seen in some cases but is not indispensable, ethnic and tribal relationship ties, institutionalization of doctrines and rituals .	Coincidence of places of activities (<i>ribāṭ</i> , <i>zāwiyah</i>) with the organization(<i>tā'īfah</i>).
2. Group of Sūfī saints	<i>Jamā'ah</i> , <i>Majlis</i>	Non-lineage, non-continuity of sainthood, limited period of existence, non institutionalization of doctrines and rituals .	Coincidence of places of activities (<i>ribāṭ</i> , <i>zāwiyah</i> , mosque, house) with the organization.
1. Independent or solitary	seclusion or personal relationship	Non-lineage, non-continuity of sainthood, limited period of existence, non institutionalization of doctrines and rituals .	Private houses, mountains, desert, vagabondage, religious houses (mosque and <i>ribāṭ</i>) .

2.2 Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah

The study of the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* requires us to understand several terms with specific meanings. For example, the term *Hadrami* refers to people originating from Hadramaut, a region in southern Yemen, who migrated to various parts of the world and are known for their role in spreading Islam. *Hadramis* are famous for their cultural adaptation and ability to spread Islamic teachings peacefully. They carried with them strong religious traditions and values, which later shaped Muslim communities in various countries.³⁵ Additionally, there are the terms *Sharīf* and *Sharīfah*, which are titles for the direct descendants of Prophet Muhammad through his grandson Hasan ibn Ali, with *Sharīf* used for males and *Sharīfah* for females. This title signifies special respect towards the Prophet's descendants, who hold an important role in Islamic history and culture.

³⁵ Ho, Engseeng. *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

Descendants of Hasan ibn Ali are often considered to have high moral and spiritual status in society.³⁶ The terms *Sayyid* and *Sayyidah* refer to the descendants of Prophet Muhammad through his grandson Husain ibn Ali, with *Sayyid* for males and *Sayyidah* for females. This title also indicates a direct relationship with Prophet Muhammad and is often associated with the responsibility to lead and teach Islamic values. Descendants of Husain ibn Ali are known for their bravery and sacrifices in upholding the principles of Islam.³⁷

The titles of *Habīb* and *Habībah/Hubabah*, which mean "the beloved," are usually given to scholars or respected religious figures within the Bā'alawi community, with *Habīb* for men and *Habībah/Hubabah* for women. These titles reflect the community's affection and respect for religious leaders who have made significant contributions to Islamic education and preaching. *Habībs* often play an essential role in preserving and spreading Islamic teachings within their communities.³⁸ The term *Bā'alawī* or *Banī Alawī* refers to families or clans descended from 'Alawī bin Ubaidillah bin Ahmad al-Muhajir, a descendant of Prophet Muhammad who migrated from Hijaz to Hadramaut. This family is renowned for their influence in disseminating and preserving Islamic teachings across various parts of the world.³⁹ *Rābitah 'Alawiyah* is an organization established to compile and manage genealogies and address the interests of the *Habāib* community, particularly the *Bā'alawī* in Indonesia, playing a crucial role in preserving their identity and cultural heritage.⁴⁰

As previously explained, the term Bā'alawi also refers to the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyah*, which has deeply rooted genealogical origins in Islamic history. They are associated with a single name, namely Imam Alawi bin Ubaidillah, the grandson of Imam Ahmad bin Isa al-Muhajir, who was the Naqib al-Ashraf, a person responsible for supervising, maintaining the welfare, and preserving the honor of the community of direct descendants of the Prophet Muhammad in Iraq. This lineage gives them a special place in Islamic history and culture because of their direct connection to significant figures in early Islamic history. The honor and respect they receive stem from their direct relationship with the companions and family of the Prophet Muhammad, making them bearers of a rich spiritual and genealogical heritage.⁴¹ Throughout history, the Bā'alawi have been instrumental in spreading and preserving Islamic teachings through education, proselytization, and their social contributions across various regions worldwide.

Known for its scholarship, trade, and culture, Basra was a prominent hub of Islamic civilization during the era of Imam Ahmad bin Isa al-Muhajir (873–956), drawing scholars and intellectuals from all over the Islamic world. But when the Abbasid Caliphate's authority declined, unrest and instability in the area grew. Imam Ahmad bin Isa moved to Hijaz with his family in 317 AH because he felt

³⁶ Freitag, Ulrike, and William G. Clarence-Smith, eds, *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars, and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s-1960s, Vol. 5*, (Leiden: Brill, 1992).

³⁷ Syed Farid Alatas, "Hadhrami Arabs in Southeast Asia: An Overview," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 20, no. 1-2 (2000): 5-13.

³⁸ Van Den Berg, Lodewijk Willem Christiaan, and Rahayu Hidayat. "*Hadramaut dan Koloni Arab di Nusantara (jilid 3)*." (1989).

³⁹ Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Some Aspects of Sufism as Understood and Practised among the Malays*. (Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 1963).

⁴⁰ Van Den Berg, Lodewijk Willem Christiaan, and Rahayu Hidayat. "*Hadramaut dan Koloni Arab di Nusantara (jilid 3)*." (1989).

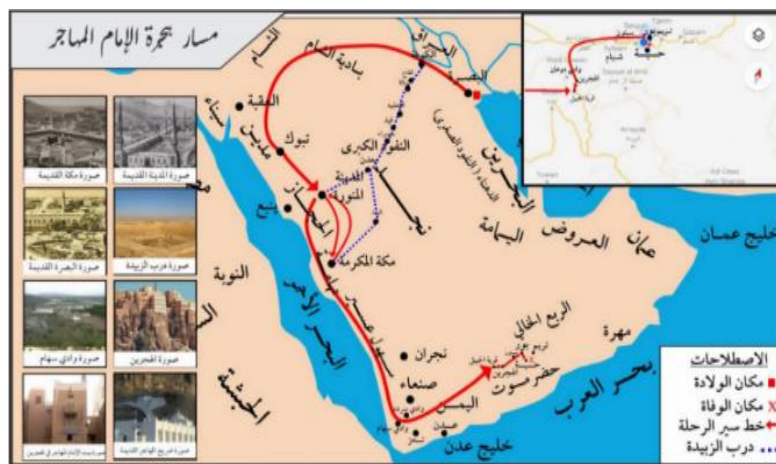
⁴¹ Students of Sheikh Munawir Kartasura from Anjok and Students of Sheikh Muhammad Sholeh from pasuruan, *Sabīlu Al-Sālikīn Fī Anwā'i Al-Tharīqah Fī Indūnīsīā* (Pasuruan: Al-'Aala Salafi Islamic Boarding School, 2015).

Basra was too dangerous for a quiet and pious religious life in the midst of the increasing political and social unrest.⁴²

This journey of migration brought Imam Ahmad bin Isa and his entourage to various regions, including the holy cities of Medina and Mecca. They traveled through the streets and had various encounters with the local communities, enriching their experience of living in a new place. However, after much consideration and deliberation, they ultimately decided to settle in the Hadhramaut valley in Yemen. At that time, the valley was largely controlled by the *Khawarij Ibadhi*, a group with different religious views and practices. The decision to settle in this area was not only based on the geographical conditions that might offer certain advantages but was also part of a well-thought-out social and political strategy.⁴³

Initially, the Al-Muhajir community settled in the city of al-Hajrain before moving to the village of Kinda and finally settling in al-Husseisa, Hadramaut. They started adjusting to their new surroundings in al-Hajrain while retaining their cultural and religious identities. They encountered more challenges after relocating to the village of Kinda, which tested the resiliency and camaraderie of their group and hastened their adaptation process. Their journey came to an end when they established themselves in al-Husseisa, where they underwent a rigorous process of religious and cultural assimilation. In an attempt to blend their customs with local ones, they engaged in closer interactions with the al-Husseisa community.⁴⁴

This community successfully adapted to their new surroundings because to Imam Ahmad bin Isa's talents, influencing and changing the local religious orientation from the Ibadhi school to *Ahlus Sunnah*. This process entailed both intellectual arguments and physical conflicts, exposing the complicated relationships between the newcomers and the natives. His visionary leadership and diplomatic approach were key in making this happen. Intellectual discussions provided a forum for the productive interchange of ideas, whereas physical altercations were a reflection of the tensions resulting from dissenting opinions. The lengthy process that the Al-Muhajir community underwent to forge their identity in the new society is demonstrated by this sequence of events.⁴⁵



Map of the migration journey of Imam Ahmad bin Isa al-Muhajir from Basra to Mecca and Medina before continuing to Hadramaut in Yemen.

⁴² Abu Bakr Al-Adny, *Al-Muhājir Ilā Allah Al-Imām Ahmad Bin Īsa* ('Aden: Far' Al-Dirasāt Wa Khidmah Al-Turats, 2002), 125.

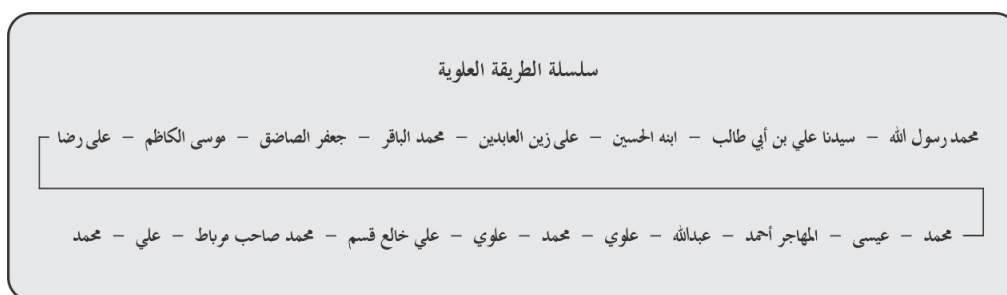
⁴³ Abu Bakr Al-Adny, 125.

⁴⁴ Abu Bakr Al-Adny, 126.

⁴⁵ Zain bin Ibrāhīm Bin Smith, *Al-Manhaj Al-Sawi Syarh Usūl Thariqah Al-Sādah Bā'Alawi* (Tarim: Dār Al-Ilmi wa Al-Da'wah, 2005), 92.

The descendants of Imam Ahmad bin Isa al-Muhajir's son Ubaidillah had three children: Basri, Jadid, and Alawi. These Alawi descendants formed the basis of the Bā'alawi and the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*; by contrast, the descendants of his two brothers had perished by the end of the sixth century Hijri. In 521 H, the descendants of al-Muhajir moved to the city of Tarim, which eventually became the hub for the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*. Tarim not only developed into a religious center but also became an important center for education and culture.⁴⁶

The *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* was first established by Imam Muhammad bin Ali Bā'alawī, also known by his nickname Faqīh al-Muqaddam, who was born in the year 574 AH/1178 CE in the city of Tarim. This *tharīqah* is known as *Madaniyyah*, associated with the teachings of Sheikh Abu Madyan al-Maghribi. Through a rigorous process of transmitting knowledge and spirituality, this method has been passed down from generation to generation, creating a strong and enduring religious tradition. After the establishment of this *tharīqah*, he spread the Alawi Sufism throughout Hadhramaut, which was respected by the Rasulid dynasty of that era. In this capacity, he became a highly influential unifying figure for the community and the Hadhrami society as a whole.⁴⁷



Genealogical list of the Tarīqah 'Alawiyyah from the founder Imam Faqīh Muqaddam Muhammad bin Ali Bā'alawī to the Prophet Muhammad.

The *Tarīqah 'Alawiyyah* was solidified by Imam Faqīh Muqaddam Muhammad bin Ali Bā'alawī using spiritual and social teaching techniques firmly ingrained in Hadramaut local traditions. He established social places where Islamic teachings could be practiced and transmitted in a peaceful, inclusive, and tolerant manner by building madrasahs and sufi educational institutes. In addition to disseminating religious knowledge, this consolidation process involves incorporating moral principles into the community's everyday existence. Through *dhikr* and other spiritual practices, Imam Faqīh Muqaddam shaped a new collective identity among his followers, emphasizing harmony and brotherhood. This transformation was evident in the changing social dynamics in Hadramaut, where inter-tribal conflicts decreased, and political stability began to emerge. The influence of the *Tarīqah 'Alawiyyah* also transcended the geographical boundaries of Hadramaut, permeating diaspora communities in Southeast Asia, India, and East Africa, where Sūfī values continued to guide social and economic actions.⁴⁸

After the era of Imam Faqīh Muqaddam, the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* produced many influential figures who excelled in the fields of knowledge and spirituality. Some of them reached the level of mujtahid in fiqh, while others were believed to display miracles of sainthood comparable to earlier figures. Notable figures include 'Abd Allah al-'Aydarūs (1408-1461), a generation of saintly figures described by Ibn Battuta as “more like angels

⁴⁶ Zain bin Ibrāhīm Bin Smith. 92

⁴⁷ Abu Bakr Al-'Adny, *Al-Ustādz Al-'Adzom Al-Faqīh Al-Muqoddam* ('Aden: Far' Al-Dirasāt Wa Khidmah Al-Turats, 2002).

⁴⁸ 'Aidrus bin Umar Al-Habsyi, *'Iqd Yawāqīt Al-Jauhariyyah Wa Simthu Al-'Ain Al-Dzahabiyyah Bi Dzikri Tharīqi Al-Sādāt Al-'Alawiyyah* (Tarim: Dār 'Ilm wa Da'wah, 2009).

than human beings,” followed by Abu Bakr al-‘Adanī bin ‘Abd Allah al-‘Aydārūs (1447–1508), a saintly figure whose grave destruction triggered anthropological exploration by Engseng Ho. Among the most renowned is ‘Abd Allah bin ‘Alawī al-Haddād (1634–1720).⁴⁹

In the 18th century, during the time of Imam Abdullah bin Alawi al-Haddad, famously known as Imam Haddad, the *Tharīqah ‘Alawīyyah* adopted a new approach called the "Method of *Ahlul Yamīn*". This approach was more suited to the social and spiritual conditions of the society at that time, focusing on the development of faith and moral life as a foundation for achieving higher spiritual levels. With a strong emphasis on deep Islamic values and in accordance with social conditions, this method not only succeeded in spreading the influence of *Tharīqah ‘Alawīyyah* to various regions but also remained relevant in inspiring generations of Muslims to this day.⁵⁰

The presence of Imam Haddad was like a blessing in formulating solutions to the social problems of his time. He lived in the mid-17th century and early 18th century, a dark period in Hadramaut. There was political turmoil with the weakening of the Al-Kathiri government, which led to the destruction of people's livelihoods. For Imam Haddad, this was due to the absence of normative rules that were easy to understand by all groups, which Islam should have accommodated. In seeking solutions to these problems, Imam al-Haddad attempted to reformulate the *Tharīqah ‘Alawīyyah*, in which he grew up. He felt that this *Tharīqah* tended to be exclusive to the Ba’alawi, creating what Ismail Fajrie Alatas calls an elite Islamic community (*khawash*), and did not reach the common people, leading to moral and spiritual decline. Therefore, it is not surprising that Imam Haddad criticized the *munsibs*, whose positions were inherited through lineage, often held by individuals with little knowledge who were preoccupied with maintaining asymmetrical relationships with their followers. He believed that the authority of the *munsibs* should be minimized. For him, religious authority as an ulama is not simply inherited from previous figures, as this could form inconsistent norms that are difficult to follow.⁵¹

Imam Haddad put forth views that would later be considered as reforms to the *Tharīqah ‘Alawīyyah*. For him, the teachings of this *Tharīqah* should be based on what was taught by the Prophet as the bearer of the message, which is objectified in hadith and codified in a set of books on creed (*akidah*), jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and prescribed acts of worship (*ibadah*). Furthermore, he believed that this *Tharīqah* should realistically focus on helping all layers of society fulfill their primary religious obligations, rather than solely engaging in rigorous acts of piety (*riyadhah*) and seclusion from society (*‘uzlah or khalwat*). Moreover, Imam Haddad sought to redefine the role of scholars (*ulama*) not only as Faqīh (*experts in fiqh*) who teach jurisprudence and produce fatwas, but also as *Dā’i* (preachers) who actively disseminate beneficial knowledge. In this regard, Imam Haddad divided this beneficial knowledge into two branches: *‘ulūmu al-īmān* (the science of faith), which discusses matters of belief and can be studied in books on creed, and *‘ulūmu al-islām* (the science of Islam), which deals with practical knowledge and can be studied in concise *fiqh* books. Additionally, he wrote a book of dhikr that is easy to practice even for common

⁴⁹ Ali bin Husain Alatas, *Tāj A’rās ‘ala Manāqib Al-Habib Al-Quthb Sāleh Bin Abdullah Alatas* (Kudus: Menara Kudus, 1979).

⁵⁰ Zain bin Ibrāhīm Bin Smith, *Al-Manhaj Al-Sawi Syarh Usūl Tharīqah Al-Sādah Bā’Alawi* (Tarim: Dār Al-Ilmi wa Al-Da’wah, 2005).

⁵¹ Ismail Fajrie Alatas, *What is Religious Authority?: Cultivating Islamic Communities in Indonesia* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2021), 1-256.

people, known as *Rātib*. These two books are concise and easy to study due to their simple language and straightforward discussions.⁵²

Furthermore, the books that were intended to become consistent Islamic norms opened up space for the emergence of actors who could explain, translate, or simply lead their recitation in various interactive settings. These actors were referred to by Imam Haddad as "*sheikh al-ta'lim*" (teaching sheikh), which he distinguished from "*sheikh al-riyādhah*" (training sheikh) or "*murshid*" (Sufi guide). The difference lies in that the pedagogical interaction of a sheikh al-ta'lim centers on the content of the books and does not necessarily require the individual to be a scholar, Sufi, or expert; what is needed is merely the ability to teach the books, which were initially designed to be easily understood. This clearly shows that Imam Haddad sought to reform the teachings of the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* with an easily comprehensible curriculum that would support the realization of standardized and realistic social norms, both in matters of faith and practice, accessible to all groups regardless of their ethnic or class background.⁵³

Imam Haddad has had a significant influence on the spread of the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* across various parts of the world, including Africa (such as Kenya and Tanzania), Asia (such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore), as well as Europe and Arab countries. This influence is primarily due to his dedication to spreading knowledge and dawah through his words, writings, and exemplary life. His books, known as summaries of earlier scholars' works like the "*Ihya*", and his blessed litanies continue to be inherited and practiced by many Muslims through his disciples and followers who have spread across different parts of the world. Amidst the currents of modernization and changing times, Imam Haddad's spiritual and intellectual legacy remains relevant and serves as a guide for disciples and followers seeking peace and spiritual depth through the teachings of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*. In every work, there is an implicit invitation to return to the pure and universal values of Islam, making him a spiritual beacon for Muslims worldwide.⁵⁴

After Imam Haddad, the spread of the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* was continued by his chosen disciples, who also became great scholars. Among them were Habib Ahmad bin Zain al-Habshi (d. 1144 AH), Habib Abdul Rahman bin Abdullah BaFaḳīh (d. 1162 AH), who was nicknamed "*Allāmah Dunya*", and Habib Muhammad bin Zain bin Smit (d. 1172 AH). Additionally, Imam Haddad's children were known as examples of their father's education. The next prominent generation in spreading the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* included Habib Umar bin Saqaf al-Saqqaf, who was known as "*Sheikh al-Aqtab*". Among his disciples were Habib Ahmad bin Umar bin Smit (d. 1257 AH), Habib Abdullah bin Hussein bin Tahir (d. 1272 AH), and his brother Habib Tahir bin Hussein bin Tahir (d. 1241 AH). Additionally, there were Habib Hassan bin Saleh al-Bahr al-Jifri (d. 1273 AH) and Habib Abdullah bin Umar bin Yahya (d. 1265 AH). Habib Idrus bin Umar al-Habshi (d. 1314 AH) was one of the most well-known disciples of this generation and compiled the book "*Aqd al-Yawaqit al-Jawhariyyah*", gathering the transmission chains from Alawiyyin scholars.⁵⁵

Following that generation, three notable individuals arose from the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*: Habib Ahmad bin Hassan al-Attas (d. 1334 H), well-known in academic circles outside of Hadhramaut, including Egypt, Syria, and the Hijaz; and Habib Abdul Rahman bin Muhammad al-Masyhur (d. 1320 H), the greatest Mufti of Hadhramaut and author of

⁵² Ismail Fajrie Alatas, 1-256.

⁵³ Ismail Fajrie Alatas, 1-256.

⁵⁴ Zain bin Ibrāhīm Bin Smith, *Al-Manhaj Al-Sawi Syarh Usūl Thariqah Al-Sādah Bā'Alawi* (Tarim: Dār Al-Ilmi wa Al-Da'wah, 2005).

⁵⁵ Zain bin Ibrāhīm Bin Smith.

"*Bughyat al-Mustarsyidin*." In addition, Habib Ali bin Muhammad al-Habshi (d. 1333 H), whose literary and *sūfī* contributions are noteworthy. The founder of Ribath Tarim and a major contributor to the academic resurgence of his day, Shaykh al-Islam Habib Abdullah bin Umar al-Syathiri (d. 1361 H), was among the leaders of the following generation. There were also the agnostics Habib Salim bin Hafidh (d. 1378 H) and Habib Alwi bin Abdullah bin Syihabuddin (d. 1386 H). One more significant person.⁵⁶

In the end, it can be concluded that the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*, which has its roots in Sayyid Alawi bin Ubaidillah bin Ahmad al-Muhajir, the direct lineage of the Prophet Muhammad, has been instrumental in the propagation and conservation of Islamic teachings, especially through a deep and methodical approach to spiritual education. Under political and social pressure, Imam Ahmad bin Isa al-Muhajir led a migration from Basra to Hadhramaut, which exemplifies a complex method of adaptation and integration in maintaining their religious identity. They were effective in changing the religious orientation of the locals in Hadhramaut from the Ibadī sect to *Ahlus Sunnah*, a process that reflected the intricate interactions between migrants and the local people within the framework of socioreligious developments. His successors, including Imam Faqīh Muqaddam Muhammad bin Ali Bā'alawi, institutionalized the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* through spiritual education based on traditional practices, while later figures such as Imam Abdullah bin Alawi al-Haddad introduced new methods relevant to the social-spiritual conditions of their time. Their influence extended to Europe, Africa, and Southeast Asia, reflecting a strong diasporic network and their capacity to transmit profound Islamic values. Their spiritual and intellectual legacies remain a source of inspiration today, demonstrating the complex and dynamic mechanisms of cultural transmission that allow for the maintenance and adaptation of collective identity.

The history of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* has produced various writings that reflect their thoughts and changes in Sufism. For example, "*al-Kibrīt al-Ahmar wa al-Iksīr al-Akbar*" by 'Abd Allah al-'Aydārūs is a very profound and difficult-to-understand work, following the writing style of scholars of that time. However, after the era of Imam Haddad, around the late 16th and early 17th centuries, there was a significant shift towards more standardized and accessible writing. Works such as "*al-Nūr al-Sāfir*" by 'Abd al-Qādir al-'Aydārūs, "*al-Mashra 'al-Rawiy*" by Muhammad al-Shillī, and "*Risālat al-Mu'āwana*" by 'Abd Allah al-Haddād now focus more on practical and applicable Prophetic teachings. This change demonstrates an effort to make the teachings of the *Tharīqah* more known and accepted by people outside the Ba 'Alawi lineage, as well as to address new emerging challenges.

2.3 *Tharīqah* Movemet on Politics

Historically, *tharīqah* have not only functioned as spiritual institutions but also as social forces capable of influencing political dynamics, as evidenced by the role played by *tharīqah* in various social and political movements throughout Islamic history. They have often been centers of Islamic teaching and propagation, but they have also played a role in maintaining cultural and religious identity amidst external pressures. The influence of *tharīqah* in politics is an intriguing topic that is often overlooked in studies of Islamic politics. Since the early development of Islam, *tasawwuf* has been a spiritual path for many Muslims seeking closeness to God. Several *tharīqah* that have formed over time have played a crucial role in the spread of Islam in various regions.

According to Azyumardi Azra, *Tharīqah* frequently serves as a social and political agency with the ability to organize large crowds in support of particular political objectives or opposition to colonialism. Azra points out that the *Tharīqah Syattariyah* and

⁵⁶ Zain bin Ibrāhim Bin Smith.

Tharīqah Naqsyabandiyah, for instance, had a big impact on the resistance movement against Dutch colonialism in Indonesia. They gave the warriors vital moral and logistical support in addition to spiritual encouragement. The fact that *tharīqah* has influenced various resistance movements shows that it is not just a spiritual practice but also has the power to affect social and political transformations.⁵⁷

During the colonial era, *Tharīqah* often served as a basis for resistance against colonizers. For example, in Algeria, the *Tharīqah Qadiriyyah* and *Tharīqah Tijaniyyah* played significant roles in the resistance against French colonization. This resistance movement was not only military but also cultural and spiritual, aiming to preserve Islamic identity and local traditions from Western influence. Followers of *Tharīqah* even fought with weapons, strengthening religious and cultural values through religious teachings, the dissemination of Islamic literature, and religious ceremonies that reinforced solidarity and fighting spirit.⁵⁸

In Indonesia, as previously mentioned, *Tharīqah* also served as a basis for resistance against the colonizers. One of the most notable examples is the Diponegoro War (1825-1830), which was largely supported by the followers of *Tharīqah*. This war was seen as both a military conflict and a struggle to uphold the honor and dignity of Islam and Javanese traditions against Dutch colonial domination. Leaders of the *tharīqah* gathered the resistance, gave the warriors sanctuary, and supported them morally and spiritually. They also reinforced communication networks and assisted in coordinating logistics and resource mobilization. In addition to inspiring and motivating the populace to resist foreign dominance, *tharīqah's* role in the colonial resistance shows how local religious institutions can serve as important hubs of social and political power. It also reflects *tharīqah's* capacity to adapt and respond to the difficulties faced by Muslim communities under colonial rule in ways that go beyond simple physical resistance.⁵⁹

In the postcolonial era, *Tharīqah* continued to play a significant role in politics by adapting to new political situations, often supporting the ruling regimes or becoming a strong opposition. In Egypt, for instance, *Tharīqah* played a significant role during the eras of Nasser, Sadat, and Mubarak.⁶⁰ Their ability to remain relevant in politics is due to their large and organized mass base, which can be mobilized to support or oppose government policies. *Tharīqah's* adaptation to changing power dynamics reflects their flexibility in maintaining influence amidst social and political changes. They also serve as channels for people's aspirations, providing space for the community to voice opinions in a repressive political context. With strong emotional and spiritual bonds, *Tharīqah* builds trust and loyalty that can be mobilized for political purposes. In the era of globalization and modernization, *Tharīqah* utilizes new technologies and media to reach a wider audience

⁵⁷ Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia : Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern'Ulam? 'in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004).

⁵⁸ John Obert Voll, *Islam: Continuity And Change In The Modern World* (New York: Routledge, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429052132>.

⁵⁹ Moh Ashif Fuadi et al., "Pesantren Tradition and the Existence of Tharīqah Syattariyah in the Java War of 1825-1830," *TSAQAFAH* 18, no. 1 (May 1, 2022): 165, <https://doi.org/10.21111/tsaqafah.v18i1.7666>.

⁶⁰ Tarek Ladjal and Benaouda Bensaid, "Sūfism and Politics in Contemporary Egypt: A Study of Sūfī Political Engagement in the Pre and Post-Revolutionary Reality of January 2011," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 50, no. 4 (August 10, 2015): 468–85, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909614534170>.

and strengthen their political influence, demonstrating that *Tharīqah* is a dynamic and adaptive political actor.

In the contemporary context, *Tharīqah* still holds significant influence in the politics of many Muslim countries, including Turkey. Several *Tharīqah*, such as the *Tharīqah Naqsyabandiyah* and *Tharīqah Gulen* Movement, have undergone significant transformations and are often involved in politics, adapting to social and political changes. According to John L. Esposito and Emad El-Din Shahin, some of these *Tharīqah* play an important role not only in religious life but also in the economy and education, strengthening their position in the political arena. The *Tharīqah Gulen* Movement, for instance, has become a significant political force with a wide network of schools and social institutions, building a loyal follower base and influencing various aspects of life in Turkey. By adapting to changing political dynamics, these *Tharīqah* have successfully demonstrated how religious organizations can remain relevant and contribute to the social and political development of the country.⁶¹

Comparably, *tharīqah* is significant to modern Indonesian politics as well. Large mass bases and involvement in local politics are characteristics of *tharīqah* like *Tharīqah Syattariyah* in West Sumatra and *Nahdlatul Wathan* in Lombok. These two *tharīqah* are important figures in their respective regions because of their impact on politics, society, and spirituality. According to Greg Fealy, local concerns like social welfare, education, and infrastructure development are frequently linked to *tharīqah's* involvement in Indonesian politics. This engagement typically manifests as endorsement of certain candidates in municipal elections, which is anticipated to yield tangible advantages for the *tharīqah* community. Additionally, *tharīqah* often acts as mediators in local conflicts and provides a moral voice in political decision-making at the regional level. This involvement in politics demonstrates that their role is not limited to the spiritual realm but also encompasses important aspects of community life, including economic and social dimensions.⁶²

Naqsyabandiyah is one of the most well-known *tharīqahs* in politics. This *tharīqah* is well-known for its rigorous structure and spiritual discipline, which makes it extremely powerful in a variety of spheres of life, including politics. Because of their common ideals and objectives, the *Tharīqah Naqshbandiyah* and the political class have close relationships in many nations. The *tharīqah* backs politicians who advance Islamic principles in public affairs. This *tharīqah* had great influence in Pakistan, particularly in the days of Zia-ul-Haq, who was a prominent *Naqshbandiyah* supporter and leveraged the backing of the *tharīqah* to fortify his political base and impose Islamization policies in Pakistan. Support from the *Tharīqah Naqshbandiyah* gave Zia a sense of spiritual legitimacy and strengthened his position in a culture that places a great emphasis on religious beliefs. Up to the modern era, this *tharīqah* continues to play an important role in politics in various countries, demonstrating how spirituality and politics can interact and influence government policies, especially concerning religion and public morality.⁶³

The *Tharīqah Naqshbandiyah* is also a powerful political force in Central Asia. For example, this *tharīqah* enjoys tight ties with the administration in Uzbekistan. The *Tharīqah Naqshbandiyah* is a tool used by the Uzbek administration to forward its goals and bolster its legitimacy. The government's use of different policies and techniques to secure the support of religious organizations, such as the *Tharīqah Naqshbandiyah*, is indicative of this. Adeeb Khalid claims that the government of Uzbekistan frequently uses the *Tharīqah Naqshbandiyah* to stifle radical Islamic movements and advance a moderate

⁶¹ John L. Esposito and Emad El-Din Shahin, *The Oxford Handbook of Islam and Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁶² Greg Fealy, *Ijtihad Politik Ulama: Sejarah NU 1952-1967*, Vol. 1 (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2012).

⁶³ Barbara D. Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900*. Vol. 778 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).

and state-loyal interpretation of Islam. This Sufi Order has a role that goes beyond the spiritual to the social and political spheres, as evidenced by the fact that its leaders regularly participate in a number of government programs designed to preserve societal harmony and stability. Furthermore, the government uses this *tharīqah* as a vital tool to improve ties with the nation's Muslim community, forging a mutually advantageous alliance in the pursuit of shared objectives.⁶⁴

Tharīqah is also a significant political player in Africa. For instance, the *Tharīqah Muridiyyah* is a powerful political and economic force in Senegal. Sheikh Amadou Bamba established this *tharīqah* in the late 1800s, and it has grown to be a powerful political and economic force. The *Tharīqah Muridiyyah* frequently participates in political campaigns as a prominent supporter and has a vast business network. Leonardo A. Villalón claims that the *Tharīqah Muridiyyah* has a significant influence on Senegalese politics, especially when it comes to mass mobilization and campaign finance raising. The *Tharīqah Muridiyyah* has a wide range of impact, including social mobilization and widespread financial support. Its committed followers are able to encourage widespread participation in a variety of political activities. Their extensive commercial network encompasses multiple economic domains, offering ample capital to bolster political endeavors. The *tharīqah* is a strong force in Senegal because of its capacity to incorporate political, economic, and religious elements with one another. They provide financial, moral, and spiritual support, which is vital in the political climate of the area.⁶⁵

Tharīqah has a significant impact on politics that goes beyond mass mobilization and political support to include the formulation of public policy. *Tharīqah* affects social welfare, health, and education policies in numerous nations. For example, *Tharīqah* is frequently involved in the construction of schools, medical facilities, and social welfare initiatives in Indonesia. In Indonesia, *tharīqah* often works with the government to carry out social welfare programs, particularly in rural regions, according to Mark Woodward. In order to accomplish shared objectives and close any gaps that the government might not be able to close on its own, *tharīqah* and the government have shown mutual trust and understanding through their cooperation.⁶⁶

Regarding the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*, it had a very clear influence on politics in its early days of establishment. The Hadramaut region underwent intricate social dynamics during the lifetime of Imam Faqīh Muqaddam Muhammad bin Ali Bā'alawi (1178–1255). Numerous tribes, including the Bani Ayyub, Bani Yam, Bani Hamdan, Bani Kathir, Bani Ma'la, and Bani Harith, were embroiled in protracted wars that were frequently brought on by profound political divisions, power rivalries, and the desire for control over natural resources like water and fertile land. This was made worse by long-standing hostility and intergenerational disputes, which made it harder to stop the cycle of violence.⁶⁷

In this socio-political context laden with instability, *Bā'alawi*, who was focused on the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* and respected as one of the tribes, was asked for his stance on the ongoing social and political conditions. Consequently, Imam Faqīh Muqaddam's symbolic act of breaking his sword, known as "*kasru saif*," became a significant turning point. This act marked a firm rejection of involvement in practical politics reliant on military strength at the time. Instead, Imam Faqīh Muqaddam and his descendants from the Bā'alawi chose the path of *da'wah* (preaching), education, and the dissemination of knowledge as strategies

⁶⁴ Adeb Khalid, *Islam after Communism: Religion and Politics in Central Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

⁶⁵ Leonardo A. Villalón, *Islamic Society and State Power in Senegal: Disciples and Citizens in Fatick* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

⁶⁶ Mark Woodward, *Java, Indonesia and Islam*, Vol. 03, (New York: Springer, 2010).

⁶⁷ Muhammad Al-Abdali, *History of Hadramaut* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1994). Robert Bertram Serjeant, *South Arabian Hunt* (London: Luzac & Company Ltd, 1976). John Craven Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition of Oman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). Paul Dresch, "The Position of Shaykhs among the Northern Tribes of Yemen," no. 1 (1984): 31-49.

to build peace and social stability.⁶⁸ This decision not only reflected an adaptation to the conflict-ridden environment but also shaped the collective identity of the *Bā'alawi* as peace bearers in a fragmented society.

With the "kasru saif" event explained above, the view emerged that the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* took a path of avoiding involvement in practical politics. However, this view is not monolithic. Subsequently, some prominent figures from the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* leaders were actively involved in practical politics through the resources of the *Tharīqah*. For instance, Habib Thohir bin Hussein bin Thohir (d. 1272) led the struggle to fight and expel the colonizers. According to Ismail Fajrie Alatas, "*kasru saif*" was not a doctrine that the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* refrains from politics. In fact, it was a strategic political move that had a positive impact on the *Tharīqah* and its followers. By taking a stance of not engaging in practical politics reliant on military power, the leaders and followers of the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* were not seen as enemies and were free to interact with all conflicting parties. Many *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* figures became spokespersons among conflicting parties because they were perceived as having no political interests.⁶⁹

Conclusion

This chapter highlights the early development of Sufism as a personal expression within Islam before it evolved into various *tharīqahs*, including *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*, which developed specific methods and teachings to achieve spiritual goals. These *tharīqahs* are not found as isolated traditions separate from social contexts or solely focused on religious issues. They are discursive and historically bound, inseparable from evolving social practices over time. This indicates that *Tharīqahs* are not merely products of social structural changes but also organized expressions of concepts and theories that develop within their own tradition.

As the founder of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*, Imam Faqīh Muqoddam lived in a time of political unrest. Conflicts arose between several ruling *qabīlahs* (tribes) over resources and authority. The *Bā'alawi*, being a revered group, were consulted over these socio-political issues. In response, Imam Faqīh Muqoddam broke his sword; this act came to be known as the *Kasru Saif* phenomenon (breaking the sword). The answer to the question of the *Bā'alawi*'s position was provided by the phenomena of *Kasru Saif*, which denotes a rejection of involvement in practical politics dependent on military might. Still, *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*'s engagement in politics was not completely avoided. Some figures of this tarekat actively engaged in political struggles through non-military strategies such as mediation and diplomacy. For example, Habib Thohir bin Hussein bin Thohir led resistance against colonizers, demonstrating that this tarekat could adapt and play a significant role in political dynamics. Sufi orders, including *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*, not only play a role in the spiritual realm but also act as agents of social and political change, often serving as centers of Islamic teaching and participating in social and political movements.

⁶⁸ Abu Bakr Al-'Adny, *Al-Ustādz Al-A'dzom Al-Faqīh Al-Muqoddam* ('Aden: Far' Al-Dirasāt Wa Khidmah Al-Turats, 2002). 'Abdulramān bin 'Ubaydillah al-Saqqāf, *Mu'jam Buldān Hadramawt* (Saudi Arabia: Maktabat al-Irshād, 2002). Ali bin Muhsin al-Saqqaf, *al-Istizāda min Akhbār al-Sādā* (n.p.: Self-published, 2009).

⁶⁹ Ismail Fajrie Alatas, Associate Professor of Islamic Anthropology at New York University, interview by Ahmad Rizki, November 20, 2023, Cinere, Depok.

CHAPTER III

THARĪQAH 'ALAWIYYAH IN INDONESIA AND ITS VARIOUS ADAPTATIONS

As previously discussed, *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* emerged in Hadramaut, Yemen, after being established by Imam Faqīh Muqoddam. The presence of this *Tharīqah* in Indonesia is inseparable from the spread of the Bā'alawi community in the archipelago. This chapter will outline how *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* spread in Indonesia and how the Bā'alawi community adapted its teachings to address the social and political dynamics in Indonesia. The spread of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* in Indonesia began with scholars and traders from Hadramaut who came to the archipelago. They not only bring religious teachings, but they also bring *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*, which offers a different spiritual approach. The influence of this *Tharīqah* was greatly enhanced by the Bā'alawi community, known as the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The Bā'alawi community adheres to the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* to adapt to the socio-political changes occurring in Indonesia. There are several ways to adapt, such as changing religious beliefs to suit local culture, using an inclusive approach to various community groups, and actively participating in social and political activities. This allows the *Tarīqah 'Alawiyyah* to remain relevant and influential even though times and circumstances in Indonesia have changed.

3.1 The Introduction of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* to Indonesia

The discussion about the introduction of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* to Indonesia cannot be separated from the study of the migration and assimilation of the *Bā'alawī* family, which is a Hadramī community in their place of residence, the Netherlands Indies (the name for Indonesia at that time). The Hadramī migrants, originating from the Hadramaut region in Yemen, brought with them their traditions, culture, and religious practices as they moved to various countries, including the Netherlands Indies. They not only blended with the local community but also enriched the local culture and spirituality by bringing teachings and religious practices, including those from *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*. This process involved two-way adaptation and acceptance, where the local community adopted some aspects of Hadramī culture, while the Hadramī also adjusted to their new environment.

In fact, according to Ulrike Freitag, the leaders of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*, who are *Bā'alawī*, are a unique group within and from Hadhramaut who, with the presence of mysticism in Hadhramaut and their successful claims to its representation, are most likely literate and capable of conveying their own version of history. This success allowed them to effectively maintain and disseminate their intellectual traditions, making them the primary custodians of the historical narrative of the Hadramī community in the Netherlands Indies. With their high literacy skills, they could record and spread their stories and teachings more accurately and widely, reinforcing the study of them as religious and cultural authorities within the Hadramī society in the Netherlands Indies. At the same time, their specific claims to religious legitimacy not only through knowledge of *Tasawwuf* but also through a special *sharaf* (honor) derived from their descent from the Prophet Muhammad, necessitated an interest in genealogy. This significantly helped in preserving family histories that could then be further developed. Therefore, the study of the migration

of the Hadramī community is greatly supported by studies of the *Bā'alawī* and their *Tharīqah*.⁷⁰

The spread of *Tharīqah 'Alawīyyah* through the migration of the Hadramī community to the Netherlands Indies is not surprising. According to an interesting account by Kazuhiro Arai in his dissertation, for the *Bā'alawī*, or at least the Alatas family, who were among the pioneers of migration to the Nusantara, migration had already become part of their culture. Even before undertaking long-distance migration to the Nusantara, they were accustomed to short-distance migration within the Hadramaut region. Hadramaut is described as a "black box" from which people suddenly emerge and migrate to foreign places. This happened because family members who could not establish power in their home region often moved to seek opportunities in other parts of Hadramaut.⁷¹

There are several opinions about when the Hadramī community first set foot in the Netherlands Indies. However, it is very likely that they were already involved in trade in the Indian Ocean around the 10th century. The presence of Muslims from East Africa to China has existed since the early days of Islam. Although most historical records mention Persian and Indian traders trading with China, it is very likely that traders from the Hadramī community were also involved in this trade. There is archaeological evidence such as the Yemeni mosque in Quanzhou from the 11th century and a tombstone in Mogadishu dated 1358 that indicate the activity of Hadramī Arab traders. Quanzhou, which is part of China, was the main gateway for Middle Eastern traders to the sub-regions of the Indian Ocean, including the Netherlands Indies at that time.⁷²

The migration of the Hadramī community began to increase when the Netherlands, as the first European nation, established a trading agency in Hadramaut in 1614. This opened opportunities for the Hadramī people to establish broader trade relations with the outside world, with commodities such as spices, textiles, and incense becoming key trade items. The development of steam technology made sea travel easier and faster, leading to a significant increase in the number of Hadramī people migrating to areas in the Netherlands Indies such as Java, Madura, and Batavia (now Jakarta). Steam technology transformed previously difficult and time-consuming journeys into more practical and efficient ones, facilitating the movement and expansion of the Hadramī community. The same technological advancements accelerated the increase in Hadramī migration to Southeast Asia. Previously, migration was conducted by a few *Bā'alawī* and perhaps other wealthy Hadramī. However, cheaper steamship travel allowed more Hadramī from lower and poorer social groups to migrate. These transportation improvements also facilitated new connections between Hadramī in the Indies and their homeland in Hadramaut.⁷³

Then in the 19th century, the intensity of migration of the Hadramī community, including the *Bā'alawī*, surged due to several factors. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 facilitated a significant increase in the arrival of Hadramī people to Southeast Asia,

⁷⁰ Ulrike Freitag, "Reflections on the Longevity of the Hadhrami Diaspora in the Indian Ocean," in *The Hadhrami Diaspora in Southeast Asia: Social, Economic and Political Studies of the Middle East and Asia* (S.E.P.S.M.E.A.), ed. Ahmed Ibrahim Abushouk and Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 17–32.

⁷¹ Kazuhiro Arai, *Arabs Who Traversed the Indian Ocean: The History of the al-'Attas Family in Hadramawt and Southeast Asia*, c. 1600–c. 1960 (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2004).

⁷² Ulrike Freitag and William G. Clarence-Smith, eds., *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s to 1960s* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

⁷³ Robert Day McAmis, *Malay Muslims: The history and challenge of resurgent Islam in Southeast Asia*. (London: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2002), 12.

including the Netherlands Indies. Additionally, the arid and resource-scarce conditions in Hadramaut were a major factor pushing its residents to migrate abroad. Hadramaut, with its harsh geographical conditions, faced significant challenges in agriculture and water availability, making life difficult and economically unpromising. As a result, many Hadramaut residents sought better opportunities abroad, including in the Netherlands Indies. And the Netherlands Indies became a primary destination for them due to its strategic location on international trade routes, which facilitated access to global markets and allowed them to engage in profitable trade activities. Moreover, the Netherlands Indies's fertile land and climate, which supported agriculture, offered opportunities not available in their homeland, making it an ideal place to start a new life and develop agricultural and trade businesses.⁷⁴

Additionally, this increased migration was influenced by British intervention in the administration of Hadramaut in the 19th century, which caused instability and tension in the region. The disruptions caused by the British intervention, through what was called the "Ingrams' Peace," as an adoption of a new colonial model, created unsafe and uncomfortable living conditions, prompting many *Bā'alawī* communities to seek safer and more stable places. Furthermore, the British were eager to promote their 'new towns,' and wealthy Arab settlers, already familiar with the region's culture, were seen as ideal candidates. In fact, they were given many incentives and flexibility by the British. Families such as *al-Atas*, *al-Junayd*, *al-Kāf*, and *al-Saqqāf* were early Hadramī settlers who came from across the Strait of Malacca and became part of the community. Another major factor contributing to this instability was the attacks from Wahhabi factions, a sect that sought to eliminate *Bā'alawī* teachings and lineage. The *Wahhabī* faction viewed the *Bā'alawī* as custodians of their ancestral traditional practices, which, according to *Wahhabī* views, needed to be eradicated. Threats and attacks from the *Wahhabī* faction made many *Bā'alawī* feel the need to leave their homeland and seek refuge in safer places outside Hadramaut, including the Netherlands Indies, which had a growing Muslim community and promising economic opportunities.⁷⁵

The presence of the *Bā'alawī* through their migration to the Netherlands Indies not only had economic impacts but also significantly influenced the history of Islam's spread in the the Netherlands Indies. Some came as preachers or those who propagated Islam and spread it to the local population. Many became *muftis*, *qadis*, and *imāms* within the community. As part of the social dynamics of the time, they established *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) and centers for Islamic teaching in various regions. Their role in founding these educational institutions was crucial as *pesantren* became effective centers for learning and disseminating Islamic teachings. In addition to teaching through religious lectures, the *Bā'alawī* demonstrated exemplary lives, providing concrete examples for the surrounding community. They lived among the people, shared knowledge and moral values, and participated in daily social activities. This created close relationships between the *Bā'alawī* ulama and the local indigenous communities, thereby strengthening their

⁷⁴ Ulrike Freitag and William G. Clarence-Smith, eds., *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s to 1960s* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

⁷⁵ Nurulwahidah Fauzi et al., "Tareqat Alawiyah as an Islamic Ritual Within Hadhrami's Arab in Johor," *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research* 14, no. 12 (January 2013): 1708–15. Frode F. Jacobsen, *Hadrami Arabs in Present-day Indonesia: An Indonesia-oriented Group with an Arab Signature* (London: Routledge, 2009).

position as spiritual and social leaders.⁷⁶ The role of the *Bā'alawī* in the spread of Islam in the Nusantara was likely very significant. According to Syed Farid Alatas, "what is greatly underrecognized in the literature on the history of Islam in Southeast Asia is the role of the Hadrami *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* in the conversion process."⁷⁷

The spread of Islam by the *Bā'alawī* brought elements of Sufism and unique *Tharīqah* practices. Initially, the religious practices of the *Tharīqah Sūfī* attracted attention from both Muslims and non-Muslims. Charismatic of *Sūfīs*, skilled in reading and writing, healing, creating amulets, and often believed to possess supernatural powers, successfully attracted many followers. With the emergence of the *Tharīqa 'Alawiyyah*, the *Bā'alawī* participated in such scholarly and Sufi practices, often using symbols called "*wafak*" believed to provide benefits to their users, thereby attracting more followers. However, in recent times, some leaders of the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* have sought to return and realign the *Tharīqah* with Sharia to ensure that their practices remain consistent with pure Islamic teachings.

The *Bā'alawī* community successfully integrated and expanded their influence in the Netherlands Indies by marrying local women and producing mixed descendants known as *muwallad* or *peranakan*. By marrying local women, they not only strengthened their social and economic positions but also facilitated the spread of Islamic teachings. These marriages created close kinship ties between the *Bā'alawī* community and the local population, which helped in the acceptance and dissemination of the culture and Islamic values they brought.⁷⁸ A major factor driving these marriages was that most Hadramī migrants were men. Due to cultural taboos prohibiting women from traveling, hardly any Hadramī women left Hadramaut. As a result, many Hadramī men married local women, which helped them integrate more easily into the local society.⁷⁹ However, the indigenous population of the Netherlands Indies had an ambiguous view of Hadramī migration: on one hand, they regarded the Hadramī, who were Arabs, as authorities in religious matters; on the other hand, they also viewed them as usurers.⁸⁰

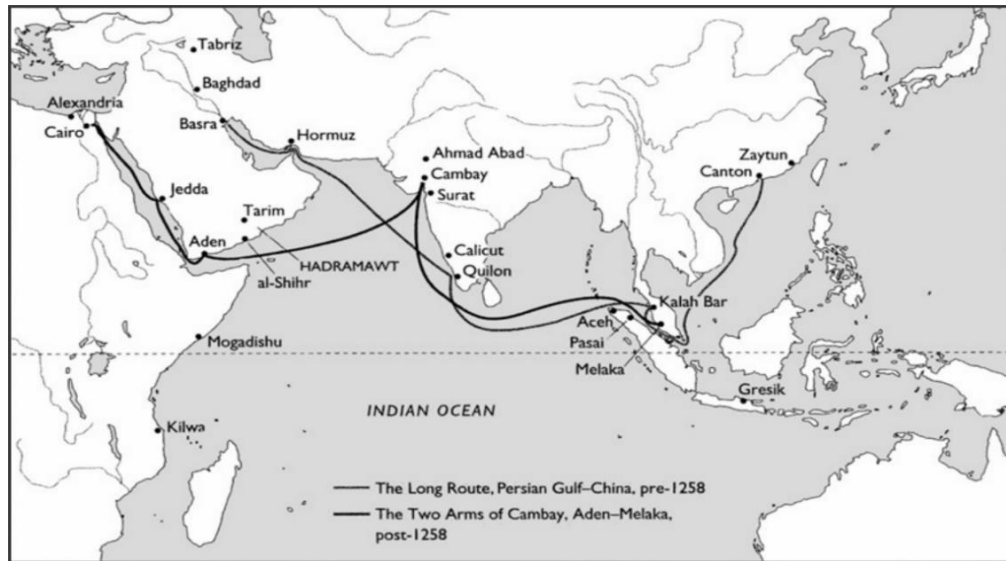
⁷⁶ Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern Ulama in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2004).

⁷⁷ Syed Farid Alatas, "Hadhramaut and the Hadhrami Diaspora: Problems in Theoretical History," in *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s-1960s*, ed. Ulrike Freitag and William G. Clarence-Smith (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 19-34. Ulrike Freitag, "Reflections on the Longevity of the Hadhrami Diaspora in the Indian Ocean," in *The Hadhrami Diaspora in Southeast Asia: Social, Economic and Political Studies of the Middle East and Asia (S.E.P.S.M.E.A.)*, ed. Ahmed Ibrahim Abushouk and Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 17-32.

⁷⁸ Engseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim. Natalie Mobini-Kesheh, Community and Identity in the Netherlands East Indies, 1900-1942* (Cornell University Press, 1999), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctv3s8rv7>.

⁷⁹ Natalie Mobini-Kesheh, *Community and Identity in the Netherlands East Indies, 1900-1942*.

⁸⁰ Nico Kaptein, "Arabophobia and the Aversion against the Tarekat: How Sayyid 'Uthmān Became Advisor to the Netherlands Colonial Administration," in *Hadhrami Diaspora in Southeast Asia: Identity Maintenance or Assimilation?*, ed. Ahmed Ibrahim Abu Shouk and Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 22-44.



Map of trade routes across the Indian Ocean that facilitated the migration of Hadrami communities to the Dutch East Indies⁸¹

Because of this intense interaction, Engseng Ho argues that the Hadramī diaspora in Southeast Asia can be considered creole, though with regional differentiation, particularly in Java, until the late 19th century. Meanwhile, Michael Feener supports the concept of hybridity when discussing the Hadramī diaspora, although this term is considered less helpful as it does not always describe the character of a stable and prestigious community. Ho argues that creolization is more relevant, given the significant emigration from Hadramaut between the mid-19th and 20th centuries, with about one-third of the Hadramī population living abroad in the 1930s.⁸² Nevertheless, the *Bā'alawī* did not marry their daughters to non-*Bā'alawī* individuals. They used the doctrine of *kafā'ah* (equality in marriage) as justification. This practice helped the *Bā'alawī* integrate with the local kinship structure while maintaining their uniqueness through strictly preserved lineage.

3.2 Sayyid 'Utsmān bin yahya

Although Hadramī migration to the Netherlands Indies increased in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the number of scholars from the leaders of the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* did not see a significant rise. This was likely due to their primary purpose of coming to the Netherlands Indies, which was for trade. However, during the colonial period, several names from the leaders of this *Tharīqah* were known as Habib in the Nusantara. One of the most prominent in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was *Sayyid*

⁸¹ Engseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean*, vol. 3 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

⁸² Engseng Ho, "Genealogical Figures in an Arabian Indian Ocean Diaspora (2000), 199–296. R. M. Feener, "Hybridity and the 'Hadhrami Diaspora' in the Indian Ocean Muslim Networks," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 32, no. 3 (2004): 353–372, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23654529>. Engseng Ho, "Names beyond Nations: The Making of Local Cosmopolitans," *Études Rurales* 163/164 (2002): 215–231, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20122942>.

‘Utsmān bin Yahya, who became the *mufti* of Batavia. His excellence lay not only in his outstanding academic career but also in his position within the Dutch colonial government.

With the social position that the *Bā’alawī* held within the indigenous community, *Sayyid ‘Utsmān*, as part of the *Bā’alawī*, not only exerted influence in religious propagation but also played a significant role in the political dynamics of the Netherlands Indies at that time. Karel A. Steenbrink explains that the *Ba’alawī* family had significant influence in the political and social spheres in the Netherlands Indies. This community often became central figures in major Islamic organizations, playing a crucial role in mass mobilization and Islamic reform. Many of them held strategic positions in political parties and were involved in diplomacy.⁸³ Nevertheless, their identity in the Netherlands Indies was ultimately shaped by socio-political factors related to both domestic and global developments.

Sayyid ‘Utsmān bin Yahya was born in Pekojan, Batavia, in 1822. His father was *Sayyid ‘Abdallāh bin ‘Aqīl bin ‘Umar bin Yahya*, and his mother, Amina, was the daughter of *Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rahmān bin Ahmad al-Mishrī*, an Egyptian. *Sayyid ‘Utsmān* was known as a preacher highly oriented towards Sharia, often regarded as a "*puritan scholar*." He focused on strengthening traditional religious values and rejecting changes that he considered to harm the purity of Islamic teachings. His commitment to classical teachings and traditional teaching methods reflected his dedication to preserving the Islamic scholarly heritage highly esteemed by the *Bā’Alawī* family.⁸⁴

Nonetheless, he was not passive and often engaged in polemics with other scholars on religious and political issues, as recorded in several of his writings. With a strict religious approach and a focus on traditional education, *Sayyid ‘Utsmān* was very selective regarding *Tharīqah* (Sufi orders), recognizing only those that conformed to Sharia. Aware of the low level of religious understanding among the general public, he prohibited the teaching of Sufism to laypeople before they had learned the basic knowledge of Sharia to prevent misunderstandings. Similarly, he was very cautious about the science of *Kalam* (Islamic theology), and citing *Ibn Hajar's* work *Az-Zawājir* in "The Twenty Attributes," he strictly forbade the in-depth study of *Kalam* due to concerns about misinterpretation. He set forth conditions before one could follow a *Tharīqah*, as explained in his book *Al-Nashīhah Al-Anīqah li Al-Mutalabbisīn bi al-Tharīqah*:

*“Worship of Allah should be orderly before seeking blessings (joining a Tharīqah) under the prescribed conditions. The conditions for entering a Tharīqah are as follows: first, one must first pursue the obligatory knowledge (fardhu ‘Ain) and additionally the communal obligations (fardhu kifayah) and perform the Sunnah in an orderly manner; second, possess praiseworthy qualities of the heart; third, strive against the desires of the self to avoid bad deeds and strive to practice the obligatory and Sunnah acts; and fourth, follow the example set by the Prophet Muhammad.”*⁸⁵

⁸³ Karel A. Steenbrink, *Dutch Colonialism and Indonesian Islam: Contacts and Conflicts, 1596-1950*, vol. 7 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006).

⁸⁴ Nico Kaptein, "Arabophobia and the Aversion against the Tarekat, 22-44.

⁸⁵ ‘Ustman bin ‘Abdullah bin ‘Aqil bin Yahya, *Al-Nashīhah Al-Anīqah li Al-Mutalabbisīn bi al-Tharīqah*, (Jakarta).

Sayyid 'Utsmān's selective attitude towards *Tharīqah* aimed to emphasize the importance of religious education in accordance with Sharia to preserve the purity of Islamic teachings and protect the community from misunderstandings of the religion, at least as stated in his books. However, his stance and thoughts expressed in some of his works often sparked controversy, as he was accused of adapting his attitudes and writings to align with the Dutch colonial agenda. These accusations arose due to his close relationship with the colonial government, which was believed to influence his views and writings, thereby diminishing the authenticity of the teachings he conveyed.

Similar to *Sayyid 'Utsmān*, the Dutch were also very concerned about the issue of *Tharīqah*, but from a different perspective. In the 1880s, *Tharīqah* was the only social institution in the Netherlands Indies capable of mobilizing the masses at a supralocal level. Although it did not have a political orientation, *Tharīqah* was considered a potential threat to the colonial government. This concern was reinforced by K. F. Holle, the Honorary Advisor for Native Affairs, who viewed the *Tharīqah Naqshabandiyyah* as a threat to public order. In January 1886, *Sayyid 'Utsmān* visited Holle, and around 1,000 copies of anti-*Naqshabandiyyah* pamphlets were distributed in West Java, sparking open conflict with local *Tharīqah* leaders. Although *Sayyid 'Utsmān* obtained approval for his pamphlets from the two highest religious authorities in Mecca, the debate continued, prompting him to write another pamphlet in Arabic and Malay. In these writings, he harshly criticized deviant *Tharīqah* practices, condemned physical ecstasy, and denounced mixed-gender participation.⁸⁶

There were several Dutch figures known to *Sayyid 'Utsmān*, such as F. W. M. Hoogenstraaten, a doctor practicing in Batavia since 1861, M. J. de Goeje, a renowned professor of Arabic Studies at Leiden, and L. W. C. van den Berg, a colonial administration advisor. However, the most prominent was C. Snouck Hurgronje, a leading Islamic scholar and government advisor. On October 14 and 16, 1886, Snouck Hurgronje published two articles in the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* highlighting the importance of *Sayyid 'Utsmān's* knowledge in formulating government policies related to Islam. The articles, titled "An Arab Ally of the Dutch East Indies Government," praised *Sayyid 'Utsmān's* struggle against *Tharīqah*, describing the sheikhs and their followers as a significant threat to Dutch authority in the Indies. Snouck Hurgronje concluded his articles by stating, "one Arab like Othman ibn Jahja is worth more than many 'liberal' regents who drink wine." Although they had never met, *Sayyid 'Utsmān* had written several times to Snouck Hurgronje, who was then in the Netherlands, offering his booklet *Al-Wathīqa al-Wafiyya* and seeking Snouck Hurgronje's support in introducing his book to the Dutch government. Their collaboration continued until Snouck Hurgronje arrived in Indonesia in May 1889, eventually leading to *Sayyid 'Utsmān's* appointment as "Honorary Advisor for Arab Affairs," a position he held until his death in 1914.⁸⁷

In his appointment as "Honorary Advisor for Arab Affairs," *Sayyid 'Utsmān* did not receive an official salary but was granted an allowance of 100 guilders per month by Snouck Hurgronje to provide information on Islamic affairs. It is suspected that *Sayyid 'Utsmān* received a much larger sum as a contribution to cover the production costs of publications that were considered to support the maintenance of the political status quo. Azyumardi Azra explains that *Sayyid 'Utsmān's* political stance was actually common among the Hadhrami in the Netherlands Indies, who often supported non-Muslim governments as long as their interests were not threatened. They generally supported the Dutch in conflicts with indigenous Muslims and often received honorary titles for their services. For instance, *Sayyid 'Utsmān* rejected calls for jihad, such as in the Banten Jihad of 1888, to maintain law and order. Nevertheless, he supported *Sarekat Islam*, the first

⁸⁶ Nico Kaptein, "Arabophobia and the Aversion against the Tarekat, 22-44.

⁸⁷ Nico Kaptein, "Arabophobia and the Aversion against the Tarekat, 22-44.

proto-nationalist Islamic movement in Indonesia, and wrote works defending *Sarekat Islam* from accusations of religious deviance and immoral actions.⁸⁸

Sayyid 'Utsmān was not opposed to *Tharīqah*; on the contrary, he was very concerned with the proper dissemination of *Tharīqah*. He even provided guidance on how one could follow a *Tharīqah* correctly, as outlined in his books. According to Ismail Fajrie Alatas, Sayyid Utsman supported the colonial "*rust en orde*" (peace and order), which led him to collaborate closely with the Dutch colonial authorities. While leveraging Dutch support to carry out his agenda, such as maintaining the teachings of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* as evident in his works, including publications like "*Sifat Dua Puluh*," the colonial government also used Sayyid Utsman to control the expression of Islam. However, for reformists, the version of Islam proposed by *Sayyid 'Utsmān* was unacceptable.⁸⁹

In the 20th century, particularly after Indonesia's independence, *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*, which had long maintained the *Bā'alawī* identity and distinguished them from other groups while preserving their diaspora consciousness, was no longer in line with the discourse of national assimilation. The strengthening of the state and the materialization of Indonesian nationalism forced groups with foreign backgrounds, including Chinese and Arabs, to adapt to the new political reality. Challenges also came from Islamic reformism, which taught egalitarianism and shifted traditional views on authority in Islam. In this context, the *Bā'alawī*, who upheld their genealogical and traditional scholarly credentials, faced challenges that required them to adapt their position within Indonesian society. In a letter from 1934, Sukarno, who later became Indonesia's first president, criticized the veneration of individuals that almost resembled idol worship among the *Bā'alawī* sayyids, a group of migrants from Hadramaut, South Yemen, who were revered as descendants of Prophet Muhammad and spread Islamic traditions through *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*. Sukarno condemned the *Bā'alawī* teachings, which he disparagingly referred to as "Hadramautism," as part of the problem in Islamic practice in Indonesia, including superstition and conservatism.⁹⁰

Sayyid 'Utsmān bin Yahya had influential students who played significant roles in the development of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* and political dynamics. One of his most prominent students was Habib Alī al-Habsyī, better known as "Habib Ali Kwitang." Habib Ali was a highly popular and respected *Bā'alawī* scholar in post-independence Indonesia. He not only played a key role in spreading *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* but also had strong political influence and was known to be close to important figures, including Soekarno. As a third-generation Hadramī born in Indonesia to a native mother, Habib Ali represented the creole Hadramī identity in Indonesia before the colonial period.

Habib 'Alī bin 'Abdur Rahmān bin 'Abdullāh bin Muhammad al-Habsyī was born in Kwitang, Jakarta, on April 20, 1870, into a family with a strong religious background. His father, Habib 'Abdur Rahmān al-Habsyī, was a *Bā'alawī* scholar and preacher, while his mother, Nyai Hajjah Salmah, was the daughter of a Betawi scholar from Kampung Melayu, Jatinegara, East Jakarta. From a young age, Habib 'Ali studied religion in classes

⁸⁸ Azyumardi Azra, "*A Hadhrami Religious Scholar in Indonesia: Sayyid 'Uthmān*," in *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s-1960s*, ed. Ulrike Freitag and William G. Clarence-Smith (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 249-263.

⁸⁹ Ismail Fajrie Alatas, "Becoming Indonesians: The *Bā'Alawī* in the Interstices of the Nation," *Die Welt des Islams* 51, no. 1 (2011): 45-108.

⁹⁰ Ismail Fajrie Alatas, *What is Religious Authority?: Cultivating Islamic Communities in Indonesia* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2021), 1-256.

held by Sayyid 'Utsmān bin Yahya, which provided a strong foundation for his scholarly and spiritual development.⁹¹ Following his father's will, Habib Alī later went to Hadramaut to continue his education. The first place he went to was *Rubat* (Islamic seminary), under the guidance of al-Habib Abdurrahmān bin Alwī al-Aydrūs, *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* scholar from *Bā'Alawī*.⁹²

In Hadramaut, he also studied under many other renowned *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* leaders, such as Al-'Allāmah al-Qutub al-Habīb 'Alī bin Muhammad al-Habsyī, Al-'Allāmah al-Imām al-Habīb Ahmad bin Hasan al-Attās, Al-'Allāmah al-Habīb Hasan bin Ahmad al-Aydrūs, Al-'Allāmah al-Habīb Zein bin Alwī Bā'abūd, Al-'Allāmah al-Syekh Hasan bin Awadh Mukhaddam, Al-'Allāmah al-Habīb Abdurrahmān bin Muhammad al-Mahsyūr, Al-'Allāmah al-Habīb Umar bin Idrūs bin Alwī al-Aydrūs, and Al-'Allāmah al-Habīb Alwī bin Abdurrahmān al-Masyhūr, along with many other scholars who became his teachers during his time in Hadramaut.⁹³ Furthermore, before returning to the Netherlands Indies, Habib Ali continued his education in Mecca, where he studied under the guidance of several scholars associated with the renowned *Shāfi'ī mufti*, Aḥmad bin Zaynī Daḥlān (d. 1886). Daḥlān was known as a staunch defender of the practices of visiting graves and venerating saints.⁹⁴

Like his teacher Sayyid 'Utsmān, Habib Ali adopted a passive Sunni political stance by accepting the existing authority and criticizing unorthodox interpretations of Islam. In his treatise, *al-Kalimāt al-ḥisān fī mā yanfa'u li-l-insān*, he rejected the use of amulets, which were often associated with anti-colonial rebellion. He considered the use of amulets as shirk (idolatry) and bid'ah (reprehensible innovation), citing the hadith of the Prophet and the views of Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī on amulets as "ignorance and deviation." Habib Ali urged Muslims to repent and study the teachings of the Prophet in theology, law, ethics, and Sufism, which he noted were "easily accessible because they have been translated by our teacher Sayyid 'Utsmān." Thus, Habib Ali followed in the footsteps of Sayyid 'Utsmān, reflecting a traditional Sunni political position and Sufism focused on Sharia.⁹⁵

As previously explained, after Indonesia's independence, the strengthening of the state and the materialization of Indonesian nationalism forced the Bā'alawī to adapt to the new political reality. For some, there were only two choices in that context: total assimilation or expulsion. In this situation, Habib Ali Kwitang endeavored to integrate with the broader Indonesian Muslim community while preserving their heritage and excellence through conscious efforts to adapt the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* to the prevailing discourse of Indonesian nationalism.

Communicating the piety of the Prophet in an easily understandable form and successfully developing a broad following was a notable achievement of Habib Ali. He built his wide

⁹¹ Muhammad Syamsu, *Ulama Pembawa Islam di Indonesia dan Sekitarnya*, vol. 4 (Jakarta: Lentera, 1999), 259. Abdul Qadir Umar Mauladdawilah, *17 Habaib Berpengaruh di Indonesia* (Malang, Jawa Timur: Pustaka Bayan, 2011), edisi revisi.

⁹² Permana, Agus, and H. Mawardi. "Jaringan Habaib di Jawa Abad 20." *Al-Tsaqafa: Jurnal Ilmiah Peradaban Islam* 15, no. 2 (2018): 155-180, <https://doi.org/10.15575/al-tsaqafa.v15i2.3820>.

⁹³ Agus Permana, H. Mawardi, dan Ading Kusdiana, "Jaringan Habaib di Jawa Abad 20," *Al-Tsaqafa: Jurnal Peradaban Islam* 15, no. 2 (Desember 2018): 155-180.

⁹⁴ Anne Katrine Bang, *Sufis and Scholars of the Sea: Family Networks in East Africa, 1860-1925* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 72.

⁹⁵ Ismail Fajrie Alatas, "Becoming Indonesians: The Bā'Alawī in the Interstices of the Nation," *Die Welt des Islams* 51, no. 1 (2011): 45-108.

following by working as a trader around Jakarta, establishing close relationships with village *kyais* (Islamic scholars) and community leaders to reach more people. His eloquent and passionate speeches in everyday Malay made him widely known, and many children of village *kyais* later studied under his guidance. After building a network with local *kyais*, Habib Ali held weekly gatherings known as “*Majlis Ta’līm*” at his home in Kwitang, attended by thousands of Muslims. In these weekly *Majlis Ta’līm* sessions, Habib Ali would read and translate the works of al-Ḥaddād, particularly *al-Naṣā’ih al-dīniyya*, which articulated the *Tharīqah* (especially *Tharīqah ‘Alawīyyah*) in the form of the Prophet's piety. This created a space for discussing Sufism within a framework accepted by the Islamic reformist discourse in Indonesia.⁹⁶

In addition to the weekly gatherings, Habib Ali also organized annual mawlid celebrations of the *Mawlid Nabi* (Prophet's birthday), which attracted thousands of people from across Java, further establishing Kwitang as a spiritual center. He used these gatherings to elevate the social status of village *kyais* by inviting them to speak to the audience, which in turn strengthened their support for Kwitang. Habib Ali also supported his local students, such as when he wrote the preface for a book by Syafi’i Hadzami. In this way, Habib Ali successfully built Kwitang as a new center for *Tharīqah* with a broad following, reorganizing the scholarly network and adapting *Tharīqah* to the needs of the modern Islamic public in Indonesia. *Tharīqah* became a popular religious expression, centered on the Prophet's piety and supported through mass-based *da'wah* movements and spiritual practices such as *mawlid Nabi* celebrations.⁹⁷

Habib Ali adopted a different approach to prophetic authority compared to modern reformists by adhering to the metaphysical concept outlined by Sufis like Yūsuf al-Nabhānī. In his various works, al-Nabhānī defended Sufism and the importance of the Prophet from reformist attacks, which often criticized and labeled Sufism as "superstition" and attempted to redefine Islam directly from the verses of the sacred texts. Habib Ali introduced himself to al-Nabhānī and translated one of his works into Malay as a practical guide for Muslims. In his public lectures, Habib Ali discussed the Prophet's piety in a manner recognized by reformists, demonstrating his skill in managing both reformist and *Sūfī* elements. He maintained good relations with al-Irshad leaders, who were reformists, and Indonesian nationalists, while also staying connected with the traditional leadership of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). His flexibility made him popular among nationalist and Islamic elites, as evidenced by his being asked to lead the closing prayer at the NU congress in 1959.⁹⁸

Habib Ali was able to adapt and establish a good relationship with Soekarno, despite Soekarno's criticism of the exclusivism of the Bā’alawi group and the conservative approach of *Tharīqah ‘Alawīyyah* towards Islam after Indonesia's independence. The personal relationship between Habib Ali Kwitang and Soekarno helped maintain their connection, with Habib Ali demonstrating his ability to adapt to changing situations. He recognized the importance of cooperating with Soekarno's government to promote the

⁹⁶ Ismail Fajrie Alatas, "Becoming Indonesians, 45-108.

⁹⁷ Hafniati Abdul Hadi, "Metode Dakwah Habib Ali Kwitang dalam Pengembangan Masyarakat Islam di Jakarta," *Liwaul Dakwah: Jurnal Kajian Dakwah dan Masyarakat Islam* 13, no. 1 (2023): 80-97.

⁹⁸ Ismail Fajrie Alatas, 51. Gibril Fouad Haddad, “The Righteous Life and Blessed Works of the Poet of the Holy Prophet, The Pious Erudite Imām al-Qāḍī Yūsuf al-Nabhānī,” <http://www.sunnah.org/history/Scholars/al-nabhani.htm> (accessed March 27, 2008).

interests of the Muslim community and the nation as a whole. Habib Ali also served as the Religious Advisor to President Soekarno, highlighting Soekarno's appreciation for Habib Ali's role and influence within the Muslim community. Their relationship was complex and multifaceted, with existing differences, but they shared a common goal of promoting national unity and progress.⁹⁹

Towards the end of his life in 1968, Habib Ali Kwitang bound his son, Muhammad, and three local students, Abdullah Syafe'i, Tahir Rahili, and Fathullah Harun, in a brotherhood oath (*'iqd al-suhba*) during weekly sessions, marking the culmination of his efforts to adapt the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* to the post-colonial Indonesian context. This oath extended the bonds previously reserved for the Bā'alawī to include kyais from their textual community, adapting the *tarīqa* to modern political and cultural structures. Habib Ali's death received national attention, with flags flown at half-mast, and Muhammad was inaugurated as his successor. Under Muhammad's leadership, Kwitang became more "Indonesian" with the use of the title K.H.S. replacing "*habib*," and the center continued to attract high-ranking officials and foreign diplomats, although this arrangement experienced changes with the shifts in domestic politics.¹⁰⁰

The political shift from the Old Order to the New Order in Indonesia had significant impacts on the development of tarekat within the Muslim community. Under the leadership of President Soekarno, the Old Order was more inclusive of various religious and belief groups, including tarekat communities, despite some criticisms. However, the transition to the New Order under President Soeharto introduced a more centralistic and controlled approach to religion, where tarekat were viewed with suspicion due to their perceived potential to threaten regime stability. This resulted in tighter control and supervision over tarekat activities, including restrictions in the public sphere and political involvement. The repressive policies of the New Order forced some tarekat to reduce their public activities and focus on internal spiritual practices, while others managed to navigate the pressures by forming cooperative relationships with the government. This tight control also encouraged tarekat to strengthen their grassroots community base, enhance religious education, and deepen spiritual teachings as a form of resistance against external pressures, demonstrating how political changes influenced religious forms and practices in Indonesia, particularly within tarekat communities.¹⁰¹

In the early 1970s, the Indonesian government under the New Order regime began promoting Islamization programs among the population. These programs aimed to attract ulama, who mostly supported the United Development Party (PPP), to side with the regime and eliminate the influence of communism as labeled by the government. In April 1971, a few months before the elections, K.H.S. Muhammad al-Habsji, the Chairman of the Kwitang Islamic Center, announced his affiliation with Golkar. This decision sparked strong protests from NU kyai supporters who largely supported Kwitang. As a form of protest, Alatas left Kwitang and never returned. His departure provided a reason for the kyai to sever ties with Kwitang, thus preventing their students from attending sessions at

⁹⁹ Natasya Rihla, *Kontribusi Al Habib Ali bin Abdurrahman Al-Habsyi dalam Bidang Sosial-Keagamaan di Batavia (1889-1968)* (PhD dissertation, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2018).

¹⁰⁰ Ismail Fajrie Alatas, *Securing Their Place: The Ba'alawi, Prophetic Piety and the Islamic resurgence in Indonesia*, (Master thesis, Department of History National University of Singapore, 2009)

¹⁰¹ Merle Calvin Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1200* (London: MacMillan, 1993), 366-408.

Kwitang. Kyai Abdurrozak Makmun was the first to take this step, followed by other kyai. In a short time, Kwitang lost three-quarters of its supporters, including all the kyai, leaving only the Bā'alawī attending sessions led by Muhammad and Novel. Kwitang thus transformed into merely a gathering of Hadrami Arabs.¹⁰²

Muhammad and Novel were active in the 1971 election, using their religious authority to persuade Muslims to support Golkar. Pamphlets featuring Muhammad's photo, his declaration of joining Golkar, and a Qur'anic verse referring to Golkar's banyan tree symbol were distributed throughout Java. During the campaign, Muhammad warned Muslims not to be hypocritical by supporting Golkar now and voting for another party at the ballot box. Novel went even further by referring to Prophet Muhammad as the 'great leader of Golkar.' Both leveraged the influence built by the first generation for political purposes. After Golkar's victory, Muhammad received funds to renovate and expand the center. In October 1971, President Suharto inaugurated the center under its new name, the Indonesian Islamic Center. This favorable relationship continued to benefit Kwitang until Muhammad's death in 1992. Although Kwitang experienced disintegration, the tarekat remained alive through new centers established by former Kwitang students. Many kyai continued to read the works of al-Haddād in their gatherings and maintained relationships with scholars and Bā'alawī centers outside Jakarta, expanding the network beyond the old Jakarta-centric boundaries centered in Kwitang.

Conclusion:

This chapter discusses how *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* entered and spread in Indonesia and how this order eventually adapted to the evolving socio-political dynamics. The introduction of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* to Indonesia is closely related to the migration and assimilation of the Bā'alawī family, a Hadramī community. Originating from Hadramaut in Yemen, the Hadramī migrants brought their traditions, culture, and religious practices, including *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*, as they settled in various countries, including the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia). This migration was characterized by a two-way adaptation process where both the local communities and the Hadramī adjusted to each other's presence, enriching local culture and spirituality.

In post-independence Indonesia, the Bā'alawī with their *Tharīqah* had to navigate the new political reality shaped by nationalism and state-building efforts. The shift from the Old Order under President Soekarno to the New Order under President Soeharto, which took a more controlled approach to religion, posed significant challenges. *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*, like other tarekat, had to adapt by reducing public activities or forming cooperative relationships with the government to continue their spiritual practices. Scholars of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*, such as Sayyid 'Utsman bin Yahya, Habib Ali Kwitang, and his son Habib Muhammad bin Ali Al-Habsyi, played crucial roles in integrating *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* with the broader Indonesian Muslim community. Their ability to adapt and establish relationships with key political figures, such as Snouck Hurgronje during the Dutch East Indies administration, Indonesia's first President Soekarno, and Indonesia's second President Soeharto, demonstrates the dynamic nature of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*. Their efforts to integrate and adapt while preserving the heritage and excellence of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* helped the order navigate the socio-political changes of their times.

¹⁰² Ismail Fajrie Alatas,

CHAPTER IV

ADAPTATION OF THARĪQAH 'ALAWIYYAH: LINEAGE, MURSYID, HIERARCHICAL RELATIONSHIPS

In the previous chapters, it has been explained that *Tharīqah* is not a static tradition detached from its historical context but continues to evolve and adapt by its followers to keep pace with changing times. In this regard, the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* has managed to survive and even thrive by adapting to the political changes in post-colonial Indonesia. However, this adaptation has not always been smooth, with frictions arising in the process, particularly concerning the order's closeness to political power. For instance, Sayyid 'Utsmān bin Yahya aligned himself with colonial authorities but clashed with other local orders such as Naqshabandiyyah. Another example is Habib Muhammad bin Ali al-Habsyi Kwitang, who aligned with the ruling party Golkar but was abandoned by his local disciples. This chapter is crucial in discussing how a figure of Bā'alawī descent, Habib Luthfi bin Yahya, successfully built relationships with governmental authorities while simultaneously building relationships with his followers and other local tarekat by adapting the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*. He has managed to maintain support from his followers while maintaining close relationships with the ruling leaders.

4.1 Habib Luthfi bin Yahya: A Brief Biography

Habib Luthfi bin Yahya, born on November 10, 1947, or 27 Rajab 1367 Hijri in Pekalongan, Central Java, grew up in a Ba 'alawī family environment. His father, Habib Al Hafidz 'Ali Al Ghalib bin Hasyim bin Yahya, was a violinist in a local orchestra and taught vocal arts at Ma'had Islam, while his mother, Karimah As Syarifah Nur bin Muhsin, raised Habib Luthfi along with his five siblings. Unlike most Hadrami families who lived in Kampung Arab, Habib Luthfi's family resided in Kampung Kwijan, where the majority of the population was Javanese. Nonetheless, both his paternal and maternal lineages trace back to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) through Fatimah az-Zahra and Ali bin Abi Thalib. The environment in which he grew up and his deep genealogical connection to Prophet Muhammad shaped his identity and influenced his life journey. Habib Luthfi married Syarifah Salma bin Hasyim bin Yahya, and they have five children: Syarif Muhammad Bahauddin, Syarifah Zaenab, Syarifah Fathimah, Syarifah Ummi Hanik, and Sayyid Muhammad Husain Syarif Hidayatullah. This marriage strengthened familial ties and his position within the community.¹⁰³

Habib Luthfi's early education differed from most children of Bā'alawi families who typically attended private Islamic schools. He received his education at a public school (*Sekolah Rakyat*) and attended religious studies held by a leader of the *qabīlah* (tribe) called Munshib in Pekalongan, 'Ali bin Ahmad Al-'Athas, who introduced him to the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*. After completing his primary education in 1959, he continued his studies at the traditional Benda Kerep Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) in Cirebon, West Java. This pesantren is known for its conservatism, emphasizing the teachings of Asy'ariyyah theology and Shafi'i jurisprudence, and prohibiting the use of electricity and other modern

¹⁰³ Imam Khanafie, "Tarekat Kebangsaan: Kajian Antropologi Sufi Terhadap Pemikiran Nasionalisme Habib Luthfi bin Yahya," *Jurnal Penelitian* 10, no. 2 (2013): 342.

innovations. Additionally, this pesantren is a center for the Syathariyyah order, enriching the spiritual dimension of Habib Luthfi's education. At *Pesantren Benda*, Habib Luthfi developed a deep understanding of the Asy'ariyyah theology and Shafi'i jurisprudence books, and the ability to translate them into Javanese and Indonesian, particularly the kromo variant rarely used in his hometown of Pekalongan. His time in Cirebon also allowed him to learn the Sundanese language. At this pesantren, he met various traditionalist Javanese scholars and students who later became community leaders. This network provided an important foundation for his career as a preacher, skilled in communicating in various dialects and local languages.¹⁰⁴ Following this, he continued his education under the guidance of Kiai Said in Tegal, known for his expertise in religious sciences, and Kiai Muhammad Abdul Malik bin Muhammad Ilyas bin Ali in Purwokerto, Central Java, who also provided deep insights into various Islamic disciplines. These educational experiences shaped his religious identity.

Habib Luthfi is also recognized as a successor and leader in the spiritual lineage of Naqshabandiyah by Abdul Malik bin Muhammad Ilyas, a murshid of the widely disseminated Naqshabandiyah-Khalidiyah-Syadziliyah order in the Indonesian Muslim community. Despite his strong Ba'alawī background with the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*, Abdul Malik affirmed Habib Luthfi as a murshid of this order, granting him religious legitimacy and authority recognized by an established congregation. This recognition allowed Habib Luthfi to lead and expand the NKS (Naqshabandiyah-Khalidiyah-Syadziliyah) congregation, which was already widespread. However, this decision also created tension with other Ba 'Alawī adherents who steadfastly held to the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*. The Naqshabandiyah-Khalidiyah, known for its quick and easy initiation process, was often criticized by *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* scholars for being less selective in accepting disciples. With his diverse educational background, Habib Luthfi was seen as diverging from the more conservative *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* paradigm. Upon returning to Pekalongan, Habib Luthfi faced challenges in gaining recognition from local scholars. Controversy arose when he claimed to have seen the figure of Prophet Muhammad in a dream after reading Abdul Malik's book of shalawat in *Al-Miftah Al-Maqashid li Ahl Al-Tauhid*. This claim led to doubts among the local scholars.¹⁰⁵

Habib Luthfi's diverse education and experiences have given him flexibility in preaching. His ability to speak various regional languages and understand local cultures makes him more easily accepted by the community. In an interview with Heri Purwono, it was explained that in his sermons, Habib Luthfi often demonstrates his sensitivity to cultural diversity and emphasizes the importance of understanding the local context and adjusting his preaching approach according to the needs of the community. When encountering culturally rich rituals, he does not immediately prohibit local cultural practices that are deemed contrary to Islam. Instead, he imparts new meanings to these rituals that are more in line with Islamic teachings, without offending the local community. This approach has fostered strong relationships with scholars and congregations in various regions through his preaching journeys. His experiences have given him deep insight into

¹⁰⁴ Gea Novita Rohmah, "The Role of Tarekat in Awakening the Spirit of Nationalism (Study of the Thought and Movement of Habib Luthfi Bin Yahya)," *JOUSIP: Journal of Sufism and Psychotherapy* 1, no. 2 (December 21, 2021): 127–40, <https://doi.org/10.28918/jousip.v1i2.4831>.

¹⁰⁵ Ismail Fajrie Alatas and Martin Slama, "Rethinking Diasporic Returns: Ḥaḍramī Trajectories in Indonesia's Religio-Political Field," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde* 178, no. 4 (2022): 410–39, JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48696833>. Accessed July 14, 2024.

the social dynamics of local communities. His approach highlights the application of Islamic teachings that consider local contexts and individual differences. Habib Luthfi also emphasizes the importance of wisdom (*hikmah*) in teaching religion.¹⁰⁶

In an effort to strengthen his relationship with the Bā 'Alawī community, on several occasions, he delivered sermons introducing his ancestors as scholars and saints of the *Thariqah 'Alawiyyah*, even though there is no textual evidence to support these claims. Additionally, he revised the prayer book recommended to his students to reflect a combination of Shādhilī and *Thariqah 'Alawiyyah*. Through these steps, Habib Luthfi sought to reconnect himself with the 'Alawiyya lineage and position himself as a successor in the line of Bā 'Alawī scholars who followed the *Thariqah 'Alawiyyah*, thereby strengthening his standing within the community.¹⁰⁷

The efforts undertaken by Habib Luthfi were very feasible because the *Thariqah 'Alawiyyah* is not a strict order and has become more flexible following the influence of Sayyid Abdullāh bin Alwi al-Haddad, known as the reformer of this order.¹⁰⁸ According to Syed Farid Alatas, the *Thariqah Alawiyyah* is simple, lacks *khalwa* (seclusion for spiritual practice), and does not condemn worldly activities. It is the only order where lineage (*nasab*) and the order itself converge.¹⁰⁹ Engseng Ho defines this as a combination of constitutive elements including the canon of saints, texts, rituals, sacred places, and genealogies. Additionally, there is another element in the form of scholarly networks manifested as *'iqd al-ṣuḥba* (the bond of brotherhood), which binds individuals based on their adherence to the order. These elements come together to produce and disseminate a normative understanding of moral order. As a complex, the order is a 'malleable discourse' that evolves over time and faces new historical contexts.¹¹⁰

4.2 Rethinking the Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah

Habib Luthfi holds an alternative view regarding the origins of the *Thariqah 'Alawiyyah*, differing from the commonly accepted narrative. In sermons, treatises, or books discussing the *Thariqah 'Alawiyyah*, this order is typically attributed to Imam 'Alawi bin Ubaidillah bin Ahmad Al-Muhajir. However, in an interview, Ali M. Abdillah explains that Habib Luthfi believes that the *Thariqah 'Alawiyyah* is actually attributed to Imam 'Ali bin Abi Thalib, rather than to Imam Alawi bin Ubaidillah. According to Habib Luthfi, by attributing it to Imam 'Ali bin Abi Thalib, the *Thariqah 'Alawiyyah* becomes the central point of all other *thariqahs*, because in the context of a *thariqah*, as in the science of hadith, a lineage or *sanad* closer to the original source is considered to have a higher degree of

¹⁰⁶ Heri Purwono, Wayang Puppet Master in Pedalangan Kudus, Ndalem Habib Luthfi Family, interview by Ahmad Rizki, September 19, 2023, Pekalongan, East Java.

¹⁰⁷ Ismail Fajrie Alatas and Martin Slama, "Rethinking Diasporic Returns: Ḥaḍramī Trajectories in Indonesia's Religio-Political Field," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde* 178, no. 4 (2022): 410–39, JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48696833>. Accessed July 14, 2024.

¹⁰⁸ Musa Alkadzim, "Mapping the Trajectory of Tariqa Alawiyya in the 13th-17th Century: The Tension between Expansion and Preservation," *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf dan Pemikiran Islam* 13, no. 1 (2023): 105-133.

¹⁰⁹ Syed Farid Alatas, "The Ṭarīqat al-'Alawiyyah and the Emergence of the Shi'i School in Indonesia and Malaysia," *Oriente Moderno* 18, no. 2 (1999): 323-339, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25817626>.

¹¹⁰ Engseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim*.

authenticity.¹¹¹ The author believes that although many books mention the *Thariqah 'Alawiyyah* being connected to Imam Alawi bin Ubaidillah and reinforced by Imam Faqih Muqaddam after receiving the *khirqah* from Sheikh Abu Madyan Al-Maghribi, the embryonic form of the *Thariqah 'Alawiyyah* already existed and was taught through generations from their ancestors whose lineage traces back to Imam 'Ali bin Abi Thalib.

Furthermore, according to Habib Luthfi, in the *Thariqah 'Alawiyyah*, having a legitimate initiation and lineage is crucial to ensure a proper connection with Prophet Muhammad. This contrasts with the simpler approach of Imam Haddad, which focuses on following recommended books as long as they align with the teachings of the tarekat. Habib Luthfi has revitalized the relationship between student and spiritual guide (*murshid*) in the *Thariqah 'Alawiyyah*. Through initiation (*bay'ah*) and accompaniment (*shubbah*), Habib Luthfi forms a close and sustained relationship with his students. The *bay'ah*, as a solemn oath of allegiance, strengthens the student's commitment to follow the *murshid*'s teachings and heed his guidance. After being initiated, students are encouraged to accompany their *murshid*, a practice known as *shubbah*.¹¹² Traditionally, *shubbah* involves living with the *murshid* for an extended period. However, Habib Luthfi adapts this practice by asking his students to at least attend the monthly grand gatherings (*pengajian akbar*) at Kanzus Shalawat. This modification maintains the connection and guidance without requiring prolonged residence with the *murshid*.

The relationship formed between a *murīd* (student) and a *mursyīd* (spiritual guide) is a hierarchical one, distinct from the relationship between other Bā'alawī scholars in majlis ta'lim or *tabligh akbar* (open sermons) and their audiences. Such a relationship between a speaker and an audience is dependent on the duration of the sermon. In contrast, the relationship between a *murid* and a *mursyid* is a hierarchical relationship that withstands the fragility and transience of quickly passing audiences. Becoming a *murid* requires continuous effort to maintain the relationship with the *mursyid*, even when distance separates them. The exemplary relationship between Prophet Muhammad and his companions serves as a model for Sufis, where the *murid* holds a special position for religious learning and spiritual development. Habib Luthfi's mobility in expanding his network through meetings and travels to various regions helps extend the reach of his *murids*.

One of Habib Luthfi's greatest contributions to the *Thariqah 'Alawiyyah* is his ability to adapt the sunnah to be relevant to the current socio-political context. In his view, the sunnah is not merely the narrations about the life of Prophet Muhammad objectified in hadith books, but also a dynamic and contextual norm of life. Habib Luthfi understands that social changes and political dynamics require adjustments in the teaching of the sunnah. He introduces new practices and adapts old teachings to meet the needs and challenges faced by his followers. For example, in addressing the complexities of modern life, Habib Luthfi devised more concise and practical *dhikr* (remembrance of God) guides that can be practiced by his students who are busy with their work. In this way, Habib Luthfi has successfully transformed the sunnah into a living norm that is relevant to the social sphere. He teaches that the sunnah is not something static and detached from

¹¹¹ Ali M. Abdillah, Head of the Islamic Civilization History Program for the Master's Degree at Unusia Jakarta, Chairman of the Ahlith Thoriqoh Al-Mu'tabaroh An-Nahdliyyah Students Association (MATAN) Jakarta, and Caretaker of al Rabbani Islamic College Cikeas, interview by Ahmad Rizki, June 25, 2024.

¹¹² Ali M. Abdillah, June 25, 2024.

everyday life but something that must be adapted and implemented according to individual needs and changing times.¹¹³

By doing so, Habib Luthfi has successfully grounded his authority on a lineage that connects him to Prophet Muhammad and the founders of the tarekat. Habib Luthfi does not impose his will or use force to gain obedience from his followers. Instead, he employs a persuasive approach based on argument and exemplary conduct, in line with the teachings and behavior of Prophet Muhammad. His authority is derived through the recognition of his followers, who see him as an embodiment of the Prophet's teachings and a link to the prophetic past. Citing Hannah Arendt, Ismail Fajrie argues that authority is a hierarchical relationship determined by the recognition of legitimacy rather than by coercive power. According to Arendt, authority depends on a foundation built in a past considered sacred and is carried forward by the current bearer of that authority. This is relevant in the context of Habib Luthfi, who bases his authority on a lineage that connects him to Prophet Muhammad and the founders of the *Tharīqah*.¹¹⁴

In navigating socio-political dynamics, Habib Luthfi uses his authority to influence and shape public opinion among his followers. He is actively involved in various social and political activities and frequently delivers sermons that emphasize the importance of unity and interfaith tolerance. Through his sermons, Habib Luthfi has successfully garnered sympathy and support from various groups, including government officials and community leaders. Habib Luthfi also plays a crucial role in easing social and political tensions by teaching principles that emphasize peace and harmony. He encourages his followers to engage in social activities that benefit the broader community, such as social services, free medical treatments, and disaster relief efforts. In this way, Habib Luthfi not only cultivates a loyal following but also attracts attention and support from others who share his views.¹¹⁵

Habib Luthfi bin Yahya effectively uses digital media to expand and strengthen the *Thariqah 'Alawiyyah* network. By being active on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, he reaches a broader and more diverse audience. Through regular postings of sermons, dhikr, and spiritual advice, his students and sympathizers gain easy and quick access to the tarekat's teachings. This digital content not only strengthens the relationship between the murshid and the murid but also introduces the *Thariqah 'Alawiyyah* to an audience that previously found it difficult to access physical gatherings. Additionally, Habib Luthfi disseminates information about tarekat activities and major events through digital media, enabling broader participation, including from outside Pekalongan and Indonesia. This digital presence ensures that the tarekat's teachings remain relevant and easily accessible to the younger generation accustomed to technology.

The religious authority held by Habib Luthfi, especially within the Sufi *Thariqah*, has led him to become the Chairman (*Raīs 'Aam Idārah 'Aaliyah*) of *Jam'iyyah Ahlith Thariqah al-Mu'tabarah an-Nahdliyyah* (JATMAN), an autonomous organization under *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) that oversees recognized *thariqahs*. Although none of JATMAN's founders, such as KH. Masykur, KH. Idham Chalid, KH. Abdul Wahab Chasbullah, KH. Bisri Syansuri, and KH. Muslih Mranggen, came from the Bā'alawī family, this did not prevent Habib Luthfi from being appointed as Raīs 'Aam of JATMAN. The author believes

¹¹³ Ismail Fajrie Alatas, *What is Religious Authority?*, 1-256.

¹¹⁴ Ismail Fajrie Alatas, Associate Professor of Islamic Anthropology at New York University, interview by Ahmad Rizki, November 20, 2023, Cinere, Depok.

¹¹⁵ Imam Kanafi, "Tarekat Kebangsaan: Kajian Antropologi Sufi Terhadap Pemikiran Nasionalisme Habib Luthfie," *Jurnal Penelitian* 10, no. 2 (2013).

that besides his authority, another key factor is Habib Luthfi's ability to maintain close relationships with non-Bā'alawi thariqah leaders. While other Bā'alawī leaders tend to live more exclusively, Habib Luthfi is very close to thariqah leaders from non-Bā'alawi backgrounds. This is likely due to Habib Luthfi's educational background, which differs from that of most Bā'alawi.¹¹⁶

4.3 Habib Luthfi and Government Authority: A Collaboration

In the early 1970s, the Indonesian government under the New Order regime launched an Islamization program through the *Proyek Pembinaan Mental Agama* (P2A) and the establishment of *Majelis Dakwah Islamiyah* (MDI). This program was designed to strengthen the religiousness of society and garner support from religious scholars for government policies. Habib Luthfi, who had just returned to Pekalongan after his period of study, saw a great opportunity in this program and decided to join, following the example of Habib Muhammad bin Ali Kwitang. By joining MDI, Habib Luthfi was able to build networks with local government officials such as the mayor, police chief, and military district commander. Shortly thereafter, Habib Luthfi was appointed as an advisor on Islamic affairs for the Golkar branch in Pekalongan. With this position, he gained financial support and protection from the government, which allowed him to conduct his preaching activities more broadly and effectively, despite some conflicts with other parties previously discussed. Government support not only provided financial resources but also enhanced Habib Luthfi's legitimacy and authority as a scholar and leader of the tarekat. His involvement in MDI and Golkar, as well as the establishment of government-supported religious study centers, positioned Habib Luthfi as an important and influential religious figure.¹¹⁷

In 1997, Habib Luthfi began the construction of a religious study center named Kanzus Shalawat. This development not only increased his capacity for preaching but also strengthened his position in the eyes of the government and the public. The local government provided full support for this construction, which was inaugurated with a groundbreaking ceremony attended by various high-ranking officials. Kanzus Shalawat became a hub for religious and cultural activities that attracted wide public attention. Activities there included fiqh study sessions, cultural performances such as Javanese *wayang kulit* and Sundanese *wayang golek*, and the celebration of the Prophet's Mawlid, attended by thousands of worshippers from various regions. Government support in the form of funding and permits for holding major events demonstrated a mutually beneficial relationship between Habib Luthfi and government officials.¹¹⁸

The close relationship with government officials allowed Habib Luthfi to develop infrastructure and *dakwah* programs more effectively. Financial and logistical support from the government enabled him to organize large events, build educational and religious study facilities, and implement social programs that benefited the community. When asked about this issue, Aman Subagio explained that Habib Luthfi and his students often collaborated with the government on social and community empowerment programs. These programs

¹¹⁶ Ibnu Farhan, *Gerakan Nasionalisme Tarekat: Studi Jam'iyah Ahlith Thoriqoh Al-Mu'tabaroh An-Nahdliyyah pada masa kepemimpinan Habib Luthfi bin Yahya* (Doctoral dissertation, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2023).

¹¹⁷ Ismail Fajrie Alatas, *What is Religious Authority?*, 1-256.

¹¹⁸ Ismail Fajrie Alatas, *What is Religious Authority?*, 1-256.

received full support from the local government. The programs included skills training, business capital assistance, and business mentoring, which helped improve the community's welfare. Government support in the form of favorable regulations and facilitated access to resources also played a crucial role in the success of these programs.¹¹⁹

Leveraging the close relationship between Habib Luthfi and the government, he also built strong ties with the military, even being regarded as a teacher there. His relationship with the military further strengthened after the abolition of the ABRI dual-function doctrine in 2004. He has worked to improve relations between the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) and the traditionalist Muslim community. He frequently invited TNI officers to speak at religious events and involved them in the administration of his religious study centers. This move not only reinforced the TNI's position as an apolitical guardian of the nation but also strengthened the bond between the military and the Muslim community. In 2005, a tradition began of celebrating the Prophet Muhammad's Mawlid with a military parade, an event that combined religious and nationalistic elements. Each year, this event is attended by high-ranking state officials and military personnel, making it a platform for interaction between Muslim leaders and the military. The parade attracts attention from groups that rarely attend religious rituals, such as secular nationalists and military personnel, reinforcing Habib Luthfi's role as a bridge between the religious community and the state.¹²⁰

For over three decades, Habib Luthfi has been actively building and maintaining relationships with various state institutions, from the local to the national level. In 2019, President Joko Widodo appointed him as a member of the Presidential Advisory Council (*Wantimpres*). This appointment was not surprising, considering that in the same year, Habib Luthfi explicitly declared his support for the presidential candidate pair Joko Widodo and Ma'ruf Amin in the presidential election against Prabowo Subianto and Sandiaga Uno. In various forums and lectures, Habib Luthfi explained the fundamental reasons behind his support, including his belief that this pair had the capability to lead Indonesia. This endorsement was widely communicated in various public events, including meetings with community leaders and religious lectures, where he encouraged people to vote for leaders with integrity and government experience. This stance demonstrates Habib Luthfi's active role in national politics, particularly in his efforts to ensure that the elected leaders are those who, in his view, can uphold national and religious values.

The phenomenon of political support shown by Habib Luthfi for Joko Widodo illustrates an interesting dynamic in the context of elections in Indonesia. In the previous presidential election in 2014, Habib Luthfi supported the Prabowo Subianto and Hatta Rajasa pair, who competed against the Joko Widodo and Jusuf Kalla pair. Despite receiving support from influential figures like Habib Luthfi, the Prabowo-Hatta pair did not succeed in winning the election and did not significantly increase their vote count even in the Pekalongan area.¹²¹ This illustrates the complexity of electoral politics in Indonesia, where support from influential figures does not always directly correlate with election results. The shift in political support from one election to the next also indicates that political

¹¹⁹ Aman Subagio, Chairman of the organizing committee for the 3rd World Sufi Assembly International Conference, interview by Ahmad Rizki, June 25, 2023, Cipete, Jakarta.

¹²⁰ Machfud Syaefuddin, "Gerakan Dakwah Cinta Tanah Air Indonesia (Strategi dan Metode Dakwah KH. Habib Luthfi Pekalongan)," *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 37, no. 2 (2018): 215-246.

¹²¹ Aman Subagio, Chairman of the organizing committee for the 3rd World Sufi Assembly International Conference, interview by Ahmad Rizki, June 25, 2023, Cipete, Jakarta.

preferences can be influenced by various factors, including changes in social and political dynamics as well as different campaign strategies.

Habib Luthfi's gracious acceptance of Prabowo's defeat, along with his passive stance towards the presidential election results and his recognition of the elected government, reflects Sunni political traditions. This tradition was also followed by previous *Thariqah Alawiyyah* leaders, such as Sayyid 'Utsman bin Yahya and Habib Ali Kwitang, who accepted the authority of the existing government even if it was non-Muslim. They prioritized social harmony and rejected opposition to the head of state, a practice deeply ingrained in Indonesian politics. Such an attitude often led to mutually beneficial symbiotic relationships. These leaders focused on maintaining stability and peace within their communities, understanding that cooperation with the ruling government could lead to greater opportunities for their followers and the broader society. By avoiding direct confrontation and fostering a collaborative environment, they ensured the continued growth and influence of their religious and social missions. This approach has allowed figures like Habib Luthfi to navigate the complex political landscape of Indonesia effectively, securing support and resources for their initiatives while promoting a message of unity and coexistence.

The accommodating approach of Sunni political doctrine towards power has led Sunni scholars in the Nusantara region to tend to support and reinforce the absolutism of authority. This doctrine is considered a way to avoid greater socio-political chaos. For example, the work "Taj al-Salatin" explains that obedience to a tyrant king is more beneficial than opposing his rule, as it can prevent strife and corruption in society. This view is consistent with the thoughts of al-Mawardi and al-Ghazali, who emphasized the importance of the people's obedience to the head of state, even if he is tyrannical, for the sake of state and societal stability. Sunni political doctrine in Indonesia also demonstrates that scholars have a central role in providing religious justification to rulers. Sunni scholars feel responsible for guiding political power so that it aligns with Islamic teachings. This reciprocal relationship benefits both parties; the king obtains the necessary religious legitimacy to gain the people's support, while scholars receive special rights and positions in the royal court, facilitating their delivery of moral messages to the king and society. By maintaining this symbiotic relationship, Sunni scholars can ensure the protection and promotion of Islamic values within the governance framework. This approach allows them to influence the ruler's decisions and policies subtly, aiming to create a more just and moral governance without directly challenging the authority, which could lead to instability. This balance of power and religion has historically contributed to the relative stability and continuity of political systems in regions influenced by Sunni Islam.¹²²

The *Sunni* political tradition upheld by Habib Luthfi became increasingly evident when he decided to support the government of the then newly elected President Joko Widodo. This decision reflects the fundamental principles of the Sunni political tradition, which prioritize stability and social harmony. In an interview, Aman Subagio explained that Habib Luthfi's support for President Joko Widodo's administration was triggered by a direct request from President Joko Widodo's mother. She asked Habib Luthfi to assist her son in running the government. Habib Luthfi accepted this request graciously, considering it an honor and a responsibility to contribute to the smooth and stable functioning of the

¹²² Muhammad Iqbal, "Akar-Akar Tradisi Politik Sunni di Indonesia:(Kajian pada Masa Kerajaan Islam di Nusantara)," *Al Qalam* 26, no. 2 (2009): 171-192.

government. Habib Luthfi understands the importance of the role of scholars in supporting the government to create harmony in society. Thus, Habib Luthfi's support not only demonstrates his loyalty to the Sunni political tradition but also his commitment to avoiding opposition to the head of state for the greater good, which is the welfare of the people and the nation. By aligning himself with the government, Habib Luthfi reinforces the idea that religious leaders have a crucial role in maintaining societal stability and ensuring that governance aligns with Islamic values. His actions illustrate the traditional Sunni approach of fostering cooperation between religious and political authorities to achieve a balanced and peaceful society.¹²³

The Sunni political tradition upheld by Habib Luthfi became increasingly evident when he decided to support the administration of the then newly elected President Joko Widodo. This decision reflects the fundamental principles of the Sunni political tradition, which prioritize stability and social harmony. In an interview, Aman Subagio explained that Habib Luthfi's support for President Joko Widodo's administration was triggered by a direct request from President Joko Widodo's mother. She requested that Habib Luthfi be willing to assist her son in running the government. Habib Luthfi graciously accepted this request, viewing it as an honor and a responsibility to contribute to the smooth and stable functioning of the government. Habib Luthfi understands the crucial role of scholars in supporting the government to create harmony within society. Therefore, Habib Luthfi's support not only demonstrates his loyalty to the Sunni political tradition but also his commitment to avoiding opposition to the head of state for the greater good, which is the welfare of the people and the nation. This alignment underscores his dedication to maintaining social cohesion and political stability, in line with the broader objectives of Sunni political doctrine.

Habib Luthfi's involvement with President Joko Widodo's administration did not initially involve a structural position. However, this involvement eventually led to his appointment to a structural role within the government, undoubtedly due to President Joko Widodo's recommendation. For instance, Habib Luthfi was appointed as a member of the Presidential Advisory Council (*Wantimpres*). He was appointed alongside other notable figures from diverse backgrounds, such as Wiranto, former Commander of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) and Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs; Arifin Panigoro, entrepreneur and founder of Medco Group; Sidarto Danusubroto, former Chairman of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR); Agung Laksono, former Speaker of the House of Representatives (DPR) and Coordinating Minister for People's Welfare; Putri Kuswisnu Wardani, entrepreneur and Commissioner of PT Mustika Ratu; M. Mardiono, politician and businessman; Soekarwo, former Governor of East Java; and Dato Sri Tahir, entrepreneur and founder of Mayapada Group.¹²⁴

Additionally, Habib Luthfi's close relationship with President Joko Widodo often provides support for his agendas, such as the World Sufi Assembly, a global platform for the Sufi movement. The World Sufi Assembly was formed based on the recommendations of the *Multaqa As-Sufi Al-Alamy* (International Sufi Scholars Conference), initiated by *Jam'iyyah Ahlith Thariqah al-Mu'tabarah an-Nahdliyyah* on April 8, 2019, in Pekalongan,

¹²³ Aman Subagio, Chairman of the organizing committee for the 3rd World Sufi Assembly International Conference, interview by Ahmad Rizki, June 25, 2023, Cipete, Jakarta.

¹²⁴ Aman Subagio, Chairman of the organizing committee for the 3rd World Sufi Assembly International Conference, interview by Ahmad Rizki, June 25, 2023, Cipete, Jakarta.

Central Java. This conference was attended by 87 Sufi scholars from 36 countries and around 3,500 tarekat scholars from various regions in Indonesia. At the 2019 meeting to form the World Sufi Assembly, the world's Sufi scholars unanimously elected Maulana Al-Habib Muhammad Luthfi bin Ali bin Yahya as the Chairman of the World Sufi Assembly. This significantly elevated Habib Luthfi's esteem, not only at the national level but also on the international stage. The presence of Sufi leaders from various countries bolstered the legitimacy and reputation of the World Sufi Assembly as a credible and influential forum in the world of Sufism. Under his leadership, Habib Luthfi has been able to consolidate various Sufi thoughts into a global movement aimed at spreading the peaceful and harmonious message of Sufi teachings. This recognition has enhanced Habib Luthfi's influence, allowing him to play a crucial role in promoting interfaith dialogue and fostering a better understanding of Sufi principles worldwide. His ability to bring together diverse Sufi perspectives into a unified global initiative highlights the importance of his leadership in advocating for peace and harmony in accordance with Sufi traditions.¹²⁵

On August 29, 2023, the World Sufi Assembly held an International Sufi Conference in Pekalongan, which continued until August 31. This event was held in the city of Pekalongan, which is the base of Habib Luthfi's congregation, and was officially opened by the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Joko Widodo. The conference was attended by Habib Muhammad Luthfi bin Ali bin Yahya, as well as 73 international Sufi scholars from 38 countries and 1,000 national scholars and figures. Several high-ranking officials were also present, with the most prominent being Indonesia's Minister of Defense, Prabowo Subianto, who had declared his candidacy for the 2024 presidential election. Prabowo's presence at the World Sufi Assembly's International Sufi Conference was as the chairman of this agenda, with the primary funding for the event provided by the Ministry of Defense under his leadership. The inclusion of Prabowo in this religious event had a positive impact on him, as it granted him religious legitimacy amid negative stigma suggesting he was less religious.¹²⁶ Prabowo Subianto stated that the conference further reinforced the international community's trust in Indonesia, which has two influential Muslim figures, namely Jokowi and Habib Luthfi bin Yahya.

The collaboration and closeness previously described are unsurprising reasons why Habib Luthfi was appointed as the Advisor to Prabowo Subianto's National Campaign Team. He was considered to have the experience to fill this role. Besides Habib Luthfi, there were nine other notable figures in this position, including General (Ret.) Dr. H. Wiranto, Ir. H. Aburizal Bakrie (former Chairman of the Golkar Party), M. Hatta Rajasa (former Chairman of the PAN Party), Prof. Dr. KH. Asep Saifudin Chalim, Admiral (Ret.) Widodo Adi Sucipto, General (Ret.) Agum Gumelar, Lt. Gen. (Ret.) E.E. Mangindaan, Siti Hardjanti Wismoyo Arismunandar, and Geovanie. All these individuals have diverse backgrounds but share a close relationship with the declared presidential candidate, Prabowo Subianto.

¹²⁵ Laporan Kemhan Buku I." Report presented at the Al-Mutada As-Sufy Al-'Alamy International Sufi Scholars Conference, Pekalongan, Central Java, Indonesia, April 8-10, 2019. Ministry of Defense, Republic of Indonesia.

¹²⁶ Indonesian Ministry of Defense, "Menhan Prabowo Dampingi Presiden Jokowi Hadiri Pembukaan Muktamar Sufi Internasional," <https://www.kemhan.go.id/2023/08/29/menhan-prabowo-dampingi-presiden-jokowi-hadiri-pembukaan-muktamar-sufi-internasional.html>, accessed July 10, 2024.

Habib Luthfi's position in the National Campaign Team unequivocally directed him to support Prabowo Subianto in the 2024 presidential election. His involvement demanded active participation in campaigning for the Prabowo-Gibran presidential candidate pair, as seen during the *Silaturrehmi Laskar Sufi Jawa Barat* event. At this event, Habib Luthfi urged the attendees, including leaders and followers of the tariqah, to support Prabowo-Gibran. His statement, "Where is Habib Luthfi heading? Many already know that Habib Luthfi supports pair 02 (Prabowo-Gibran), so why still ask? Just follow. Follow. Is Habib Luthfi wrong, don't you understand?" clearly reflected his support. This was highly influential given Habib Luthfi's maintenance of the hierarchical *Mursyid-Murid* relationship between himself and his students, which was followed by the declaration of support from Laskar Sufi Jawa Barat for Prabowo-Gibran, underscoring their hope for victory in the 2024 presidential election. Active participation in the presidential election campaign presents a contradiction with his position as *Raīs 'Aam* of *Jam'iyyah Ahlith Thariqah al-Mu'tabarah an-Nahdliyyah* (JATMAN), which officially prohibits involvement in practical politics. When asked about this issue, Ali M. Abdillah explained that Habib Luthfi's stance in the campaign did not reflect the official position of JATMAN as an organization. It is likely that this was Habib Luthfi's personal stance or conducted in his capacity as an advisor to the Prabowo-Gibran National Campaign Team.¹²⁷

Additionally, Habib Luthfi also attended the grand campaign at the main field of Gelora Bung Karno (GBK) on February 10, 2024. Habib Luthfi's presence at the event was not merely physical but also included his opportunity to deliver a speech and lead prayers, reflecting a significant convergence between the role of a *Tharīqah* leader as a religious authority and political involvement in Indonesia's social dynamics. His participation illustrates the complex relationship between religious authority and electoral politics. His presence and support at this event not only highlight the significant influence of religious leaders like Habib Luthfi in rallying political support but also demonstrate how scholars, in this case, a *Tharīqah* leader, adapt their *Tharīqah* to navigate the socio-political dynamics within the context of contemporary Indonesian democracy.

Conclusion

Born into a Bā'alawī family with close ties to Prophet Muhammad, Habib Luthfi bin Yahya underwent a varied education that greatly influenced his spiritual and theological identity. Habib Luthfi continued his studies at traditional Javanese boarding schools, in contrast to the majority of Bā'alawi who adhere to the Hadramaut educational system. As a result, he became more culturally aware and his bonds with the local kyai (Islamic scholars) were reinforced. The *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*, as adapted by Habib Luthfi, demonstrates a dynamic approach that strikes a compromise between traditional ideals and modern requirements. After Imam Haddad's reforms, the hierarchical relationship between the *mursyid* (spiritual guide) and the *murid* (disciple) had become less prominent. He restored it. Because of this, Habib Luthfi gained control over his followers and was able to shape their political and social perspectives.

An advantageous synergy emerged from Habib Luthfi's tight contact with government leaders. Habib Luthfi was able to secure funding, credibility, and safety for his

¹²⁷ Ali M. Abdillah, Head of the Islamic Civilization History Program for the Master's Degree at Unusia Jakarta, Chairman of the Ahlith Thoriqoh Al-Mu'tabaroh An-Nahdliyyah Students Association (MATAN) Jakarta, and Caretaker of al Rabbani Islamic College Cikeas, interview by Ahmad Rizki, June 25, 2024.

preaching endeavors by associating himself with the governing elite and taking part in initiatives that received government backing. His strategic use of political power is demonstrated by his membership in the Presidential Advisory Council (*Wantimpres*), affiliation with groups like *Majelis Dakwah Islamiyah* (MDI) and Golkar, and other affiliations. His influence and authority were increased by this partnership, which enabled him to carry out extensive projects for social, religious, and community empowerment.

Habib Luthfi is a leader in the socio-political sector as well as the religious one. His adept handling of the intricacies of contemporary life, coupled with his focus on harmony, tolerance amongst religions, and social cohesion, have won him the endorsement of numerous entities, such as the armed forces and government. His role as a worldwide religious leader is further cemented by his participation in national and international Sufi activities, such as the World Sufi Assembly. His religious authority is strengthened by this strategic influence, which also advances a message of harmony and peaceful coexistence in a multicultural and dynamic world.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

On February 10, 2024, the main field of Gelora Bung Karno was filled with a sea of people. A grand stage stood at the corner of the field, complete with a sound system surrounding it. This crowd had gathered for the grand campaign of presidential and vice-presidential candidates Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming Raka. Most attendees wore light blue t-shirts, some with "Prabowo-Gibran" written on them, others featuring the faces of the two candidates. Interestingly, some shirts read "*Nderek Abah Luthfi supports Prabowo-Gibran.*" This was notable because "Abah Luthfi" referred to on the shirts is Habib Luthfi bin Yahya, a *Tharīqah* scholar from the Bā'alawi lineage who follows the *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* path of piety. Additionally, Habib Luthfi himself attended the Prabowo-Gibran grand campaign. At the event, he not only led the closing prayer but also spoke, praising Prabowo for choosing Gibran, whom Habib Luthfi saw as a representative of the younger generation.

In contrast to what is visibly seen in Hadramaut, the homeland of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*, scholars there tend to focus on education, preaching, and *Tharīqah* rituals. This is not surprising, as the founder of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*, Imam Faqīh Muqaddam, initially adopted a passive stance on politics. This is marked by the "Kasru Saif" phenomenon, where Imam Faqīh Muqaddam broke his sword as a sign that he and his followers from the Bā'alawi family with their *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* would not actively engage in political conflicts over power and resources at that time. This attitude of Imam Faqīh Muqaddam is still very much felt in Hadramaut today. However, most studies on the Bā'alawi primarily focus on their status as immigrants, biographies, or as preachers.

This thesis addresses this gap by studying the adaptation of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* in facing evolving socio-political dynamics. Specifically, this thesis examines Habib Luthfi's adaptation of the Sufi path inherent in his lineage, *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*, in his efforts to strengthen his position in lineage, Sufism, and politics, and how this adaptation is facilitated through mutually beneficial relationships between Habib Luthfi and government authorities. By observing Habib Luthfi's creative adaptation and manipulation of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*, we can understand the shift in socio-political ideas among the followers of this tariqa in Indonesia. Therefore, these dynamics cannot be separated from the teachings of *Tharīqah* and the socio-political context. The first chapter discusses the introduction and framework of how this thesis is written.

The second chapter explains how Sufism began as a personal expression within Islam before evolving into various *tharīqahs*, including *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*, which have specific methods and teachings to achieve spiritual goals. These *tharīqahs* are not separate from the social context and continue to evolve along with social practices. *Tharīqahs* are not only a result of social changes but also a way of organizing concepts and theories within their own traditions. Imam Faqīh Muqaddam, the founder of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*, faced political conflict by breaking his sword, known as the phenomenon of Kasru Saif, demonstrating a rejection of military politics. However, some tarekat leaders remained involved in politics through mediation and diplomacy. For example, Habib Thohir bin Hussein bin Thohir led resistance against the colonizers, showing that this tarekat can adapt and play an important role in politics. Sufi *tharīqahs*, including *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*, not

only focus on spirituality but also play a role in social and political change, becoming centers of Islamic teaching, and participating in social and political movements.

The third chapter describes the introduction and dissemination of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* in Indonesia, as well as how this tarekat changed to reflect the changing socio-political landscape. A tight connection exists between the migration and assimilation of the Bā'alawī family, a Hadramī community from Hadramaut, Yemen, and the introduction of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* to Indonesia. Local culture and spirituality were enhanced by this migration, which required a two-way adaptation process between the Hadramī and the local population. The Bā'alawī and their *Tharīqah* had to negotiate the new political conditions brought about by nationalism and state-building initiatives in Indonesia after independence. There were several difficulties with the shift from President Soekarno's Old Order to President Soeharto's New Order, who had a more regulated approach to religion. *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* had to adapt by reducing public activities or forming cooperative relationships with the government. *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* scholars like Sayyid 'Utsman bin Yahya, Habib Ali Kwitang, and his son Habib Muhammad bin Ali Al-Habsyi played important roles in integrating *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* with the broader Indonesian Muslim community. Their ability to adapt and establish relationships with key political figures, such as Snouck Hurgronje during the Dutch East Indies administration, President Soekarno, and President Soeharto, demonstrates the dynamic nature of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah*. Their efforts to integrate and adapt while preserving the heritage and excellence of *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* helped the tarekat navigate the socio-political changes of their time.

The fourth chapter discusses how Habib Luthfi bin Yahya adapted *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* to build his congregation while simultaneously collaborating with government authorities, resulting in a symbiotic mutualism collaboration. Habib Luthfi bin Yahya, originating from the Bā'alawī family closely related to the Prophet Muhammad, received diverse education that shaped his religious and spiritual identity. Unlike most Bā'alawi who followed traditional Hadramaut education, Habib Luthfi pursued education in traditional Javanese *pesantren*, strengthening his ties with local kyai and enhancing his sensitivity to local culture. His approach to *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* demonstrates a balance between traditional values and modern needs. He revived the hierarchical relationship between the *Mursyid* and disciples, which was previously less emphasized, giving Habib Luthfi the authority to influence the social and political views of his followers. His close relationship with government officials resulted in financial support, legitimacy, and protection for his dakwah activities. His involvement with organizations such as the *Majelis Dakwah Islamiyah* (MDI) and Golkar, as well as his position in the Presidential Advisory Council (Wantimpres), shows his strategic engagement with political power. Habib Luthfi's leadership also extends to the socio-political realm, focusing on unity, interfaith tolerance, and social harmony, gaining widespread support from various sectors. His involvement in national and international Sufi movements, such as the World Sufi Assembly, solidifies his position as a global religious leader promoting peace and coexistence in a diverse world.

This thesis highlights how Habib Luthfi adapts *Tharīqah 'Alawiyyah* to preserve and enhance public appreciation of this *Tharīqah*, while also emphasizing that a *tharīqah* is not an autonomous tradition isolated from social context concerned solely with religious matters. On the contrary, a *Tharīqah* is an expression of piety that evolves to adapt to the dynamics it faces.

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