UNVEILING IDEOLOGY IN THE INTERPRETATION OF THE QUR’AN IN TAFSIR AL-WA’IE

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Abstract: The development of studies on interpretation must have experienced many products, including in Indonesia. This can be seen from various works of interpretation born in the archipelago with many kinds of patterns and methods used by the mufassir. One of the works of Tafsir in Indonesia is the result of the thoughts of Hizb at-Tahrir, an Indonesian activist, namely Rokhmat S. Labib, who authored Tafsir al-Wa’ie. The tafsir is quite thick with the views of his organization that carries the mission of the Khilāfah al-islāmiyyah; the themes raised are very ideological. In interpreting the verses of the Qur’an, they tend to be textual. The thought of Rokhmat S. Labib contained in his tafsir work criticizes the understanding of Muslims, which is mainly contaminated with Western cultures, such as pluralism of religion, religious freedom, the idea of human rights that is so broad, and so on. This interpretation can be classified as an affirmative-era interpretive work with ideological reason when viewed from its epistemological structure.

Keywords: Hizb at-Tahrir, Tafsir Ayat Pilihan al-Wa’ie, Ideology

INTRODUCTION

To speak of the Qur’an and tafsir is to speak of two different things. The basic understanding to remember is that the Qur’an is a text whose truth is certain or absolute, while the truth of exegesis is only temporary or relative. The interpretation of the Qur’an will be endless because tafsir is the result of the mufassir’s thoughts on the text of the Qur’an. Furthermore, interpretation as the fruit of a person’s thinking at a particular time will be closely related to the situation experienced by that person. On this basis, the study of interpretation in academic discussions is still very relevant and open to criticism and study (Mustaqim, 2008). Abdullah Darras analogized that verses in the Qur’an are like diamonds. Each corner can emit light different from what is radiated from other angles. From this analogy, it can be understood that we should not limit thinking only from one point of view...
because by looking from many points of view, we will get various kinds of interpretations of
the Qur’an. In a narration, Ali ibn Abi Talib forbade Ibn Abbas to argue with others using the
Qur’an because it contains many sides. He said that the Qur’an, as a mushaf text, is incapable
of speaking and requires man’s role to make it able to speak. Man must examine the message
in the Qur’an to guide human life (Syafrudin, 2009).

Incidentally, Indonesia is a country with the largest Muslim community in the world; the
characteristics of the Indonesian nation, which is also very plural and respects diversity, make
the interpretation study in this country experience rapid development. As a country
with the most significant Muslim majority, it is undeniable that Indonesia has many groups of
Islamic mass organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, Hizb at-Tahrir, Persis,
and so on. The various community organizations’ systems and ideologies of thinking are also
diverse, both in expressing or viewing Islam. Although, in principle, like aspects of creed, they
are the same as others. For example, HTI which firmly rejects religious pluralism (Setia, 2021).
The difference in the period in which the interpreter lives, the educational background,
traditions, and culture of the nation and state that is diverse is a composition that makes the
diaspora of text interpretation. Every time faced with the level of interpretation, the
application will cause distinctive characteristics in producing an understanding and
interpretation (Anshori, 2006).

Tafsir Ayat Pilihan al-Wa’ie is a work of tafsir representing a specific Islamic ideology
that leans towards a mass organization in Indonesia, namely Hizb at-Tahrir Indonesia. Hizb
at-Tahrir (HT) is a transnational Islamic movement that operates in da’wah and politics. Hizb
at-Tahrir —Party of Liberation) was founded by Taqiyyuddin al-Nabhani in 1953 in Palestine.
This interpretation is evident in the author’s ideology, Rokhmat S. Labib, an activist from the
Hizb at-Tahrir group. This interpretation can be considered ideological because it contains
themes of ideas popularized by Hizb at-Tahrir, such as the Caliphate, the enforcement of
Sharia, and others (Rafiuddin, 2015a). This is natural because if an individual writes, then
indirectly, the writing of his work will be given his thinking pattern. Abdul Mustaqim
emphasized that the epistemology of interpretation will be influenced by several sides, namely
the view of life owned by the mufassir, his scientific background, and the purpose of the
interpretation (Mustaqim, 2012).

Various religious experiences emerged in society and entered into fundamental and
modern religious organizations (Prasetyo, 2019). Tafsir Al-Wa’ie is explicitly a simple new
work. Even so, the work remains a scientific treasure in the field of interpretation in Indonesia
that needs to be studied academically to understand the content contained in the
interpretation, starting from the approach used, the pattern of interpretation, and the method
used by the author. Hopefully, this research can explain this as a scientific treasure that can
contribute to the academic field.

METHOD

In this research, the primary approach is through the literature review method, where
the data sources are obtained from literature covering the thoughts and interpretations of
Rokhmat S. Labib. This type of research focuses explicitly on an in-depth exploration of written
sources regarding these thoughts and details relevant references. More specifically, this
research adopts a qualitative analysis method, allowing the presentation of data results in
descriptive form. This approach provides understanding and analyzing the collected data
through literature readings and interview results, aiming to prove and conclude research
findings. This research employs descriptive-analytical and content-analysis methods in the data analysis process. Through this approach, researchers can detail information found, identify specific patterns or themes, and provide an in-depth interpretation of research data. This approach is expected to yield a better understanding of Rokhmat S. Labib’s thoughts and the phenomenon that is the focus of this study.

**Finding and Discussion**

**Rokhmat S. Labib: Author Of Tafsir Ayat Pilihan Al-Wa’ie**

Rokhmat S. Labib was born in Bojonegoro 52 years ago, on June 26, 1971. He received his education with his parents from childhood to high school in Tuban, East Java. After graduating from high school in 1989, Rokhmat S. Labib continued his undergraduate education at IKIP Surabaya, now known as Surabaya State University. As a student, he actively participated in Islamic studies that studied tafsir, hadith, fiqh, and Arabic intensively at the Islamic Spiritual Activity Unit (UKKI). His interest in studying religion and learning Arabic led him to study at Ihya ‘Ulumuddin, a Sheikh Muhammad Alwi al-Maliki disciple, a famous scholar in Mecca al-Mukarramah. Not stopping there, he also honed his Arabic skills by attending courses at LPBA (Arabic Language Teaching Institute) Sunan Ampel and Ma’had al-Manar Surabaya. After graduating from IKIP Surabaya, he continued his master’s studies by majoring in Islamic Economics, which he completed in 2004.

During his college journey in Surabaya, he had begun to intersect with various movements of community organizations; until then, he chose Hizb at-Tahrir as his place to fight and preach. In this Hizb at-Tahrir movement, his Islamic thinking was honed. Then, he also penetrated the da’wah world after participating in this organization. He has visited many big cities ranging from Aceh to Papua to preach. He has also preached in foreign countries such as Australia and Malaysia. In 1997, with his activist organization, Hizb at-Tahrir Indonesia, he co-founded Ma’had ’Umdatul Ummah, located in Surabaya, which targeted his studies from various students.

Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) is a transnational Islamic organization carrying the Islamic caliphate established in Indonesia in the 1980s (Syaiful Arif, 2016).

In line with the Salafi movement, another organization of the same type is Hizb at-Tahrir, which is also identified by its high level of control over the internet (Paelani Setia, 2021). Starting in 2004, Rokhmat S. Labib busied himself by joining Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia’s da’wah media, namely Al-Waie. In addition to being a permanent caregiver in the da’wah press, she also had time to become a writer in the Suara Islam tabloid and the Wahyu Study rubric. At the beginning of the publication of the Media Umat tabloid, Rokhmat immediately joined and became the editorial board and the caretaker of the Wahyu Study rubric in the tabloid (Labib, 2013).

Rokhmat S. Labib’s awareness of the high requirements to become a mufassir led him to think that being a mufassir takes work. His work of exegesis only tries to provide the understandings and values he got from the mufassir, who is mu’tabar. The critical points he expressed in his interpretation are common societal problems. This point is usually also used in answering discourses that have emerged recently, such as liberalism, democracy, human rights, pluralism, and others (Labib, 2013).
Epistemology Of Interpretation Of Al-Wa’ie’s Chosen Verses

Epistemology is one branch of philosophy that describes the nature of knowledge. In epistemology, the source and nature of knowledge will be discussed, how to obtain knowledge and how the criteria so that knowledge can be said to be true (Mufid, 2013). This book of tafsir is the work of Hizb at-Tahrir activist Rokhmat S. Labib, who is known to be active in writing closely related to the organization. As explained earlier, every product of interpretation cannot be separated from what is in the environment of the mufassir. In this case, the educational background, traditions, and culture of Rokhmat S. Labib also more or less influenced his style of interpretation. He further made his work an idea and manifestation of his work in his movement and struggle as part of the Hizb at-Tahrir group.

Rokhmat S Labib titled his work with Tafsir on selected verses of Al-Wa’ie. From the title, it can be concluded that this book of tafsir does not interpret the entire verses of the Qur’an but certain verses that adjust to the needs by the urgency of the theme that the mufassir has determined. In it, it does not even interpret one letter ultimately. However, only certain verses that he considers can represent the author’s need to awaken Muslims from Western thoughts that have mushroomed in the archipelago.

The naming of Al-Wa’ie in his work comes from a magazine of Hizb at-Tahrir entitled “Political Media and Da’wah Al-Wa’ie “Building the Consciousness of the Ummah.” The meaning of al-Wa’ie is the process of forming the word from wa’a, which linguistically means consciousness (Munawwir, 1984). Tafsir Al-Wa’ie is a tafsir born/started from the writings of Rokhmat S. Labib, published in the da’wah and political media magazine Hizb ut-Tahrir. Since 2004, Rokhmat S. Labib has been asked to take control of the media’s interpretation. Then, after that, many requests from media readers asked him to collect his writings and record them in a work of exegesis, and he agreed to them. From his book, it can also be understood that this work of interpretation was made by him himself. This is evident in the preface he included

“I am fully aware of the limitations and abilities in writing this interpretation of the Qur’an; for that, we expect rebuke and rectification from brothers who directly receive the lesson.” (Rafiuddin, 2015b).

The background of writing this interpretation is that Rokhmat S. Labib is concerned about what is happening amid a society in which Western thoughts have begun to enter several fields such as pluralism, secularism, democracy, human rights, inclusivism which are seen as destructive, but dominate the thinking of Muslims in the current era. Then Rokhmat S. Labib also highlighted the problem of Western thought that often misuses verses to legitimize a matter. This tafsir by Rokhmat S. Labib is undoubtedly not a tafsir that suddenly appeared; this tafsir was written to unravel his criticism of the wrong Western understanding in reading and understanding the Qur’an. This Tafsir also seeks to inform its readers of the obligation to apply sharia in all lines of life (Labib, 2013).

As in the book Khazanah Tafsir Nusantara by Islah Gusmian, in analyzing a tafsir can use a methodological benchmark that has two aspects, namely the technical aspect of writing the interpretation of the Qur’an and the hermeneutic aspect of Qur’anic interpretation. The first aspect is the technique of writing Qur’anic exegesis, which consists of the systematics of its presentation, the form of expression, the style of the language contained, the nature of the mufassir, his scientific background, and the reference sources used in his interpretation. The second aspect that can be examined is the hermeneutical aspect, which talks about the methodology of interpretation, the nuances of interpretation, and the approach used in interpreting the verses (Islah Gusmian, 2003).
Two types of systematics are used in interpretation: coherent and thematic. Sequential systematics presents interpretation by adjusting the order of surahs in the Qur’an or can refer to the descending order of revelation. At the same time, thematic systematics is a systematics of interpretation whose presentation is carried out by taking a specific theme, verse, letter, or juz. This interpretation carried out by Rokhmat S. Labib is included in the category of classical thematic interpretation. The book presents certain verses that the author has chosen.

Rokhmat S. Labib offers interpretation by making one verse the core of the discussion, then correlates it with other verses in the Qur’an. For example, when explaining the compulsory veiling, she interprets the verse from Surah al-Ahzab (33:59) as the core of the interpretation. In contrast, the other verses are used as the center verse explanatory. Rokhmat S. Labib also added linguistic aspects, such as the meaning of vocabulary contained in verse and asbāb al-nuzūl āyah, then conveyed some scholarly opinions about the interpretation of a verse, then concluded the explanation that had been described.

The language style used in this interpretation is more inclined to the reportage style. The reportage style here is also not without purpose, which captivates the reader’s emotions and invites him to participate in the writer’s thoughts. This style of reportage in exegesis is closely related to the embryonic origin of this interpretation, which is part of a rubric in a magazine (Islah Gusmian, 2003). Furthermore, by using the reportage style, many readers are expected to be exposed to the ideology of Hizb ut-Tahrir. The use of reportage style in this interpretation can be seen from the contents as follows:

"Related to sharia law is mandatory. Applying it in life is also mandatory. This includes governmental, economic, educational, social, criminal, and foreign policy affairs laws. Therefore, anyone who does not want to die in su’ al-khātimah should not procrastinate. He must immediately rise to participate in fighting for the establishment of the Islamic Khilāfah State, which implements Sharia law and carries out da’wah throughout the world. Are you interested in them? Attach those great qualities to you as they are."

(Labib, 2013)


The next book of tafsir that is also a reference in this book is the work of tafsir that is still closely related to Hizb at-Tahrir such as al-Shakhsiyyah al-islāmiyyah (Taqiyuddin al-Nabānī), Naẓm al-Durar fī Tanāsīb al-Ayat wa al-Suwar (al-Biqā’ī), Ruh al-Ma’āni (al-Alūsī), al-Tafsīr al-Qur’ān (Ibn Kathīr), Jāmi’ al-Bayān (al-Tāhirī), Maṣāḥih al-Wajīz fī Tafsīr al-Kitāb al-‘Azīz (Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah), and others (Farida, 2017).

The systematics contained in the book can also be seen in the use of the method of interpretation by Rokhmat S. Labib. The intertext method, wherein the presentation of his interpretation cannot be separated from the profound explanation in the previous tafsir of
scholars, and second, the method of interpretation of thought, where the interpretation contained in the tafsir Al-Wa’ie cannot be separated from the author’s scholarship. The approach included in the book is a textual system, which is an approach that parses the verses of the Qur’an and is very text-oriented. The texts contained in the book are also strongly influenced by the understanding of the doctrine of Hizb at-Tahrir, Hizb at-Tahrir, which has a religious pattern as a fundamentalist movement in general, namely scriptural interpretation. Hizb ut-Tahrir’s spirituality can be seen from its knowledge of verses that intersect with political institutions, Islamic sharia, and leadership. HTI activists recognize the Islamic Khilāfah doctrine as an ideological antithesis that is ready to compete with, even replace, the position of the concept of the nation-state (NKRI), which is considered final in Indonesia (Hilmy, 2014). Hizb ut-Tahrir views politics as regulating and maintaining community affairs per Islamic law and Sharia (Rafiuddin, 2015b). For Hizb ut-Tahrir, Allah’s command in the Qur’an is more than enough to serve as a basis for the obligation of Muslims to establish political institutions such as the Islamic Caliphate. The verse Hizb at-Tahrir uses is Surah al-Nisa (4:59) and Surah al-Maidah (5: 44). (Arifin, 2014).

The style of interpretation carried out by Rokhmat S. Labib is included in the pattern of ideological interpretation, where describing explanations related to the interpreted verse tends to the paradigm built by the Hizb at-Tahrir group, such as the themes contained in this commentary and the relative conclusions of the verses that have been described. In addition, Rokhmat, in explaining his description, seems to connect with the ideals of establishing the Islamic State, which is promoted by Hizb at-Tahrir (Farida, 2017).

In his book, Abdul Mustaqim groups the epistemology of interpretation into three parts: formative era interpretation with quasi-critical thinking, affirmative era interpretation with ideological thinking, and reformative era interpretation with critical thinking. First, Affirmative-era interpretation with quasi-critical consideration is a way of thinking that lacks reason in interpreting the Qur’an and has not applied a culture of criticism. His interpretation is based on the interpretation of the Prophet, companions, and tabi’in. The resulting exegesis tends to be less critical and ignores reality because the Qur’an is positioned as a subject, while truth and its interpretation are set as objects. Second, Affirmative era interpretations with ideological thinking tend to be influenced by the ideological interests of the mufassir. Its interpretation is dominated by particular political interests, schools, or scientific ideologies, so the Qur’an is used as legitimacy for these interests. The author of the interpretation of this model shows excessive fanaticism towards his group, leading to blind piety, and has no tolerance for others, as well as less criticism of his group. Third, The interpretation of the reformative era with critical thinking is a model of interpretation that tends to be critical of the products of past interpretations and independent of Mazhabi thinking models. This interpretation model seeks to produce interpretations that can respond to changing times and scientific progress (Mustaqim, 2012).

Tafsir by Rokhmat S. Labib or Tafsir Al-Wa’ie belongs to the category of affirmative era exegesis with ideological reason. The source of interpretation of the book of tafsir is the Qur’an, hadith, the more dominant reason/ijtihad, and theories contained in the mufassir scholarly family. The method used in its interpretation is bi al-ra’yī, tahlīli, deductive, and uses linguistic analysis. It is more inclined to relate to theories from the scientific family or school of the mufassir. The validity of the truth is the compatibility between the results of interpretation with the interests of the rulers, schools, or schools, and the knowledge engaged in by the mufassir. The characteristics and objectives of interpretation here are ideological, sectarian,
atomistic, repetitive, and the imposition of non-Qur'anic ideas. It tends to be valid claims and subjective to be in the interests of one’s group, supporting the ruler, madhab, or science that the mufassir is engaged in (Mustaqim, 2012).

Rokhmat S. Labib, as a writer, is significantly influenced by the group he joins, namely Hizb at-Tahrir, which carries the ideology of re-establishing the Islamic Caliphate so that the interpretation carried out is usually associated with the Islamic Caliphate. For example, in the interpretation of Surah al-Baqarah (2:30), The word caliph in the verse is affirmed as postulating the obligation to establish the caliphate, even though the context of the verse is not so. This verse became the basis of interpretation for Rokhmat S. Labib in realizing the mission of the Khilāfah state in Indonesia. He began to interpret the verse normatively by narrating the beginning of the creation of man written in the Qur'an as a caliph on earth. Then he mentions the term caliph in the Qur'an, which many begin with the term ja'ala, both in the form of ism, jamā', and mufrad. Another example is in Surah al-An'am (6:165), al-Naml (27:62), and Ṣad (38:26). Rokhmat S. Labib understood the term ja’ala always to have the involvement of someone with potential/power who appointed others as caliphs. So, in the context of the Quran, the one who is in power is Allah Subḥānahu wa Ta‘ālā, who made humans as caliphs on earth (Nadhiroh, 2014).

The verse clearly states that Allah Subḥānahu wa Ta‘ālā gave knowledge to the angels about the creation of a man who was made caliph on earth. All the mufassir agreed that the caliph in this verse was the prophet Adam. The difference of opinion among the mufassir is that the prophet Adam became caliph over whom. From this basis, Rakhmat S. Labib divided it into four epistemologies to show his understanding of the Caliphate.

First, Adam was caliph for Jinn. He referred to the interpretation of at-Tabari and al-Zuhaili in explaining the creation of humans in place of angels after they succeeded in expelling and sending the Jinn to the coast and mountains because they had done so much damage. For this statement, those who drove the Jinn out of heaven were angels whom humans replaced after the Jinn were expelled.

Second, Adam was the caliph for angels. He refers to the interpretations of al-Shawkānī, al-Nasafi, and al-Waḥidi. He explained that after the angels succeeded in getting rid of the Jinn and they stayed on earth, the prophet Adam took the place of the angels. From that interpretation, angels and jinns are housed on earth while Adam is in Heaven.

Third, Adam was a caliph for his fellow human beings. This opinion refers to the interpretation of Ibn Kathīr. Rokhmat S. Labib asserts that the prophet Adam and his posterity were ordered to become caliphs because people became people who, some of them replaced others, from generation to generation. If this is the case, then all humanity is an incarnation of a caliph who ultimately does not demand a single caliphate on earth as the warriors of the caliph system demand.

Fourth, Adam as Caliph for Allah Subḥānahu wa Ta‘ālā to establish Allah’s laws and apply His decrees. This opinion is referred to from the interpretations of al-Baghawī, al-Alusī, al-Qinūjī, al-‘Ajīlī, Ibn Jauzī, and al-Shanqiṭī. They are all used as references to justify his interpretation that the caliph is a substitute for prospering the earth, governing, and caring for the man. According to Rokhmat S. Labib, this fourth interpretation is more acceptable (Labib, 2013). Furthermore, Rokhmat S. Labib strengthened his interpretation by adding another Qur'anic verse, Surah al-Naml (27:62).

However, at this stage of interpretation, there has been no difference between this work of interpretation and other interpretations in general. Because the theme he wrote in this
interpretation about the obligation to establish the Khilāfah system with this verse is the basis of legitimacy for justification of the responsibility of Muslims to uphold the Khilāfah system and appoint a caliph, he has not expressed clearly. However, at the end of his discussion, he reinforced this theme with a justification of interpretation that refers to the interpretation of the al-Qurṭubī, the primary meaning of which is that the verse is the primary origin for the obligation to appoint imams and caliphs who are heard and obeyed, to unite sentences and apply the laws of the caliph. There is no dispute about this obligation between the ummah and the Shi’a imams unless narrated by al-Asham. Rokhmat S. Labib also added the opinion of al-Zuhaylī, who also agreed with what was expressed by al-Qurṭubī, who affirmed that all scholars agreed on the obligation to appoint the caliph.

Rokhmat S. Labib also quoted al-Nawāwī in the book Sharḥ Šahīh Muslim, which states that appointing a caliph for Muslims is mandatory and that obligation is established as sharia law. The quote from Imam Nawawi is used as a form of the legitimacy of Rokhmat S. Labib so that Muslims meet the promises of Allah Subḥānahu wa Ta’ālā by striving to uphold them. Anyone who tries to get in the way is bound to fail (Labib, 2019). He also argued that the obligation to establish the Caliphate, which connotes ‘ala minhāj al-nubuwah, is obligatory for every Muslim. He argued that way because he took several references to the hadith narrated by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad, and Abu Dawud, which stated as follows: “verily al-imam (caliph) is like a shield, where people will fight behind him (support) and take refuge from enemies with his power.” Rokhmat thinks like that because, according to HTI's belief, Islamic law cannot be implemented perfectly unless there is a Khilāfah (Islamic state) (Hayati, 2017).

The ideological tendency that is very thick in this interpretation is closely related to the embryonic interpretation, which was initially intended to strengthen the position and paradigm of a particular group, in this case, Hizb at-Tahrir Indonesia. Tafsir Al-Wa’ie is writing written periodically and published monthly in the tafsir rubric of al-Wa’ie magazine. In addition, it is also because the interpretation carried out by Rokhmat S. Labib is only on themes related to ideology as carried by his group.

CONCLUSION

A work serves as a profound reflection of its creator, encapsulating the essence and distinctiveness of the author. This assertion is particularly evident in the interpretation authored by Rokhmat S. Labib, known as al-Wa’ie, where the manifestation of the author's identity is intricately intertwined with subjective ideas. The author's background emerges as a significant determinant in the composition of a work, particularly in the realm of interpretation.

Upon closer examination of this study, it is discerned that the al-Wa’ie tafsir book predominantly leans towards the meticulous elaboration of verses for specific purposes. The thematic elements are intimately connected to a radical ideology, apparent in the author's comprehension of his work. Furthermore, the additional information presented in this book tends to underscore the author's perceived authority as a representative of God on earth. This position prompts him to critique alternative perspectives, express disbelief, and assert exclusive claims.

REFERENCES


