



THE MULTI-FUNCTIONAL ROLE OF URBAN SUFISM IN BUILDING MODERN SOCIETY'S RELIGIOSITY

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to identify the role of Majelis Zikir Az-Zikra for the formation of urban community religiosity. This qualitative research uses descriptive analysis method, primary data in the form of scientific articles and mass media relevant to the subject matter. This research concludes that the Az-Zikra Zikir Assembly is not only a medium for da'wah and dhikr, but has a complex role for the lives of urban communities, such as socio-economic aspects with a religious approach in increasing economic independence. This research confirms that the role of taklim assemblies for urban communities can have a positive impact on the complexity of life needs, not only related to aspects of religiosity.

Keyword: Urban Sufism, Majelis Zikir Az-Zikra, Religion, Society

A. Introduction

Urban Sufism has become a phenomenon that is starting to be found in many big cities. Indications can be seen from the presence of urban spiritualism in the form of various Islamic study assemblies. (Alam et al., 2023). This explanation marks an interesting phenomenon in terms of the condition of the religious life of urban communities in Indonesia. Theoretically, the phenomenon of urban people in Indonesia's enthusiasm for religion is a result of the prolonged crisis and moral decadence affecting the lifestyle of some urban people. Although it is believed that religion comes from God, not all religious adherents pursue it. Even teenagers have begun to play an important role in the revival of Sufism in urban communities. They have contributed to the dynamic development of the Sufism civilisation in urban communities (Sodik & Sujibto, 2023) The phenomenon of virtual Sufism through social media has shown a new expression of piety as virtual piety. It is a simplification of piety from the original form of the Sufistic tradition that emphasises symbolic-esoteric aspects that tend not to be just individual piety (Hidayat & Zein, 2022).

Majlis zikir Az-Zikra is one of the majlis zikir located in urban areas and led by ustadz Muhammad Arifin Ilham. Now the Az-Zikra Assembly is centred in the Bukit Az-Zikra housing complex, Sentul, Bogor City. The Majelis also organises pesantren and formal education, both under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and national education. Majlis zikir Az-Zikra carries the syiar of Islam and continues to actively organise da'wah activities and activities to invite people to get closer to Allah SWT (Wisnu Arto Subari, 2024).

This research aims to identify the role of Az-Zikra Zikir Assembly for the formation of urban community religiosity. This qualitative research uses descriptive analysis method, primary data in the form of direct interviews with Jam'ah and also Dzikir leaders as mentors, then secondary data in the form of articles and other writings both in mass and print media. Analysis using reduction, presentation, and verification techniques.

Previous research related to Ustad Arifin Ilham's da'wah has also been carried out by several researchers, among others, Siti Tarwiah and Uwes Fatoni's research concluded that the attention of netizens to Ustad Arifin Ilham's da'wah bi al-qalam through Facebook social media can be seen from the response of emoticons and comments which symbolise the expression of netizens to Ustad Arifin Ilham's posts on social media (Tarwiah & Fatoni, 2016). Next, Bahroni's research states that there are forms of lexical cohesion in Ustad Arifin Ilham's preaching rhetoric which include repetition, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, collocation, and equivalence (Bahroni, 2018).

Based on previous research with various colours of the focus of the study and its urgency, then this research is theoretically and practically urgent theoretical and practical urgency can be an important source in examining how the

treatment of modern human religiosity in the midst of the chaos of worldly busyness, which is a religious remembrance assembly and religious experience as a medium of therapeutic counselling for every human being. Religious experience as a medium of therapeutic counselling for each congregation as a person who needs a spiritual oasis and the essence of religion. Who need spiritual oasis and the essence of the life of a servant who expects His affection (Al Walid, 2022). According to Nozira Salleh, the current social problems in modern society are caused by the lack of appreciation of spiritual values (Salleh et al., 2020).

Practically, this research is important for academics and religious leaders to take steps-taking references in producing a quality study and service to the community, especially complex urban communities. Apart from the fact that this research is an analytical descriptive research in which data collection is done through direct interviews with the leaders of the assembly and its congregation, this research is also important because it seeks to explore the sides of social activism as an interpretation of Sufism's emphasis on spiritual and ethical-social areas (Polat, 2017). In other words, the existence of a remembrance assembly in building a religiously mature society more or less adopts the conception of neo-sufism.

B. Classification of Schools in Sufism

Although Islamic spirituality among certain Muslim communities there are those who prioritise the authenticity of Sufism itself, such as the manifestation of the value of *ihsan* and *akhlaq al-karimah*, not necessarily involved in the flow of methods of implementing the teachings of Sufism (Hidayat & Zein, 2022). However, in the history of Islam, there are several schools of *Tariqah* that are popular in the Islamic world today. (Sri Mulyati, 2004). Further explanation, as follows:

1. Tariqat Qadiriyyah

In 521 AH/1127 CE, at the age of 50, Abdul Qadir Jailani suddenly emerged as a popular Hanbali preacher in Baghdad. He began to teach and give fatwas in all schools of thought to the public until he became widely known. For 25 years Abdul Qadir Jailani spent his time as a Sufi wanderer in the deserts of Iraq and eventually became recognised by the world as a great Sufi figure of the Islamic world. In addition, he led the madrasa and ribath in Baghdad which was established since 521 AH until his death in 561 AH. The madrasa continued to survive with the leadership of his son Abdul Wahab (552-593 AH/1151-1196 AD), continued by his son Abdul Salam (611 AH/1214 AD). It was also led by Abdul Qadir Jaelani's second son, Abdul Razaq (528-603 AH/1134-1206 CE), until the destruction of Baghdad in 656 AH/1258 CE.

The Qadiriyyah Order developed and became established around 1300 in Iraq and Suri'ah, although it was not yet widespread. By a century later, the order had found a place in the masses, particularly in the Indian subcontinent, where the main figure was Mir Nurullah, the grandson of the great Iranian Sufi Shah Ni'matullah Wali. In Africa it developed in the 15th century and in Turkey in the 17th century with Ismail Rumi (d.1643) as the main figure.

2. Tariqat Syattariyah

The Shattariyyah order is attributed to Shaykh 'Abd Allah al-Syaththari (d. 890 AH/1485 CE), who was a scholar related to Shihab al-Din Abu Hafsh, 'Umar Suhrawardi (539-632 AH/1145-124 CE), who popularised the Suhrawardiyyah order. The Shattariyyah order most likely originated in Transoxiana in view of its lineage culminating in Abu Yazid al-Bustami (d. 260 AH/873 CE) and Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (d. 146 AH/ 763 CE). The Shattariyyah order is a congregation that was resurrected by Shaykh 'Abd Allah al-Syaththari from the Isyqiyyah order in Iran or the Bistamiyyah order in Ottoman Turkey.

This tariqat emerged as a movement to spread da'wah to non-Muslims in India and also to improve spiritual moral values in order to adapt to the traditions or rituals of the local community which were still heavily influenced by Hinduism. By looking at the birth process, this order is very accommodating so that it can be used as a movement in spreading Islam. Sheikh 'Abd Allah al-Syaththari wrote a book that became the basis of the teachings of the Shattariyyah order, namely Latha'if al-Gaibiyyah. Shaykh Abd Rauf al-Sinkili was the caliph of the Syattariyyah order in Malay-Indonesia.

3. Tariqat Chistiyyah

The Chistiyyah Order, is an order whose name is taken from a region in Afghanistan, the origins of which can be traced to the 3rd century AH/9 CE. However, although the order is named after a region in Afghanistan, it is only famous in India. The Chistiyyah have a spiritual lineage that can be traced back to Hasan al-Bashri (21-110H/ 642-728 CE). They believe that Hasan al-Bashri was a disciple of Ali ibn Abi Talib, a claim whose validity they find spiritual. The founder of the Chistiyyah Order in India was Khawajah Mu'in al-Din Hasan. In addition, Shaykh Nizham al-Din Auliya who settled in Delhi, crystallised the Chistiyya teachings in North India, as well as in the Deccan region. His disciples, established Chistiyya schools in Jawnpur, Malwa, Gujarat, and the Deccan. The Chistiyya order has Sunni roots. They follow the Hanafi school of fiqh.

4. Tariqat Naqsyabandiyah

The order was founded by Muhammad bin Muhammad Baha' al-Din al-Uwaisi al-Bukhari Naqsyabandi, then became an institution that experienced a

very long and unique development process. Sufi figures from various regions became the chain of continuity of its teachings up to the Prophet Muhammad, through the path of Abu Bakr Shiddiq, and Salman al-Farisi. The Naqsyabandiyah Order spread its wings to various countries starting from Qhazwin Tibris (Iran) to Istanbul (Turkey) (Martin Brunessen, 1993).

C. The Concept of Neo-Sufism

The behaviour of the Prophet and his Companions, as well as the generations after him, is a description of what Sufis practice as an effort to cultivate the mind to achieve the essence of spiritual perfection. However, the Companions were not yet called Sufis, only known as zahids or 'abids (Martin Lings, 1987). According to Fazlur Rahman, neo-sufism is a renewed type of Sufism, in which the ascetic and metaphysical features and content have been replaced with content from Islamic orthodoxy. This new method of Sufism emphasises and renews the original moral factors and puritanical self-control in Sufism. The idea of neo-sufism is that Sufism tends to engender social activism and reinstate a positive attitude towards the world. Its pioneering figures were Ibn Taimiyah and Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyah. Neo-sufism does not reject the epistemology of kashf as a degree of intellectual processes and utilises all essential Sufi terminology and tries to incorporate into Sufism a moral meaning and social ethos (Rahman, 1979). Specifically in Indonesia, the development of the Sufism movement was dominated by Sunni Sufism. In the early 1950s, Hamka through his books *Tasawuf; Development and Purification*, and *Modern Tasawuf*, tried to show that true Sufism is one that remains rooted in the principle of tawhid, namely God is only One (Hamka, 1980).

The application of tasawwuf is to fill oneself with the perfect qualities of Allah swt, and or identify oneself with the perfect qualities of Allah swt through the teachings of wirid and others. Furthermore, Hamka in his work, *Modern Sufism*, has laid new foundations regarding the thought and implementation of Sufism in a harmonious manner in Indonesia, namely through a deep appreciation of the esoteric dimensions of Islam while still involving oneself in all aspects of social life, not by going into seclusion or isolation. Hamka's idea of the importance of the inner or spiritual (esoteric) aspect by not releasing the shar'i or outer (exoteric) aspect in holding Islam, both as a religious dogma and as a norm of social life, has had a huge influence on the growth and development of the modern Sufi tradition in the country.

The thought of neo-sufism in Indonesia, spearheaded by Hamka, about the involvement of Sufis more actively in social life, is a differentiator from the classical Sufism tradition that has grown earlier in the archipelago. Neo-sufism does not necessarily abolish classical Sufism, but only wants to release individuals from the 'ties of tariqah', not in the maqamat and ahwal. In the sense that modern

society is reactualising and redefining the Sufis' maqamat and ahwal. Ahwal is the plural of hal, which means state, namely the state of the heart that is deep by the Sufis in travelling the path to get close to God. Ahwal can also be interpreted as a psychological situation obtained by a Sufi as a gift from Allah swt, not as a result of his efforts. Ahwal is a mental state such as happiness, sadness, fear, and so on (Jumantoro & Amin, 2005).

In this modern era, especially with regard to maqamat, it can be carried out by giving a new definition for each level in maqamat. As the sages say, it is an extraordinary thing in the hustle, bustle, noise and tendency of materialistic life to cultivate the mind so as not to be swept away in this life. Isn't it true that the greater the obstacles, the greater the rewards. Likewise in the present era, the greater the obstacles obtained in worshiping Allah swt, the greater the reward. living in this modern world, Sufistic values inherited by predecessors should not be ignored and abandoned. Rather, they need to be reoriented and reactualised so that they can be actualised in modern society.

D. A Brief Portrait of Majelis Zikir Az-Zikra

Majlis zikir Az-Zikra is a majlis zikir led by ustadz Muhammad Arifin Ilham. Now Majelis Az-Zikra is based in the Bukit Az-Zikra housing complex, Sentul Bogor. The Islamic housing complex was initiated by its founder, KH Muhammad Arifin Ilham, who later called this housing complex 'Kampung Sunnah.' Majelis Az-Zikra, which carries out Islamic propagation, continues to actively organise da'wah activities and activities to invite people to get closer to Allah SWT after the death of its founder KH Muhammad Arifin Ilham. Routine activities, namely monthly zikir Akbar on every first Sunday of the week, selawat, munajat and prayers and other activities continue to run as usual, including boarding school activities.

The assembly, which originated in Depok, West Java, has been well known as an Islamic da'wah and ukhuwah assembly, especially dhikr and muhasabah. The assembly invites people to goodness and devotion and together pursue benefits in the moral glory of all the nation's children in this country. 'The mandate of Murabbi, the call of ta'zhim and mahabbah alm. KH Muhammad Arifin Ilham, this harakah da'wah and dhikr must be continued,' he said. The monthly Sunday Zikir activity is usually carried out in the first week of every month and attracts many congregations. Likewise, the Fajr Halaqah every day, the Muslim Women's Study every Thursday, or the reading of Ratib, Doa and Malulidurasul continue as usual. The congregation who usually participates in dhikr, selawat, munajat and prayer activities and other activities continue to flood these activities. In addition, the boarding school as a regeneration institution for Generasi Zikir (Genzi) is maintained, continued and developed both in Sentul and Gunung Sindur and has opened registration for new students for the 2025/2026 learning year. There are also Bea student opportunities for those who excel and have certain skills.

Murabbi KH Arifin Ilham organised dhikr activities, which at first were only done by himself. But slowly, there were followers of the congregation. The congregation wanted this dhikr activity not only to focus on one activity, but to further develop its da'wah activities. Based on this proposal, KH Muhammad Arifin Ilham established a Zikir Assembly called Az-Zikra.

E. The Role of Majelis Zikir Az-Zikra in Building the Religiousness of the City Community

Tasawwuf or Sufism is also known as Sufism in Western thought. The word Sufism is not known in the Qur'an, but only became known in the third century H. Etymologically, there are several opinions regarding the origin of the word Sufism / Sufi, some say that Sufi comes from the word Shafa which means holy, clean, pure or clear (Al-Kalabazi, 1993). Another opinion says that Sufi comes from the word Shaf which means row, Sufis are always in the first row when praying to get the grace of Allah SWT (Mir Vahuddin, 1993). There are also those who say that Sufi comes from the word Shuffah which means a simple porch made of earth with a building slightly higher than the ground of the mosque. Sufis were once a group of friends of the Prophet Muhammad who liked to worship and live in the porch of the Prophet's mosque. There are also those who say that the word Sufi comes from the word Shafwah which means the chosen people. And there are also those who say that Sufi comes from the word Shuf meaning coarse woolen cloth.

While European scholars argue that sufi comes from the Greek, namely sophos which means wisdom, but Ibrahim Basyumi rejects it by saying that the Greek letter sigma is equated with Arabic Sin in all Arabicised Greek sentences, not the letter Shad. Furthermore, A. Rivei Siregar said that the ultimate goal of Sufism is pure ethics, namely; first, surrendering oneself completely to the absolute will of God, because He is the prime mover of every event that occurs in this nature. Secondly, total abandonment of all personal desires and abstinence from the vices associated with worldly life. Third, the elimination of self-consciousness and the concentration on the contemplation of God alone, seeking nothing but Him (Jumantoro, 2005).

Another opinion was expressed by Harun Nasution that the purpose of Sufism is: To obtain the perfection of a direct and conscious relationship with God, so that one is in the presence of God. The essence of Sufism is the communication and dialogue between the human spirit and God through seclusion and contemplation (Harun Nasution, 1973). Whereas according to Sayyed Hussein Nasher, the goal of Sufism is the attainment of a state of complete purity, not through the negation of reason and mind, as is often the case in the practice of piety maintained by certain Sufi movements, but through the knowledge of each element of one's being towards its own true centre. Sufism is not the result of a specialised mind but the vision of the eyes of the heart through a way of life

(Seyyed Hussein Nasr, 1994). In the history of Islam, there are several schools of Tariqah that are popular in the Islamic world to this day (Sri Mulyati, 2004).

With the various arguments that have been put forward, the ultimate goal of a Sufi is only to instil divine values in himself. When he thinks about God, his mind feels calm and he seems to feel united with God. This unity will give birth to noble behaviour, and always try to display a smooth temperament, his heart is clear, his words are regular and polite, his thoughts are always brilliant. His broad outlook does not separate himself from social life, and his soul is strong in the face of various obstacles and trials in life. Not only that, the substantial religious spirit in Sufis can also move them to have an ecological conservation awareness in protecting nature (Ahmad, 2019) Sufism healing, as a potential alternative approach to rehabilitating those struggling with drug addiction and drug abuse, centres on the goal of cultivating a greater relationship with Allah SWT through the principles of takhalli, tahalli, and tajalli (Laksana et al., 2023).

Az-Zikra Zikra Assembly as a non-formal institution has a special curriculum in an effort to accommodate the formation of a religious soul and personality. Thus the community can feel the presence of the Az-Zikra assembly to guide them to provide salvation both in the world and in the hereafter, also aims to provide a deep understanding of Islamic education to the wider community. Apart from being a non-formal institution, the Az-Zikra taklim assembly has sociologically made many real contributions to the development and religious knowledge of the community since its establishment and until now, which has changed leadership by Ustadz Arifin ilham's biological son Ustadz Muhammad Alfin Faiz, this taklim assembly has become a tool for developing Islamic preaching through social media and other mass media.

The concrete programme of the contribution of the Az-Zikra Dhikr Assembly in the field of religious education is as follows.

1. Organising Monthly Zikir Akbar

As the purpose of the Az-Zikra Zikr assembly is to devote Zikr as a tool to get closer to Allah SWT, the Az-Zikra Zikr assembly holds monthly Dzikir Akbar activities which are held every first Sunday of each month and the tausiyah is broadcast live on private television screens so that it can be enjoyed by all corners of Indonesia, This activity aims to make Jam`ah dhikr in particular and the wider community in general to always remember the almighty amid the hustle and bustle of the busy world by prospering the mosque and participating in religious studies and praying together. This activity begins early in the morning by doing qiyamul lail, then continued with sunnah isroq prayers and morning prayers together, then continued with religious studies and ceremonies and then the main event, namely tausiyah and dhikr together led by Ustadz Arifin Ilham or who represents him.

2. Organise Weekly Recitation

In addition to the monthly Zikr activities, this assembly also holds weekly studies, namely routine studies held every week at the Az-Zikra Sentul Bogor mosque led directly by the leader of the Dzikir assembly, namely ustadz Arifin Ilham or who represents him. The activities are in the form of Halaqoh subuh which is held every day with jam`ah and employees of the Az-Zikra Dhikr assembly, then dhuha prayers together which are held every week with jam`ah both from local and from outside the city, and finally the Muslimah study which is held on every fourth week of the month which is attended by Muslim women and the general public. When viewed sociologically, the activities carried out by the Az-Zikra Dhikr assembly, both monthly and weekly activities, aim to be an effort to become a forum for friendship, both between jama`ah, the surrounding community as well as a means of conveying ideas to the ulama and umaro.

Other activities in addition to monthly and weekly Zikr are also student camps, which are tourist activities for students from outside the assembly who will carry out study tours, the assembly also provides religious materials such as Islamic history, national Islamic seminars, religious science halaqohs, Hajj manasiks, archery training and also horse riding training. Then another activity is Titian Keluarga Sakinah, this activity aims to jam`ah who are still single or do not have a partner in order to prepare themselves to run a family that is sakinah, mawaddah wa rohmah and has succeeded in forming a sakinah family, namely as many as 120 jama`ah. The last religious education programme is the Az-Zikra Islamic Boarding School located in Sentul, Bogor, led directly by Ustad Arifin Ilham and mandated to his son Alfin to continue the Islamic Boarding School, whose vision is to produce students with global and Islamic insight, and to create Qur'an memorizers who are able to apply the contents of the content in today's modern era.

In addition, as far as the researchers understand, apart from being a non-formal institution with the vision of producing a generation of students with global insight, the az-Zikra Islamic boarding school or az-Zikra assembly has an important bargaining position in forming an independent and economically literate generation. Practically, this is shown by how this institution later formed business units managed directly by the foundation. These units include, first, Zikra Mart is one of the minimartket-like business units which in its development already has several branches in several areas in the Bogor area. Second, Az-Zikra Canteen is a business unit that provides opportunities for the surrounding community to increase the economy together. Third, Zikra Laundry is a cleaning business unit. Fourth, multipurpose building rental. Fifth, Rumah Sehat as a unit that serves non-medical treatment such as cupping and other prophetic medicine. Sixth, horse racing. Seventh, Travel Adzikra is a business unit that provides Hajj and Umrah travel services. Eighth, there is Az-Zikra Honey as a business unit that provides

fresh honey consumption. And the last is Az-Zikra Boutique, a business unit that produces Muslim clothing and of course is produced independently by the manager and or human resources of Az-Zikra (Supriyadi, 2021).

Thus, if we borrow the glasses of religious sociology, looking at the Az-Zikra assembly or the Az-Zikra Islamic Boarding School as a non-formal educational institution that not only explores religious activities as a refreshing oasis, but also tries to explore the socio-economic side with a religious approach which certainly has a noble goal in addition to increasing faith but also together growing to increase economic independence, both in the Az-Zikra environment itself and outside the Az-Zikra environment.

F. Conclusion

The main discussion of this research concludes that Ustadz Arifin Ilham's da'wah method through the Az-Zikra Zikir Assembly is not only a medium for da'wah and dhikr, but has a complex role for the lives of urban communities, but also the socio-economic side with a religious approach in increasing economic independence, both in the Az-Zikra environment itself and outside the Az-Zikra environment. This research confirms that the role of majelis taklim for urban communities can have a positive impact on the complexity of life needs, not only related to aspects of religiosity. The limitation of this research is that it has not identified obstacles in the effective implementation of various activities of the Az-Zikra Zikir Assembly. Therefore, further research is important.

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