THE IMPACT OF AL-ALBĀNĪ’S REVOLUTIONARY APPROACH TO HADITH ON ISLAMIC MILITANCY IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

The rise of Islamic militancy among Indonesian Salafis closely relates to their literal understanding of the hadith as the resource of their religious doctrines, with Muḥammad Nāṣiruddīn al-Albānī (1914-1999) as the most referenced figure. This article analyses how the thought of al-Albānī on hadith impacted Islamic militancy development in Indonesia. The writer argues that al-Albānī’s pupils support the rapid spread of his thinking on the hadith with their book publishers, organisations, and Salafi pesantrens. Meanwhile, the impact of al-Albānī’s thoughts on the Salafi movement in Indonesia appears in three notions: the domination of the textual understanding of the hadiths, the growth of al-Lā Madhhabiyyah (not relying on any classical madhab of fiqh), and the taṣfiyah and tarbiyah program. According to al-Albānī, the program of taṣfiyah and tarbiyah is the only way to build an Islamic society, which is a condition for the establishment of the Islamic Sharia and the Islamic State (Daulah Islāmiyyah).

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untuk tidak bertumpu pada mazhab fikih klasik tertentu); dan program taṣfiyah dan tarbiyah. Menurut al-Albānī, tanpa taṣfiyah dan tarbiyah, tidak mungkin bisa terbanging masyarakat Islami yang menjadi syarat bagi tegaknya syariat Islam dan berdirinya negara Islam).

Keywords: Salafism, Islamic militancy, al-Lā Madhhabiyyah, Taṣfiyah and Tarbiyah.

A. Introduction

Among the treasures of Islamic intellectuals, the thoughts on the hadith have the most impact on the movement of Islamic militancy that mostly based its religious preferences on scriptural-based literal interpretations. Ahmad ibn Hanbal, the initial reference of the Wahhabis, a group that in this modern era is known to have produced the most radical actions,¹ for instance, is known to hold the strongest principle in understanding the hadith literally. He is more an expert on hadith and theology than a jurist.² Since the early history of Islam, there has been an intellectual movement called abl al-hadīth that builds its religious system based on the dominance of the textual understanding of the hadīth,³ where not a few hadiths have textual support for militant attitudes.

In modern times, the impact of hadith thoughts on Islamic militancy increases, especially among Wahhabis, who were known to have many hadith figures. The most prominent one was Muḥammad Nāṣiruddīn al-Albānī (1914-1999), who often gave lectures to Jamā’ah al-Salafiyya al-Muḥtasiba by al-Utaybi.⁴ He was involved in the polemic with many ulama and was referred to as a figure who used the term

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Salafi to avoid the negative stigma first pinned on the Wahhabis.\(^5\) This nomenclature is based in part on the saying of the Prophet Muhammad that he understood textually: “The best time is my time (ṣaḥābah), then those who came after them (tābi‘ūn), then those who came after them (tābī’īn al-tābi‘īn).”\(^6\) Almost all ulama agreed upon these three generations from the beginning as the generation of the salaf. However, the ulama of the hadith often use the term *mutaqaddimūn* rather than the salaf term; and some of his students had used the term *mutaqaddimūn* to criticise him as not being salafi enough because he was considered to be more inclined towards *muta’akākhānīn*, namely the ulama following al-Dāruquṭnī (917–995).\(^7\)

In Indonesia, the Salaf term has two contradictory meanings. Many traditionalists pesantrens label their selves as salaf pesantrens. It means that these pesantrens teach classical books, commonly called *kitab kuning*. This salaf term does not imply restrictions on three generations (ṣaḥābah, tābi‘ūn, and tābī‘īn) only because the yellow book they use also include works compiled by ulama after them.\(^8\) In addition, the Salaf pesantren is also known as an institution relying on the schools of Islamic jurisprudence (*al-Madhhabīyyah*). In this type of pesantren, the study of the hadith supports the study of three main Islamic sciences: *Tawḥīd*, *Fiqh* and *Sufism*.\(^9\) Second, the salaf term refers to the notion stated by al-Albānī above, which is usually called Salafi. Therefore, this group in Indonesia is also often called as *Salafi-Wahhabi*. Later Wahhabi in Indonesia also

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\(^8\) Stéphane Lacroix, “Al-Albani’s Revolutionary Approach to Hadith”, *ISIM*, vol. 21 (2008), pp. 6-7.


had pesantrens, so they were called Salafi pesantren. Contrary to the Salaf pesantren, the Salafi pesantren make the study of the hadith a basic science on which they have been building their religious system, as the teachings of al-Albānī. In addition, the Salafi pesantrens develop the ideas of al-Lā Madhbabiyah (not relying on any classical fiqh madhab), or at least there is a prohibition on doing taqlīd.

Al-Albānī had many students, including Sheikh Muqbil bin Hādī al-Wadī’i and Rābi’ bin Hādī al-Madkhalī. It was through these two students that many Indonesians studied and then spread Salafism to Indonesia. Among those who studied with them was Ja’far Umar Ṭālib, a Salafi figure known as the Commander of Laskar Jihad (LJ). At first, Ja’far Umar Ṭālib was classified as a Salafi Non-Jihadi, as al-Albānī and his followers (al-Albāniyyūn). The characteristic of this Non-Jihadi Salafi is to concentrate on developing the knowledge and purification of the faith (tawḥīd) and avoiding politics. In practice, however, al-Albānī himself is considered a person who is not immune from politics. Even in Indonesia, considering the case of Ja’far Umar Ṭālib, this Salafi is not only a politician but also took a radical path.

Many studies have been conducted regarding al-Albānī’s impact on Salafism. In the global context, Lacroix, for example, has linked al-Albānī’s hadith thought with Salafis militancy and showed its effects on religious politics in Saudi Arabia. In the Indonesian context, Noorhaidi and Din Wahid also acknowledge al-Albānī’s impact on Salafism, but they have not specifically highlighted the impact of his hadith thought. Therefore it is crucial to recognise the effect of al-Albānī’s hadith thought on Islamic militancy in Indonesia, especially among the Salafis.

12 Ibid.
14 Lacroix, “Between Revolution and Apoliticism”.
15 Ibid.
16 Hasan, “Faith and Politics”.
20 Wahid, “Nurturing Salafi Manhaj”.

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B. The Revolutionary Approach to Hadith

Al-Albānī’s full name is Muḥammad Nāṣiruddīn ibn Nūḥ ibn Ādam al-Najātī. He was born in 1332 H/1914 AD in Askhodera, the capital of Albania. Albania was still implementing Islamic law at that time despite its independence from the Ottoman Empire. However, when Albani was nine years old, there was a massive application of secularism and communism, including a ban on wearing the ḥijāb in Albania. There was a wave of refuge among those who wanted to maintain their Islamic identity towards Damascus, the capital of Syria. Al-Albānī’s family was among those who took part in the migration.21

In Damascus, his father enrolled him in elementary school, but his father did not want him to continue to the next level. Seeing that the school curriculum was lack of quality, his father made a curriculum for himself, starting from the Quran and Tajwīd, Nahw and Ṣaraf, and the Hanafi school of fiqh. He also studied with other teachers, such as Sheikh Sa‘īd al-Burhānī, Imām ‘Abdul Fattāh, and Sheikh Taufīq Barzakh. Although he did not continue to formal education, his enthusiasm for learning was very high.

It was in an atmosphere of high enthusiasm for independent study, for the first time, at the age of twenty, he was attracted to the science of hadith, inspired by the al-Manār magazine published by Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā. In the magazine, al-Albānī was interested in an article about the study of criticism of al-Ghazali’s Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn. Since then, he has continued to study hadith, even though he is self-taught. He has produced many works, even being appointed professor of hadith at the Islamic University of Madinah. He died in 1420 H/1999 AD.

Lacroix called al-Albānī’s approach to hadith revolutionary because it has an internal impact on hadith studies and externally on religious studies and practices, even in some cases encompassed political aspects.22 Through this approach, al-Albānī and some of his students broke the dominance of the long-established religious aristocracy, which consisted of people from Najd. The breakthrough did not only stop at the spiritual aspect, but some also penetrated the political one.

The revolutionary criteria refer to at least three things.23 First, making hadith central in religious studies. According to him, someone can find all religious issues not mentioned in the Quran in the hadith.

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21 Lacroix, “Between Revolution and Apoliticism”.
22 Lacroix, “Al-Albani’s Revolutionary Approach to Hadith”.
23 Ibid.
Therefore, according to al-Albānī, someone must not follow a specific madhab to be a true Salafi. Al-Albānī used this point to criticise the Wahhabis, whose many figures still follow the Hanbali school. Even Muhammad bin ‘Abd al-Wahhab, al-Albānī considered him a Salafi only on the aspect of tawḥīd, not on fiqh. Second, his practice of hadith criticism targets all hadith books, including those that have been agreed upon by the majority of hadith scholars as authentic books, such as Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim. He differs from the hadith scholars who commonly consider the two books the most authentic after the Quran and do not need further examination. Third, al-Albānī did not recognise the importance of ʿijāzah, a certification in the transmission of the hadith.

According to al-Albānī, the criteria for criticising hadith are very clear, namely examining the quality of narrators one by one without being influenced by ethnic and ideological origins. Al-Albānī also disowned the requirement to obtain an ʿijāzah in the Wahhabi religious tradition. To become an authoritative Wahhabi ulama, anyone does not have to have the received ʿijāzah but the qualifications. According to Lacroix, this idea aligns with the fact that al-Albānī received very few ʿijāzahs due to his self-taught and informal method of studying hadith.

In general, the hadith thoughts of al-Albānī consist of two parts. The first part is the theoretical part related to the hadith examination. Like other ulama in general, he began his analysis by carrying out takhrīj (tracing the origins of the hadith), followed by analysis on sanad (al-naqd al-khārijī). He then ended with matn analysis (al-naqd al-dākhilī). The criteria he uses to examine sanad and matn are not different from those of other ulama of hadiths. As mentioned above, the difference between him and other ulama is his courage to implement his examination method on all types of books and hadiths. The books of hadith that are widely known as most authentic have not escaped from his examination, such as Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim. A mutawatir hadith was also not

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25 Lacroix, “Al-Albani’s Revolutionary Approach to Hadith”.
sparing from his study. His courage, in addition to garnering dislike from several parties, also caused appreciation from others. It is clear that, theoretically, what al-Albānī did is true. There is no final hadith examination, but subjective and tentative.

The second part is practical and related to using these hadiths in Islamic structures. This notion is typical of al-Albānī compared to the other ulama of hadith. For him, hadith examination has implications for the assessment of the hadith quality and impacts the entire system of Islam. All the maqībūl (accepted) hadith must be in use, and on the contrary, all the mardūd (rejected) ones must be discarded from the Islamic system. Related to this, al-Albānī has two programs, namely tafṣīyah and tāribiyah. Tafṣīyah is cleaning up all the treasures of Islamic intellectuals from false teaching in general and the ḍaʾīf hadith in particular. It produces works of tāḥqīq or tākrīj type (examination on the quality of the hadith). Al-Albānī has finished the research on dozens of books in various fields, starting from the tafsīr, tawḥīd, fiqh, and morals until muʿāmalah. It seems inseparable from his first experience in contact with the science of hadith, namely tākrīj conducted by al-Iraqi on Iḥyāʾ of al-Ghazali reviewed in al-Manār. The works of contemporary ulama also can not be separated from his criticism, such as Fiqh al-Sirah by Sheikh Muḥammad al-Ghazālī,32 Fiqh al-Sirah by Ramaḍān al-Buṭī33 and al-Halāl wa al-Haram by Yusuf al-Qarḍāwī. At the same time, the tāribiyah is educating young Muslims with Islamic teachings that are clean from any ḍaʾīf and false hadiths. In practice, the tāribiyah uses the works of al-Albānī, or the works of other people on which he has done his tākrīj.

Since the early eighties, the hadith thoughts of al-Albānī have begun to emerge in Indonesia through several people who studied from his students in the Middle East. Nevertheless, his thoughts appeared

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29 Amin, “Nāṣiruddīn al-Albānī on Muslim’s Ṣaḥīḥ”.
30 Amin, “The Reliability of the Traditional Science of Hadith”.
31 Al-Ṭaḥḥān, Uṣūl al-Takhrīj wa-Dirāsāt al-Asānīd.
more massively in Indonesia after the reformation.\textsuperscript{36} Along with politically oriented and apolitical transnational organisations with moderate and radical ideologies, al-Albānī’s thoughts are increasingly widespread.\textsuperscript{37} In addition to the opening of the reform faucet, the inclusion of the hadith thoughts of Albānī is in line with the jargon of the idea of Islamic revival that has long existed, returning to the Quran and the Sunnah. Conjoining this jargon is a program of cleansing Islamic teachings from superstition, \textit{bid`ah} and \textit{khurāfāt}, which also aligns with al-Albānī’s program.\textsuperscript{38}

The influence of the hadith thoughts of al-Albānī is considerably fast in Indonesia, supported by a number of facilities. Even though all of al-Albānī’s followers in Indonesia did not learn the hadith directly from him but through his students, they supported and spread al-Albānī’s idea massively. Indonesia also had not been visited directly by him. Some of his pupils, such as Sālim ibn Ḥādi al-Hilālī, Mashhūr ibn Ḥasan Abū Salmān, Muqbil ibn Hādi al-Wadiʼī and Rabi’ ibn Hādi al-Madkhālī, had many students from Indonesia who were keen to spread Salafism, such as Abdurrahman bin Abdul Karim al-Tamimi, Abdul Hakim bin Amir Abdat, Mubarak Bamu’llīm, ‘Aunurrafiq bin Ghufran Hamdan, Yūsuf bin Mukhtar al-Atsari, Ja’far Umar Ṭālib, and Muhammad Umar Assewed.\textsuperscript{39}

In addition, al-Albānī’s followers have developed book publishers that actively published his translated works or magazines that spread his thoughts. Among the publishers that actively publish his translated works are Pustaka Imam Syafi’ī, Pustaka Attibyan, Pustaka Azzam, Pustaka Assunnah, Pustaka Ulil Albab, Pustaka Sumayyah, Najla Press, Pustaka Sahifa, Gema Insani Press, Maktabah Salafi Press, Pustaka Mantiq and Media Hidayah. Through these translation works, al-Albānī’s thoughts can be widespread. As the characteristics of the translation work generally, the intervention of the translators’ thoughts (or \textit{al-idrāj} in terms of


\textsuperscript{37} Hasan, “Salafism in Indonesia”.

\textsuperscript{38} Wahid, “Nurturing Salafi Manhaj”.

\textsuperscript{39} Lukman Hakim bin Nurdin, Mohd Arif bin Nazri and Najah Nadiah Binti Amran, “The Entry of Al-Albani’s Influence in Aceh, Indonesia”, \textit{Journal of Islamic, Social, Economics and Development (JISED)}, vol. 6, no. 41 (2021), pp. 156-73.
the hadith science)\textsuperscript{40} does exist, but there are relatively few.\textsuperscript{41} That is, through the translation works, the absorption of readers from al-Albānī’s thoughts. For example, in the translation of his work \textit{Sifat Shalat Nabi},\textsuperscript{42} Abu Zakariya al-Atsari did not put his comments. He translated the work as it is. So that readers can immediately take al-Albānī’s thoughts, likewise in al-Albānī’s other works, which have been available through Indonesian translation.\textsuperscript{43} Hakim et al. listed al-Albānī’s works that have been translated into Indonesian; in the field of hadith, there are 16 works by 15 translators with nine publishers; in the field of fiqh, there are 11 works by nine translators with eight publishers; in the field of ‘aqīdah, there are four works by five translators with four publishers; in the field of Islamic thought, there are four works by five translators with three publishers.\textsuperscript{44}

Besides the translation works, there are some magazines such as \textit{As-Sunnah}, \textit{al-Furqan}, \textit{al-Dzakhirah}, \textit{Qiblati}, and \textit{Fatawa} that actively spread al-Albānī’s thoughts. In contrast to translated works with very little intervention, the magazines on al-Albānī’s thoughts have undergone processing because of the adjustment to the questions addressed and the segmentation of the readers. However, the outline still refers to the main works of al-Albānī. For example, the as-Sunnah Magazine has a column with contents sourced explicitly from hadith. In that column, the assessment of hadith is based chiefly on al-Albānī’s.\textsuperscript{45}

The dissemination of al-Albānī’s thoughts is also through organisations, namely al-Irsyad and Persis. Since its inception, these two Islamic organisations, together with Muhammadiyyah, are known as reformist organisations in Indonesia. Their figures, Ahmad Surkati, Ahmad Hassan, and Ahmad Dahlan, are known as the Trio of Indonesian


\textsuperscript{43} Nurdin et al., “The Entry of Al-Albani’s Influence in Aceh, Indonesia”.

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.

Reformers. However, in the post-reformation era, only al-Irsyad and Persis have still been actively adapting and propagating al-Albānī’s ideas. Ma’had ‘Ālī al-Irsyad Surabaya have ever invited Sheikh Ali and Sheikh Mashhur, two students of al-Albānī, to provide training for their dā‘i (preacher) in 1422 H and 1423 H. Al-Irsyad and Persis follows up at spreading al-Albānī’s thoughts through their schools and pesantren.

Last, the Salafi pesantrens’ role is also vital in spreading al-Albānī’s thoughts. In addition to the Salafi pesantrens owned by al-Irsyad and Persis, many Salafi pesantrens have recently emerged, some of which follow the al-Albānī’s thoughts on hadith. An online site organised by Salafi, nahimunkar.com released around 44 Salafi pesantrens; even Din Wahid estimated they reached 50 pesantrens. Although not all of them follow the hadith thoughts of al-Albānī, and even some oppose him, all contribute to the spread of these ideas on hadith in Indonesia. Those who opposed al-Albānī argued that he was more inclined towards muta‘akkhirūn. For them, al-Albānī is less salafi. However, in a broader context, both mutaqaddimūn and muta‘akkhirūn are included in the category of salaf scholars.

C. The Impact on Islamic Militancy

The militancy term is often associated with violence and extremism, but this is not always the case. This word comes from the

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48 Ibid.
50 Wahid, “Nurturing Salafi Manhaj”.
51 Lacroix, “Al-Albani’s Revolutionary Approach to Hadith”.
word militant, which comes from the Latin word *militare*, which means serving as a soldier. Contemporary use of this word has become broader to describe someone with a particular view or ideology. A militant is someone confrontational, regardless of the use of physical force or peaceful methods. A militant can be used to describe someone who engages in aggressive expression, verbally or physically, and does not necessarily involve extreme violence.\(^{54}\)

When discussing Islamic militancy, scholars such as Bjørgo, Matthew, Hafez and Mullins, and Borum also add an un-negotiated ideology as an essential factor in Islamic radicalisation.\(^{55}\) Islamic militancy here is an attitude of solid holding to specific Islamic ideology, manifested verbally and in action, and does not always involve extreme violence. Thus, Islamic militancy can be radical\(^{56}\) and non-radical. These two classifications exist in the three Salafi factions in Indonesia: purists, politicians, and jihadists.\(^{57}\) The first two factions are non-radical, while the last faction is relatively radical. The impact of al-Albānī’s thought on Islamic militancy in Indonesia occurs in all these factions, although the most obvious is in the first two. This impact can be seen through three notions: the textual understanding, *al-Lā Madhhabiyyah* attitude, and *tasfiyah* and *tarbiyah* program.

1. **The Domination of the Textual Method in Hadith Understanding**

Some ulama said that interacting with the hadith is more complicated than interacting with the Quran. To interact with hadith requires effort to answer two questions at once, which is related to the question of the *wurūd* and the *dalālah*. The *wurūd* concerns the quality of the hadith, whether accepted (*maqbūl*) or rejected (*mardūd*), while the *dalālah* is about how to understand it. In contrast to the Quran that all its parts in terms of *wurūd* are *qaṭ’ī* (certain), the hadith is *ẓannī* (guess).\(^{58}\)

In order to determine the quality of the *wurūd* of hadith, the ulama have formulated examination methods concerning both *sanad* and *matn*.

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\(^{54}\) *Ibid.*


\(^{57}\) Hasan, “Salafism in Indonesia”

with clear criteria as well. A hadith is of high quality (ṣaḥīḥ) if it fulfils five criteria: connectedness of sanad, its all narrators are ‘adl (people who have good personal capacity), its all narrators are ḍābiṭ (people who have good intellectual qualities), free from ‘illat, and free from shudhūd. The last two conditions apply to sanad and matn as well.59 In practising this method, al-Albānī is as same as the classical ulama. The difference is that al-Albānī is very concerned about matn quality, unlike classical ulama, who seem to pay more attention to the sanad.60 This emphasis on the importance of matn examination by al-Albānī brings him closer to other contemporary hadith ulama. The difference is that al-Albānī is practising sanad analysis, unlike other contemporary hadith ulama who tend not to emphasise sanad quality.61

Classical ulama has developed two complementary textual and contextual methods for understanding the hadith.62 Some hadith are more precisely understood textually, some are more precisely understood contextually, and some can be understood simultaneously.63 The potential for the emergence of problems will be great when there is a dominant use of one method, for example, preferring only one of the textual or contextual methods. For the two methods to be applied proportionally, a number of ulama classify the hadiths as the sunnah tashrī‘yyah and the sunnah ghair tashrī‘yyah.64 Some others classify the hadith based on its relation with the nṣil and the furū‘ problems. Some sort out the hadiths that are related to maḥḍah and ghair maḥḍah worship. Al-Albānī, like other Salafi ulama, however, tends to be dominant in using the textual method...
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in all kinds of hadith with no classification regarding its messages.65

The dominance of using the textual method by al-Albānī seems based on several considerations. First, for al-Albānī, everything from the Prophet is non-negotiable and must be accepted without question. The bi lā kaifa (with no question) method is the basic characteristic of the Salaf ulama, especially concerning the issues of faith.66 Second, because the hadith is a record of the Prophet’s entire life in implementing the Quran’s teachings, the hadith is a record of the perfection of the Islamic implementation. Therefore, for al-Albānī, there is no need to segregate the Prophet’s hadiths. Every hadith must be accepted as it is as long as the quality is good. This is in line with his revolutionary approach mentioned above, namely the centrality of hadith in Islamic teaching.67

In the context of Indonesian Salafis, some identifiable characters reflect their textual understanding of the hadith. First, concerning physical identities, the most visible ones are young men wearing long beards (lihya), Arab-style flowing robes (jalābiyya), turbans (imāma), and ankle-length trousers (non-īshāl) and women wearing a form of enveloping black veil (niqāb) in public places.68 Dealing with the ban of īshāl, for example, there is also a textual hadith stating that the prohibition relates to its user attitude of arrogancy. They still, however, make such non-īshāl trousers as their identity and use that physical identity to build an exclusive, strict community. It seems simple, only a matter of physical identity, but it becomes an essential part of a submission to religious rules for Salafis. It can even be more important than engaging in social and political activities. Because from here, they will build a society imbued with submission to shari’a, an absolute requirement for establishing an Islamic state.69

Second, concerning demographic affairs, a Salafī family commonly has many children. This choice is based on the hadith about the command to have as many as children because, in the hereafter, the Prophet Muhammad will compete with other prophets about the number of their followers.70 Some Salafis with militant views make it a pretext to add fighters. The involvement of children in suicide bombings in Surabaya

65 Muḥammad Nāṣiruddīn al-Albānī, Al-Ḥadīth Ḥujjatun bi Nafsihī fi l-Aqā'id wa l-Ahkām (Riyāḍ: Maktabah al-Maʿārif, 2005).
67 Lacroix, “Al-Albani’s Revolutionary Approach to Hadith”.
68 Hasan, “Salafism in Indonesia”.
69 Ibid.
70 Al-Bukhārī, Šahīḥ Al-Bukhārī.
in early 2018 can be an example.\textsuperscript{71}

Third, concerning national issues, the national flagship ceremony is prohibited. In the al-Irsyad Pesantren Tengaran, there was a ban on the flagship ceremony because, for them, respecting the national flag leads to \textit{shirk}. Such a conclusion relates to the concept of ‘\textit{aq\textsuperscript{i}da} based on several hadiths with a truly textual understanding, though there is a hadith that the Prophet Muhammad always provided a flag in every war expedition.\textsuperscript{72}

It is difficult for the followers of al-Alb\textsuperscript{ā}n\textsuperscript{i} to reduce their literal attitude in comprehending their religious life and simultaneously practice a more contextual approach towards the hadiths because the sole method and material they study have been available. The hadith collections compiled by al-Alb\textsuperscript{ā}n\textsuperscript{i} make them feel finished. Such works completely fulfil their need to base their entire lives on the hadith. Al-Alb\textsuperscript{ā}n\textsuperscript{i}’s works, which consist of almost all themes, ‘\textit{aq\textsuperscript{i}dah}, worship, and \textit{mu\textsuperscript{‘}amal\textsuperscript{a}}\textsuperscript{h}, make them sufficient to make a similar effort.

2. The Growth of \textit{al-L\=a Madhhabiyyah}

The ban on \textit{taql\textit{id}} is Salaf\textit{i} teaching which Muslim revivalist has also inflated. Indeed, this teaching also exists among traditional Muslims. The difference is in its implementations and implications. For Salafis, like other Muslim revivalists, it is implied to get out of the school of Islamic jurisprudence (\textit{madhhab}). Therefore, the ban on \textit{taql\textit{id}} actually also means a prohibition on the idea of \textit{al-madhhabiyyah} (relying on a fiqh madhab). In the Indonesian context, especially among traditional Muslims,\textsuperscript{73} \textit{taql\textit{id}} means following the opinions of a madhab without understanding its arguments. Someone may move to a higher level by following the opinions of the \textit{madhab} with sufficient knowledge of the arguments. The latter is what they call \textit{ittib\textit{\=a}}.\textsuperscript{74}

Although \textit{taql\textit{id}} for the Salafis implies an urge to leave the madhab, the Salafis frequently refer to the madhab in their religious practices. ‘\textit{Abd al-\textsuperscript{‘}Aziz Bin B\=a\textsuperscript{z}, for example, even though he explicitly claimed

\textsuperscript{71} Schulze and Hwang, \textit{Militant Islam in Southeast Asia}.


\textsuperscript{74} Jal\textsuperscript{ā}ludd\textsuperscript{i}n Abdurra\textsuperscript{y}m\textsuperscript{ā}n Al-Suy\textsuperscript{ū}t\textsuperscript{i}, \textit{Al-Ashb\textsuperscript{ā}h wa\textsuperscript{’}l-Na\textsuperscript{z}\textsuperscript{ā}r} (Bei\textsuperscript{r}ūt: D\=ar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1998).

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not to attach to any madhab, referred to many ideas of Ibn Hanbal. Sheikh Uthaymin, another Salafi figure, also still refers to Ibn Hanbal’s school.\textsuperscript{75} Their references to Ibn Hanbal are understandable because the madhab of Ibn Hanbal is known to be the strongest in holding onto the hadith.\textsuperscript{76} However, this practice has become ironic and inconsistent in implementing the *taqlīd* ban. If the figures like Bin Bāz and Uthaimin still refer a lot to certain madhab, it is unlikely that some of them dared to enter the door of ijtihad they had opened, even had been opened by their predecessors.

The next step taken by al-Albānī became the answer. He did not just close the *taqlīd* and open the door of ijtihad, but at the same time, he also entered it and provided its requirements, namely his works that became religious guidance, which almost no longer referred to and relied on any madhab. These works then become references to his followers. Through this, they feel entirely far away from the *taqlīd*, because they have been religious without referring to the opinion of any school and only refer to the Quran, the Sunnah, and the Salaf practices.

The implication of what happened to al-Albānī and his followers is the attitude of taking further distance from the madhab. The phenomenon is what is called *al-Lā Madhabiyyah*, a term first coined by al-Būṭī.\textsuperscript{77} This work is a response to the work of al-Albānī, *Difā' 'an al-Hadīth al-Nabawī wa l-Sīrah wa l-Radd ʿalā Jakālat al-Dīktūr al-Būṭī fi Fiqh al-Sīrah*,\textsuperscript{78} a critical study of the work *Fiqh al-Sīrah* of al-Būṭī.\textsuperscript{79} Both of these people were involved in quite fierce polemics, some were documented through books that responded to each other.

The symptoms of *al-Lā Madhabiyyah* are getting stronger along with the more complete works of al-Albānī that are practical guides related to the religious daily activities. If there is anything he has not written yet, he has provided the material, namely the hadiths he had selected. Some works are a set of hadith, both the collection of *ṣaḥīḥ*, *ḍaʿīf* and *maudūʿ*. The set of *ṣaḥīḥ* hadiths means the hadiths are valid references to build their religiosity. In contrast, the set of *ḍaʿīf* hadiths is a basic reference to reject all religious behaviour that is not appropriate.

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{76} Duderija, “Constructing the Religious Self and the Other”.


\textsuperscript{78} Muḥammad Nāṣiruddīn al-Albānī, *Difāʿ ‘an Sunnah al-Nabawīyyah* (Riyāḍ: Maktabah al-Maʿārif).

\textsuperscript{79} Al-Būṭī, *Fiqh al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyyah*. 

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There are also works by al-Albānī that summarise or select existing hadith collections. Al-Albānī had prepared all the hadiths that every Salafi needs.

Al-Albānī had built a complete Islamic system based on hadith. He provided all teachings in Islam, such as ‘aqīda, fiqh, and akhbāq, with the hadith as the main materials. He emerged as a founder of a new madhab amid the discouragement of most ulama entering the door of ijtihād. He did not only open that door but also enter it. His ijtihād is a new movement on the hadith,80 which can be recognised as the most successful in Islamic history. He wrote the position of hadith in the religious system in his work entitled al-Hadīth Hujjah bi-Nafsih fi-‘Aqā‘id wa-l-Abkām81 and Manzilah al-Sunnah fi al-Islām.82

Following this al-Lā Madhhabiyyah ideology strictly, some Salafis caused several militancy issues in the Indonesian context. First, it triggers a tremendous clash with existing madhab adherents—most of Al-Albānī’s works relating to religious guidance conflict with the practices usually done by the local community. In addition, their attitude of exclusiveness and feeling the truest make the conflict more tapering. Al-Albānī’s book Ṣifat Ṣalāt al-Nabīy Sallallāhu ‘Alaihi wa-Sallam, for example, has been translated into Indonesian in several versions. The work always emphasises that what the book describes on how to perform a prayer is the most correct since it is in accordance with the prayer of the Prophet. Meanwhile, the guidance differs from what some local people have been practising since they adhere to the Shafi‘i madhab. Another example is his work al-Tawassul: Anwā‘uh wa-Aḥkāmuh, which has also been translated into Indonesian in several versions. This work is clearly a sharp criticism of tawassul as practised by traditional Muslims.

Second, the al-Lā Madhhabiyyah ideology disconnects his followers, especially Wahabis, from the treasures of classical Islamic intellectuals. The treasures of classical Islamic intellectuals, commonly known as turāth, have an important role in one’s attitude towards diversity issues. Modern understanding of a religion can not neglect the turāth so one is not cut

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81 Muḥammad Nāṣiruddīn al-Albānī, Al-Ḥadīth Ḥujjah bi-Nafsih fi-‘Aqā‘id wa-l-Abkām (Riyāḍ: Maktabah al-Ma‘ārif).

82 Muḥammad Nāṣiruddīn al-Albānī, Manzilah al-Sunnah fi-l-Islām (Riyāḍ: Maktabah al-Ma‘ārif).
By calling themselves Salafis, they actually embody the *turāth*. Nevertheless, the restriction only on the three generations has uprooted many intellectuals’ works that illustrate how Islam interacted with an increasingly broad and complex world. In other words, Salafi does not have enough references related to a more complex dynamic world. As a result, their perspective is limited, not to say narrow, especially in the context of today’s era.

Third, it promotes the emergence of a new *taqlīd* attitude. What happened to al-Albānī and his followers was a new form of *taqlīd*, which they opposed very much. Al-Albānī’s followers positioned him as a mujtahid who had succeeded in establishing a complete system of Islam based on hadith. Therefore, all of his works become the primary references in their Islamic system. So, the pupils follow not the manhaj (method) but the product of his thinking. This practice is the most prominent of the *taqlīd* that they did; even more, they have excessive fanatical attitudes because they do not leave enough space for tolerance for different understandings.

### 3. *Taṣfiyah* and *Tarbiyah* Programs

The implementation of the *manhaj* of Salaf founded by al-Albānī is based primarily on the *taṣfiyah* and *tarbiyah* programs. *Taṣfiyah* etymologically means cleansing up or purification, while terminologically, al-Albānī explained:

*Taṣfiyah* is cleansing up the teachings of Islam from heresy that infiltrates. It is by removing the *daʿīf* and *mauḍūʿ* hadiths from the Sunnah, accordingly interpreting the Quran with the hadith that are valid in line with the views and the understanding of the *Salaf Ṣālih*. This interpretation cannot be made except by studying the hadith and the science of *al-jarḥ wa'l-taʾdīl*. I do not intend to limit myself to the interpretations conveyed by the salaf, but we stick to their *manhaj* in interpreting the Quran. Holding onto the Salaf *manhaj* can unify the views of ulama and prevent schism. *Taṣfiyah* that I mean also includes cleansing up Islamic sciences and thoughts. We must get rid of the knowledge and thoughts that deviate from the true *manhaj*. It also cleanses Islamic thought from all new elements infiltrating the minds of Muslims today through Western-style education methods, especially philosophy, educational sciences, and other sciences to insert

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deadly poisons that damage the minds of Muslims.  

There are three steps in implementing the *tasfiyah* program. *First*, cleansing up the sunnah from *ḍaʿīf and mauḍū*’ hadith. In this regard, al-Albānī has selected thousands of hadiths, collected in his own composition (*taʾlīf*), as well as his research on existing hadith books (*taḥqiq, takhrīj, ṭaʿlīq, talkhīṣ*, and *mukhtaṣar*). These works can also be divided into the sources and the products of law. The sources of law imply works that have not been processed by al-Albānī related to a particular theme, like *Silsilat al-Abadīth al-Ṣaḥīḥā* and *Aḥādīth al-Buyūʿ wa-Āthārūhā* and *Adāb al-Zījīf fīl-Sunnah al-Muṭaharah*. This step assumes the existence of weakness in all hadith compilations without exception.

*Second*, interpreting the Qur’an with authentic hadiths according to the views and understanding of the salaf. Related to this issue, al-Albānī formulated the correct steps in interpreting the Quran, which he put in his work *Kaifa Yajib ‘Alainā an-Nufassir al-Qurān*, translated into Indonesian *Tanya Jawab Memahami Isi al-Quran*. There is no work on *tafsir* by al-Albānī. Only two works are available that can be a small example of his interpretation, namely *al-Āyāt wa-ʾAbadīth fi Dhammi al-Bidʿah* and *al-Āyāt al-Bayyināt fī ‘Adam Simāʾ al-Ammāt* (*Taḥqiq wa-Taʾlīq*).

*Third*, cleansing Islamic thought from everything coming from outside Islam. This third step further strengthens the Puritan’s exclusive character. Since, for them, every piece of knowledge considered inappropriate with Islamic teachings must be rejected, and the measurement of the relevance of science is based on the hadith. Therefore, the key to this *tasfiyah* program is the hadith.

These three steps contribute to strengthening militancy among proponents of al-Albānī’s thought of hadith. The characteristics of *tasfiyah* that do not accommodate modernity strengthen their exclusivity. While the centrality of his thought based on hadith with the dominance of the textual understanding is not compatible with the problems of modernity. The hadith materials do not develop, while the problems of modernity develop rapidly. Instead of developing, many hadiths dropped out due to al-Albānī’s hadith selection.

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While regarding the *tarbiyah* program, he said:86

What I meant by *tarbiyah* is to guide the generation of Islam towards the guidance of a true Islamic faith based on the Quran and the Sunnah. Especially giving worship guidance to Muslim children without much discussing the benefits of worship materially, as some people do. If it is necessary to be mentioned, it should be at the end of the lesson. Do not forget to teach Islamic law. In my opinion, the teaching of this subject must be based on submission and obedience to God’s command and trust in His wisdom, without mentioning material gain. This way will protect students from any threats and hazards. On this occasion, I reminded Muslims of the event of the Hudaibiyyah agreement and the importance of surrendering and obeying the law of Allah and His Messenger.

The above statement leads to the conclusion that there are two principles of *tarbiyah* program. *First*, Islamic sharia has to be clear of any deviations prior to teaching. *Second*, the principle of teaching is a submission, not a rational explanation of the benefits of worship and moreover, material benefits. In other words, this teaching must prioritise the aspects of *ta’abbudi* rather than the aspects of *ta’agguli*. This teaching is the sufistic dimension of al-Albānī’s program. Even though he formally strongly rejected Sufism, the soul of Sufism was in him. Like Ibn Taimiyah, his predecessor, al-Albānī is anti-Sufism, but he had a concept of Sufism and practised it.87

Further, the Islamic community will establish through *taṣfiyah* and *tarbiyah* programs, providing requirements for an Islamic State. Without both, enforcing Islamic law and developing Islamic State is impossible. Both programs are actually also owned by Salafis in general. But what is typical of al-Albānī is the centrality of hadith. In practice, *taṣfiyah* was only carried out by al-Albānī because he mastered the knowledge. The followers tend to use the results. While *tarbiyah* still goes on and becomes the great work of his followers, namely creating the Islamic State.

Based on the description above, *taṣfiyah* and *tarbiyah* are one unified program. The first is the theoretical dimension, while the second is the practical one. The first must come before the second. In both steps, the hadith becomes a very dominant source, of course, that al-Albānī has selected.

86 Al-Albānī, *Al-Taṣfiyah wa’t-Tarbiyah*.
D. Concluding Remarks

Personal and institutional factor has supported the spread of the hadith thoughts of al-Albānī among Indonesian Salafi. Al-Albānī’s Indonesian pupils, who have studied his thoughts from his students, actively promoted the Salafi ideology based on his idea. They developed book publishers that widely spread al-Albānī’s translated works and Salafi magazines to support this effort. Almost all of al-Albānī’s works have been available in Bahasa Indonesia. The number of magazines that endorsed al-Albānī’s thoughts is also increasing. In addition, Islamic organisations, such as al-Irsyad and Persis, took al-Albānī’s work as their references in their curriculum. Meanwhile, the rapid growth of Salafi pesantrens strengthened the spread of al-Albānī’s idea.

Through those facilities, the impact of the hadith thought of al-Albānī on Islamic militancy in Indonesia manifested through three notions. The first is through the growth of using the textual understanding method. The second is through the growth of *al-Lā Madhhabiyyah* since al-Albānī has provided all guidance needed to implement Islamic teachings; the implementation of the jargon to stay away from *taqlīd* finds its momentum. The third is through the *tasfiyah* and *tarbiyah* programs. The first and the second impact strengthen exclusive attitudes toward religion. Al-Albānī has done the third, *tasfiyah*. Although al-Albānī does not restrict anyone from doing it, no one dares to do what he did. While, *tarbiyah* still has a latent contribution to the escalation of Islamic militancy.

In this case, the Islamic system built by al-Albānī does not only stop at the personal level but manifests at the level of society and nation. Al-Albānī had no time to do much about this. So this is what his followers feel they get the mandate and the challenge to make it happen, namely an Islamic social order that is a necessary condition for an Islamic State (*Daulah Islāmiyyah*).
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