THE SCIENTIFIC-CUM-SUFISTIC INTERPRETATION OF SAID NURSI IN KULLIYYAT RASAIL AL-NÜR

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Abstract

The Qur'an is a holy book that contains many valuable lessons, requiring interpretation (tafsir) to understand its contents in depth. Ahmad Mustafa al-Maraghi, through his work Tafsir al-Maraghi, presents one of the most remarkable interpretations with a social approach that is relevant to the needs of modern society. Meanwhile, Said Nursi, a contemporary scholar, offers a unique paradigm of scientific interpretation (tafsir 'ilmi) that emphasizes the essence of faith and monotheism, oriented toward the ultimate purpose of the hereafter. This study employs a library research method to explore and identify the novelty of scientific interpretation in the work Kulliyyāt Rasāil al-Nūr. The approach used in this research is tafsir s'ilmi. The findings reveal two main conclusions. First, Said Nursi's scientific interpretation emphasizes the essence of faith and monotheism

with an eschatological orientation, differing from other scientific interpreters. Second, the novelty of *tafsir 'ilmi* proposed by Said Nursi is divided into three aspects: (1) in terms of its characteristics, it adopts a scientific-cum-sufistic style; (2) in its perspective and interpretation of nature, it applies two meanings, namely *harfi* and *ismi*; and (3) in terms of its impact and the interrelation between science and the *Asma' al-Husna*, it fosters the integration of general sciences (science) and religious knowledge.

Keyword: Sa'id Nursi, Scientific cum Sufistic, *Ma'na Harfi*, *Ma'na Ismi*, *Asma' al-Husna*

Abstrak

Al-Qur'an adalah kitab suci yang mengandung banyak pelajaran berharga, sehingga memerlukan tafsir untuk memahaminya secara mendalam. Ahmad Mustafa al-Maraghi, melalui karyanya *Tafsir al-Maraghi*, menghadirkan salah satu tafsir fenomenal dengan pendekatan sosial yang relevan bagi kebutuhan manusia modern. Sementara itu, Said Nursi, seorang ulama kontemporer, menawarkan paradigma tafsir 'ilmi yang unik dengan menekankan hakikat keimanan dan ketauhidan yang berorientasi pada tujuan akhirat. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian pustaka (library research) untuk mengetahui dan mengidentifikasi kebaruan penafsiran saintifik dalam karya Kulliyyāt Rasāil al-Nūr. Pendekatan yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah pendekatan tafsir 'ilmi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan dua kesimpulan utama. Pertama, penafsiran saintifik yang dilakukan oleh Said Nursi lebih menekankan pada hakikat iman dan ketauhidan yang berorientasi pada tujuan akhirat, berbeda dengan para mufassir 'ilmi lainnya. Kedua, kebaruan tafsir 'ilmi yang digagas oleh Said Nursi terbagi menjadi tiga aspek, vaitu: (1) dari sisi karakteristik tafsirnya, ia mengusung corak saintifik-cum-sufistik; (2) dari sisi pandangan dan penafsiran terhadap alam, ia menerapkan dua makna, yakni makna harfi dan makna ismi; dan (3) dari sisi dampak serta keterhubungan antara ilmu sains dan Asma' al-Husna, yang menghasilkan integrasi keilmuan antara ilmu umum (sains) dan ilmu agama.

Kata Kunci: Said Nursi, Sainstifik-cum-Sufistik, Makna *Harfi*, Makna *Ismi, Asma' al-Husna*

Introduction

Many scholars and modern exegetes have endeavored to spawn and restore the glory of Islam by producing numerous monumental works focusing on the field of scientific interpretation, particularly in introducing that since ancient times, the Muslim community has sought to create a close relationship between the Ouran and science. This is evident from their efforts in interpreting various branches of knowledge from the verses of the Quran, which then developed and provided many benefits, although the Quran does not mention the name of a science, let alone elaborate on it in detail, but indications towards it are plentiful in the verses presented as its philosophical foundation. The main ideas of scientific interpretation can be traced in the form of their exegesis products such as "Jawāhir al-Qur'an" by Imam al-Ghazali, "Tafsir Mafātīh al-Ghaib" by Fahruddin al-Razi, "Tafsir al-Manar" by Muhammad Abduh, "Tafsir al-Maraghi" by Mustafa al-Maraghi, "Tafsir al-Jawahir" by Tantawi al-Jawhari, as well as "Tafsir al-Ayat al-Kawniyyah fi al-Qur'an" by Zaghlul al-Raghib Muhammad al-Nazar, and so forth.

One of the contemporary scholars who paid great attention to the study of Tafsir science is Said Nursi. This is evident from the numerous treatises he wrote, amounting to 130 treatises, which are collected under the grand title "Kulliyāt Risale-i Nur", consisting of four main series: al-Kalimat, al-Maktubat, al-Lama'at, and al-Shua'at, Other opinions state that there are nine main series, namely al-Kalimat, al-Maktubat, al-Lama'at, al-Shua'at, Isharat al-I'jaz Fi Madhani al-I'jaz, al-Mathnawi al-'Arabi al-Nuri, Shaiqal al-Islam, Malahiq fi Fiqh al-Da'wah al-Nur, and Sira al-Zatiyah. Moreover, Nursi himself expressed his opinion regarding the British

¹ Abd. Hadi, *Metodologi Tafsir Dari Masa Klasik Sampai Masa Kontemporer* (Salatiga: Griya Media, 2021), 182.

² Badi' al-Zaman Sa'id Nursi, *Biografi Badiuzzaman Said Nursi; Berdasarkan Tuturannya Dan Tulisan Para Muridnya*, (Banten: Risalah Nur Press, 2020), 926.

³ 'Abd al-Ghafur Mahmud Mustafa Ja'far, *Al-Tafsir Wa Al-Mufassirun Fi Thanbihi Al-Iadid* (Kairo: Dar al-Salam, 2007), 733.

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Parliament's attempt to keep the Qur'an away from the hands of Muslims, saying, "I will indeed prove and show to the world that the Qur'an is a spiritual sun that will never dim, let alone be extinguished."

In this regard, although some studies suggest that his works tend more towards patterns of creed (theology),⁵ language,⁶ social aspects,⁷ and Sufism,⁸ on the other hand, there is a different pattern in his interpretation that has not been explored by other researchers, namely the scientific pattern (science).

It is also generally known that one of the characteristics of contemporary interpretation is its scientific approach (*ilmi*)⁹, however, Said Nursi's approach to interpreting verses related to science differs from typical works of *tafsir ilmi* in contemporary times. For instance, *Tafsir al-Jawāhir* by Tantawi al-Jawhari, *Tafsir al-Ayat al-Kawniyah fi al-Qur'an* by Zaghlul Al-Najjar, or even Indonesian contemporary works like *Tafsir al-Misbāh* by Quraish Shihab, primarily emphasize a purely scientific perspective, resembling encyclopedic scientific research. For example, in interpreting Surah al-Fajr (verses 6–8), Quraish Shihab refers to Western archaeologists who identify the cities of Shammuttu, 'Ad, and Iram based on information found on an ancient tablet mentioning Shammuttu. Regarding 'Ad and Iram, these names are also mentioned in the Qur'an. Since no other references about these cities exist between Ebla (2500 BCE) and the Qur'an (625 CE),

⁴ Nursi, Biografi Badiuzzaman Said Nursi; Berdasarkan Tuturannya Dan Tulisan Para Muridnya, 50.

⁵ Muhammad Iqbal, "Metodologi Penafsiran Said Nursi Dalam Kitab Isyarat Al-I'Jaz Fi Mazann Al-Ijaz," *Diskursus Islam* 06, no. 02 (2018): 292.

⁶ Sujiat Zubaidi Saleh, "Al-I'jaz Al-Lughawi Fi Al-Qur'an 'Inda Badi' Al-Zaman Sa'id Al-Nursi," *Kalimah* 16, no. 01 (2018): 111.

⁷ Muhammad Labib Syauqi, "Mengenal Risalah Nur Karya Said Nursi Dan Metodologi Penafsirannya," *Maghza* 02, no. 01 (2017): 120.

⁸ Syauqi, 120.

⁹ Johannes Jacobus Gerardus Jansen, *Diskursus Tafsir Al-Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana Yogya, 1997), xiii.

scholars like Nicholas Clapp, Juris Zarins, Sir Ranulph Fiennes, and George Hedges discovered ancient pathways leading to the city of Iram (also known as Ubar).¹⁰

Similarly, in Zaghlul al-Najjar's interpretation of the fly in Surah al-Haji, verse 73, he explains that the fly possesses extraordinary abilities, such as complex flight maneuvers, high speed, and energy efficiency, which enable it to function as a natural cleaner and a destroyer of harmful bacteria. 11 Zaglul elaborates on the scientific interpretation of the biological abilities of the fly, whereas Said Nursi emphasizes the spiritual significance and the wisdom behind the creation of the fly as evidence of Allah's greatness.¹² In his interpretation, Nursi mentions that the fly teaches humans about remembrance of Allah, cleanliness, and diligence. Additionally, he describes the fly as a filtering mechanism that transforms toxic substances into beneficial ones, highlighting its noble role as a health agent within the ecosystem. Nursi's interpretation differs from other scientific interpretations as it is more faith-oriented and focuses on monotheism rather than purely scientific analysis.

Previous studies on the Scientific Interpretation Perspective of Badi' al-Zaman Said Nursi (An Examination of Scientific Verses in *Kulliyyat Rasail al-Nur*) include, first, the research of Sujiat Zubaidi Shaleh (2015) titled "Tafsir Kontemporer Bediuzzaman Said Nursi Dalam Risale-i Nur (Studi Kontruk Epistemologi)". ¹³ In his dissertation, Zubaidi Shaleh explains the characteristics of Said Nursi and his epistemological framework. His research highlights

¹⁰ Afrizal Nur, Tafsir Al-Mishah Dalam Sorotan; Kritik Terhadap Karya Tafsir Prof. M. Quraish Shihah (Jakarta Timur: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 2018), 63–64.

¹¹ Zaglul Al-Najjar, *Tafsir Al-Ayat Al-Kanniyyah Fi Al-Qur'an Al-Karim* (Kairo: Maktab al-Syuruq al-Dawlah, n.d.), 184.

¹² Badi' al-Zaman Sa'id Nursi, *Al-Lama'at, Terj. Ihsan Qasim Al-Salihi* (Kairo: Dar Suzlr Li al-Nasr, 2011), 377.

¹³ Sujiat Zubaidi Saleh, "Tafsir Kontemporer Bediuzzaman Said Nursi Dalam Risale-i Nur (Studi Kontruk Epistemologi)" (UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2015).

three key findings. First, Said Nursi, as an open-minded scholar free from ghetto-mindedness, consistently and systematically upheld a sacred idealism to achieve cultural transformation and social reform. Second, in applying his interpretive method, he unified critical thematic coherence and combined two contemporary interpretive methodologies: the thematic method and the critical reasoning method. These methods were fused with a strong emphasis on critical thinking while maintaining a balance between text and context, as well as between authenticity and flexibility. Third, Nursi's epistemological framework for contemporary interpretation is solid and unique, as his approach integrates a comprehensive methodology grounded in textual authenticity while aligning with a dialectical and dynamic contextual relevance. Furthermore, Nursi's interpretation demonstrates a modern spirit by addressing theological issues, scientific indications, and gender issues with an emphasis on benevolence. This is particularly evident in the variables he developed, which balance text and context while integrating the principles of Harfi logic and Ismi logic. The distinction between this study and Zubaidi's dissertation lies in their focus. This research emphasizes the analysis of scientific verses found in Kulliyyat Rasail al-Nur and examines the novelty of Said Nursi's scientific interpretation, which differs from Zubaidi's work that centers on the characteristics of Nursi as a figure and his epistemological framework.

Second, the research of Yusrina Dyah (2020) titled "Analisis Penafsiran Tazkiyah Al-Nafs Menurut Badi' Al-Zamān Sa'id Nursi Dalam Tafsir Risālah Al-Nur", In her thesis, she explains the meaning of *Tazkiyah al-Nafs* (purification of the soul) according to Said Nursi and outlines the best steps to achieve it. According to Nursi, *Tazkiyah al-Nafs* involves purifying the soul through a series of optimal steps. These include strengthening faith (*tawhid*, avoiding

¹⁴ Yusrina Dyah Wulandari, "Analisis Penafsiran Tazkiyah Al-Nafs Menurut Badi' Al-Zamān Sa'id Nursi Dalam Tafsir Risālah Al-Nur" (Institut Ilmu al-Qur'an dan Tafsir (IIQ) Jakarta, 2020).

self-righteousness, walking in the path of Allah, and loving everything for Allah's sake) through acts of worship (prayer, fasting, and almsgiving); drawing lessons from the stories of the Prophets (patience, repentance, and reliance on Allah); abandoning blameworthy behaviors (arrogance, envy, jealousy, pride, showing off, and following the whispers of Satan); and finally, engaging in praiseworthy actions (maintaining brotherhood, remembering death, sincerity, and resisting carnal desires). The most crucial aspect is resisting the urges of the *nafs* (carnal desires) that lead humans toward sin and disobedience. Nursi's interpretation is particularly relevant as a solution for addressing the ailments of the modern soul, such as weakening faith, declining morality, fractured brotherhood, and destructive behaviors like envy, arrogance, and pride. The differences between the thesis mentioned above and the current study lie in the following aspects: First, this research focuses on analyzing the interpretation of scientific verses found in Kulliyyat Rasail al-Nur. Second, it emphasizes the innovative aspects of Said Nursi's scientific exegesis as developed in his work. Therefore, it significantly differs from Wulandari's thesis, which delves specifically into Tazkiyah al-Nafs (purification of the soul) according to Said Nursi, along with its steps and processes.

Based on the previous studies mentioned above, it can be concluded that no research has specifically or comprehensively addressed the *Tafsir al-Ilmi* (scientific exegesis) from Said Nursi's perspective, particularly regarding his novel ideas in scientific interpretation. The objectives of this study are as follows: first, to analyze and apply the scientific interpretation approach from Badi' al-Zaman Said Nursi's perspective as presented in *Rasā'il al-Nūr*. Second, to examine the innovative aspects of *Tafsir al-Ilmi* (scientific exegesis) proposed by Said Nursi in his work *Rasā'il al-Nūr*.

This research falls under the category of library research, ¹⁵ which employs a qualitative approach. ¹⁶ The focus is on examining the scientific interpretation (*Tafsir Ilmi*) of Badi' al-Zaman Said Nursi, which stands out for its uniqueness compared to other contemporary interpreters. This study adopts a historical approach to understand the background of Nursi's family, environment, and intellectual development. ¹⁷ Primary data is derived from Said Nursi's monumental works, such as *Kulliyat Rasail al-Nur*, as well as his autobiography. Meanwhile, secondary data is obtained from relevant books, journals, and articles to enrich the analysis and strengthen the understanding of *Tafsir Ilmi*.

The data collection technique is carried out through the documentation method, by accessing and analyzing related documents. The data analysis technique uses a descriptive-analytical approach, which involves collecting, organizing, analyzing, and interpreting data to draw comprehensive conclusions. This research not only examines Said Nursi's scientific exegesis but also connects it with his methods and style of interpretation, as well as identifies the ontological, epistemological, and axiological values that support the development of the science of exegesis. 19

Discussion

Biography and Methodology of Exegesis by Said Nursi

Said Nursi was born in 1877 AD, which corresponds to the year 1294 AH, in the village of Nurs, Isparit District, Hizan City, Bitlis Province, Eastern Anatolia (now Turkey). His father was named Mirza, a descendant of Ali bin Khidr bin Mirza Khalid bin Mirza Rasyan from the Isparta region. His mother, Nuriye, was a

¹⁵ Nashruddin Baidan and Erwati Aziz, *Metodologi Khusus Penelitian Tafsir* (Yogyakarta: Yogyakarta Pustaka Belajar, 2015), 25.

¹⁶ Baidan and Aziz, 25.

¹⁷ Syahrin Harahap, *Metodologi Studi Dan Penelitian Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2000), 36.

¹⁸ Albi Anggito and Johan Setiawan, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Jawa Barat: CV Jejak, 2018), 153.

¹⁹ Winamo Surakhmad, *Dasar Dan Teknik Research* (Bandung: Tarsito, 1978), 131.

descendant of Molla Tahir.²⁰ From a historical perspective, Said Nursi was born during the reign of two sultans: Sultan Murad V in 1876 AD and Sultan Abdul Hamid II from 1876 to 1909 AD. During this period, Turkey faced many polemical issues, including political and cultural aspects influenced by the West. Moreover, looking back to the periods before and after, during the reigns of Sultan Abdul Majid I (1839-1861 AD) to Abdul Majid II (1922-1924 AD)²¹ signs of cultural revival and administrative reforms under the influence of Western ideas emerged in Ottoman Turkish society. Another perspective suggests that Nursi lived during two transitional periods of governance: the end of the Ottoman Caliphate and the beginning of the secular Republic of Turkey under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. During this time, Nursi became a patriotic revolutionary figure actively involved in practical politics.²² Said Nursi passed away on the 25th of Ramadan in 1379 AH, corresponding to the 23rd of March 1960 AD, in the city of Urfa, leaving behind numerous works that have been widely read and studied, both throughout Turkey and in various parts of the world.23

As for Said Nursi's monumental work, the Kulliyyat Rasail al-Nur (collection of Nur's treatises), as previously mentioned, it consists of four main series: al-Kalimat, al-Maktubat, al-Lama'at, and al-Shu'a'at. Below are the characteristics and contents of each of these works: Firstly, al-Kalimat. In this work, Nursi discusses and explains the meanings and essences of various branches of knowledge such as worship, prophethood, the Qur'an, Tawhid, social matters, and philosophy, all aimed at the continuous renewal

²⁰ Badi' al-Zamān Sa'id Nursi, *Sirat Al-Dzatiyah Terj. Ihsan Qasim Al-Salihi* (Kairo: Dar Suzler, 2013), 56.

²¹ Abdul Syukur Al-Azizi, *Sejarah Terlengkap Peradaban Islam* (Yogyakarta: Noltah, 2017), 417.

²² Saleh, "Tafsir Kontemporer Bediuzzaman Said Nursi Dalam Risale-i Nur (Studi Kontruk Epistemologi)," 132.

²³ Badi' al-Zaman Said Nursi, Terapi Maknawi Dengan Resep Qur'ani, Terj. Fauzi Faisal Bahresisy (Tangerang: Risalah Nur Press, 2014), ix–x.

of faith.²⁴ Secondly, al-Maktubat. Similar to al-Kalimat, Nursi addresses various issues such as theology, prophethood, kalam (theology), worship, Islamic law, and Sufism. He presents these disciplines thematically.²⁵ Thirdly, al-Lama'at. In this work, Nursi explains as if he were preaching to the generation fifty years ahead. This is acknowledged by the publisher in the introduction of Said Nursi's work, stating that "this book feels very relevant for the present time." Additionally, he elaborates on various topics such as the story of Prophet Yunus and the wisdom behind the creation of Satan. It's not surprising that he addresses and refutes contemporary religious issues such as materialistic philosophy and the Unity of Existence doctrine. He also explains the interpretation of the seven layers of the earth, the concept of frugality in various aspects, and elucidates the six most noble names of Allah, among other topics.²⁶ Lastly, al-Shu'a'at. In this work, Said Nursi extensively explains the signs of the Day of Judgment, the importance of Tawhid²⁷ and its relationship with the beauty and uniqueness of nature. Additionally, he offers insights into contemplating the verses of the Qur'an.²⁸

The origin of the term "Rasāil al-Nūr", as quoted by Zubaidi, is explained by Nursi in an appealingly argumentative manner as follows: The word "Nur" has captured my attention so strongly throughout my life that I named my work Rasāil al-Nūr. Among the factors that led me to this decision are: Firstly, the village of my birth is named Nurs. Secondly, my mother's name is Nuriyah. Thirdly, my spiritual teacher in the Naqsabandiyah order is named Sayyid Nur Muhammad. Fourthly, my teacher in the Qadiriyah order is

²⁴ Badi' al-Zaman Sa'id Nursi, *Al-Kalimat* (Tangerang: Risalah Nur Press, 2021), vii.

Nursi, vii.
 Nursi, Al-Lama'at, Teri. Ihsan Oasim Al-Salihi, xi-xii.

²⁷ Intan Pratiwi Mustikasari, "Isra' Mi'raj Perspektif Badi' Al-Zaman Sa'id Nursi Dan Relevansinya Dalam Pembaharuan Iman (Tela'ah Ayat Isra' Mi'raj Dalam Kulliyyat Rasail Al-Nur)" (UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2021), 78.

²⁸ Syauqi, "Mengenal Risalah Nur Karya Said Nursi Dan Metodologi Penafsirannya," 112.

Nuruddin. Fifthly, my teacher in Quranic studies is named Nuri. Sixthly, the most descriptive term for my work is al-Tamthilat al-Nurivah. Finally, the first verse that has inspired and deeply touched me is the verse "Allahu Nur al-Samawat wa al-Ard Mathal Nurihi Kamishkat Fiiha Misbah."29

Looking at the tendencies of its interpretation, the tafsir (exegesis) of Kulliyyat Rasail al-Nur encompasses various inclinations in terms of language, theology, Sufism, jurisprudence (Figh), philosophy, symbolic interpretation (Isyari), Sufi, societal matters, and scientific knowledge (al-'Ilmi). 30 With a clear, firm, and flowing language style, Said Nursi discusses various issues related to Tawhid (monotheism), prophethood, theology, worship, Islamic law, and Sufism."31

Some Key Concepts in The Scientific Interpretation of Said Nursi

1. The Concepts of Ismi and Harfi

According to Nursi, there are two aspects to every creation: one side looks at itself and its own characteristics, and the other side looks at its creator and what is manifested through His names.³² In the Qur'an, it is evident that all events, including physical, social, and psychological events, are signs (ayat) from God with particular meanings. Therefore, Nursi dedicated his entire life to developing an integrative approach known as the "other indicative" approach

²⁹ Saleh, 140.

³⁰ Salamah, "Maqasid Al-Qur'an Perspektif Badi' Al-Zaman Said Al-Nursi: Tela'ah Penafsiran Surah Al-Fatihah Dalam Kitab Rasail Al-Nur," 80.

³¹ Badi' al-Zaman Said Nursi, Al-Maktubat (Tangerang: Risalah Nur Press, 2020), vii.

³² Nida Amalia Kamal and Wildan Taufiq, "Telaah Penafsiran Maqasidi Badiuzzaman Said Nursi Terhadap Tema Eskatologi Dalam Al-Qur'an," Jurnal Spiritualitas no. (2022): https://doi.org/10.15575/jis.v2i3.18615.

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(mana-i harfi). The purpose of this approach is to harmoniously integrate scientific and religious knowledge.³³

Literally, mana-i ismi means "self-reference" or a very limited physical dimension, so the universe does not have a metaphysical meaning. Meanwhile, mana-i harfi means "other indicative," or where the universe has meaning when related to another dimension.³⁴

From the imaginative story about the nature and essence above, it can be said that in interpreting and interpreting a verse Nursi uses these two ideas, namely with the literal and the figurative meaning. The literal meaning is to view all the beauty of nature and objects in the world as an indication of the existence and sign of God the creator. Whereas the figurative meaning is to view all the beauty of nature and objects in this world only as material existence without indicating the existence of God the creator.

2. Asma'ul Husna and Their Correlation with Science

Science or Knowledge is a part of systematically organized knowledge about natural phenomena and society in order to achieve truth, gain understanding, provide explanations, and even carry out applications.35 Asmaul Husna, on the other hand, refers to the best names attributed to the attributes of Allah.36

Nursi's interpretation regarding the novelty of scientific interpretation, seen from the perspective of the relationship between science and the Asma' al-Husna in the Kulliyyat Rasail al-Nur, is that scientific knowledge, when not connected with the

³³ Necati Aydin, Said Nursi and Science in Islam: Character Building through Nursi's Mana-i Harfi (New york: Routledge, 2019), 120, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429019364.

³⁴ Kamal and Taufiq, "Telaah Penafsiran Maqasidi Badiuzzaman Said Nursi Terhadap Tema Eskatologi Dalam Al-Qur'an," 358.

³⁵ Fatih Ni'am Syukri, "Integrasi Sains Dan Agama" (Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto, 2021), 7.

³⁶ Departemen Agama RI, *Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahannya* (Jakarta: Widya Cahaya, 2011), 604.

Asma' al-Husna, will not attain spiritual values and divine understanding within it. This is crucially needed, especially when reflecting on education in the contemporary era. If these values are disregarded, scientific knowledge will merely give birth to secular sciences devoid of spirituality and faith in Allah, thus failing to realize the aspirations of an integrated Islamic education combining religious knowledge with secular sciences. More importantly, it aims to produce holistic, balanced outputs with broad knowledge for the advancement of Islamic civilization.

The Interpretation of Badi' al-Zamān Said al-Nursi Regarding Scientific Verses in Kulliyyāt Rasāil al-Nūr

The Interpretation of the Fly as an Animal

Starting his interpretation of the fly, Said Nursi first reveals the initial reason why he interprets the creature, precisely during the autumn season when some people only think of their own interests, especially in using fly repellents so they won't be bothered. Naturally, this troubled Nursi's heart. Then he mentioned that at that time the number of flies was so high, even more than before despite the use of the fly repellent. Additionally, there was a string in his room to hang clothes. However, in the evening, the small creatures were hanging beautifully and orderly on that string. So Nursi said to Rusydi, "Let the small creatures stay there. Hang these clothes elsewhere!" But seriously, Rusydi replied, "We need this string. Let the fly find another place".37

From that short conversation, which surely was not intentional by Nursi, the door to discussing flies, bees, and various insects and the like opened. Then the conversation about it ensued. Next, he told Rusydi that "creatures like these that appear in large numbers have various important tasks. A book can be printed in large numbers by looking at its value. It means that the fly species

³⁷ Nursi, Al-Lama'at, Terj. Ihsan Qasim Al-Salihi, 505.

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also have important tasks and great value. Because, the Almighty Creator has printed and copied many messages that demonstrate divine power."38

Therefore, he showed the verse that discusses the fly in Surah Al-Hajj, verse 73, as follows:

O mankind! An example is presented, so listen carefully! Indeed, those whom you invoke besides Allah cannot create [even] a fly, even if they gathered together for that purpose. And if the fly should steal away from them a [tiny] thing, they could not recover it from it. Weak are the pursuer and pursued.³⁹

In interpreting the verse, Nursi first explains that the creation of the fly is a miraculous act of Allah SWT and is one of the evidences of His great power, because this creature is made by Allah SWT as an example and challenge for the disbelievers to create a fly, and surely they will not be able to do so.⁴⁰

Next, he elaborates on the dialogue and complaint of Prophet Moses to his Lord in order to explore the deeper meaning of the fly. Moses asked, "O Lord, why have You multiplied these troublesome creatures?" Then Allah responded to Moses through inspiration, saying, "You feel burdened by it only once, while it (the fly) often wonders: 'O Lord, this creature with a large head mentions You only with one tongue. Sometimes, it even forgets You. If You were to

³⁹ RI, Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahnya, 404.

³⁸ Nursi, 506.

⁴⁰ Nursi, Al-Lama'at, Terj. Ihsan Qasim Al-Salihi, 506.

create creatures like us, surely thousands of them would mention You.' Additionally, Nursi interprets another wisdom and essence of the fly, stating that the fly is very diligent in maintaining cleanliness. It always cleans its face and both of its eyes, and constantly washes its wings like a person performing ablution. Therefore, the existence of the fly is very important and noble. However, human attention and knowledge are unable to comprehend all of its roles.⁴¹

Therefore, the benefits, essence, and wisdom behind the creation of the fly can be gathered. Then Said Nursi said that occasionally humans should not be hostile towards it because besides providing entertainment when you are lonely, it can also awaken you from negligence and worry, and remind you of your duties such as being active, working diligently, maintaining cleanliness through ablution and prayer, and always washing your face and eyes as it clearly demonstrates (the fly).⁴²

Furthermore, it has the task of cleaning various disease-causing bacteria and is also assigned to remove various toxic substances. It not only transports bacteria but, conversely, it destroys various harmful bacteria while simultaneously eradicating them by ingesting and consuming them. It transforms toxic substances and materials into other materials. Thus, it has prevented and halted the spread of diseases. Therefore, it is appropriate that the evidence describes the position of the fly as a health worker and an intelligent cleanliness officer, in which vast divine wisdom is contained within it, in large and infinite numbers. 43

As for the medical aspect, the remnants of a fly's meal are not harmful. In fact, they might even serve as a tasty drink and food for other insects. This is because, in accordance with divine wisdom, the fly was created as a filtering machine and a transforming device. This is evident from its activity of consuming thousands of types of

⁴¹ Nursi, 507.

⁴² Nursi, 509.

⁴³ Nursi, 509.

materials that serve as sources of bacteria and toxins. Additionally, among several types of insects, aside from bees, there is one type that consumes various kinds of spoiled food and then secretes a sweet substance as a replacement for its residue, similar to sweet dew like honey that falls on tree leaves. This confirms the fly's function as a transforming machine. Thus, it becomes clear to us how this very small fly is so great and has a very noble task. It is as if it says, "Do not look at our small bodies, but look at our great tasks! Then say, 'Subhanallah.'44

Analysis of the Novelty of Scientific Interpretation in Kulliyyāt Rasāil al-Nūr

1. Characteristics of Scientific Interpretation in Kulliyyāt Rasāil al-Nūr

In his exegesis work, Said Nursi presents a new form of scientific interpretation, which is certainly different from other contemporary scholarly exegeses such as Zaglul al-Najjar or Tantawi al-Jawhari, who tend to emphasize purely scientific interpretation. Therefore, in his interpretation, Nursi tends to focus more on the aspects of faith and monotheism, while also orienting towards the ultimate goal or the hereafter. Moreover, in his exegesis, when Said Nursi interprets a verse related to scientific phenomena such as the universe, earth, stars, mountains, animals, and others, he interprets them solely as avenues and materials for contemplating Allah and glorifying and acknowledging Him as the Lord of the universe.

This can be seen from his scientific interpretation regarding the interpretation of the seven heavens and seven earths, as well as the animal Fly as follows: when Said Nursi interpreted the Fly in his exegesis work, he emphasized more on the aspects of faith and monotheism as a form of contemplation towards Allah, while still not neglecting its scientific aspect as follows:

⁴⁴ Nursi, 510–11.

It began with a dialogue and a complaint by Prophet Moses to his Lord regarding the fly. "O Lord, why do You multiply the offspring of this troublesome creature?" Then Moses was given an answer by Allah in the form of inspiration, which is: "You feel annoyed with it only once, while it often asks: 'O Lord, this creature with a large head only remembers You with one tongue. Sometimes, he even forgets You. If You were to create creatures like us, surely thousands of creatures would remember You." Then the benefits and wisdom of the creation of the fly were explained "Occasionally, humans should not antagonize it, because besides being able to entertain you when you are lonely, it can also awaken you from negligence, anxiety, and remind you of the tasks you have, such as moving, working actively, always maintaining cleanliness through ablution and prayers, and constantly washing your face and eyes as it appears clearly from it (the fly). From a scientific perspective, "it has the task of cleaning various disease-causing bacteria and is also assigned to remove various toxic substances. It not only transports bacteria but, on the contrary, it destroys various harmful bacteria and eliminates them by swallowing and eating them. It transforms toxic substances and materials into others. Thus, it has prevented and stopped the spread of diseases. Therefore, it is appropriate to argue that the position of the fly as a health officer and a smart cleanliness employee contains vast divine wisdom, with their number being very large and endless. '45

The scientific interpretation by Said Nursi differs from that of other contemporary interpreters, such as Zaghlul al-Najjar, in interpreting the fly. Zaghlul tends to emphasize purely scientific aspects, similar to general science books, and somewhat overlooks the essence, wisdom, and guidance of the revelation of the Qur'an. He states, "The fly is a swift creature, making it challenging for humans to combat, despite many opportunities to do so. Additionally, the fly has highly complex movements, especially during preparation for flight, where it first determines which muscles to use, then assumes a ready position for takeoff by straightening the balance organs at the front of its body based on the angle of the runway and wind speed. This intricate process takes no more than 1/100th of

⁴⁵ Nursi, 377–78.

a second. Furthermore, the fly can take off vertically from its standing position and maneuver quickly forward, backward, and sideways to change its position. During flight, it can increase its speed up to 10 km/h with zigzagging routes and land precisely wherever it desires, regardless of shape, height, slope, or suitability for landing. With such remarkable abilities, its maneuvering is supported by its wings, attached directly to the chest through a fine membrane. Each wing can move independently, especially during takeoff, and can work together seamlessly, both forward and backward, supported by a complex system of joints and muscle tissue. This muscle tissue enables a fly to flap its wings more than 100 times per second, as seen in the green fly, which can fly for approximately half an hour, covering a distance of one mile." However, he concludes his interpretation by affirming that this scientific knowledge only became known to humanity in the 20th century.⁴⁶

Thus, from Said Nursi's interpretation and its comparison with Zaghlul al-Najjar's scientific interpretation above, it can be concluded that the interpretation of the Kulliyyat Rasail al-Nur or commonly known as the Risale-i Nur, has a unique or innovative scientific character compared to other scientific interpretations. It combines a scientific-cum-sufistic approach, blending scientific interpretation with a Sufi approach. Its Sufi aspect is inseparable from the Maqasid al-Qur'an (the purposes or objectives derived from the Qur'an) from Said Nursi's perspective, namely al-Tawhid (Oneness of God), al-Nubuwwah (Prophethood), al-Hashr (Resurrection), and al-'Adalah (Justice).

2. Scientific Interpretation of the Ismi and Harfi Meanings in Kulliyyat Rasail al-Nur

In analyzing the scientific novelty from the perspective of interpretation found in the works of Said Nursi, this subsection will discuss the scientific aspect of interpretation through the approaches of Ismi (linguistic) and Harfi (morphological) meanings. The purpose of this approach is to integrate scientific knowledge and religion harmoniously. This approach represents one aspect of

⁴⁶ Al-Najjar, Tafsir Al-Ayat Al-Kawniyyah Fi Al-Qur'an Al-Karim, 184–85.

the novelty of scientific interpretation in terms of the viewpoint and interpretation of nature. It is explained in the Kulliyyat Rasail al-Nur as follows:

First, in commencing his interpretation, Said Nursi presents one of the Quranic verses relevant to his discussion, which is:

"Whoever is granted wisdom has indeed been given a great good..." (Q.S al-Baqarah : 269)⁴⁷

Although the verse cited above is not one of the scientific verses, Nursi explains it scientifically with a tone of faith or monotheism. In his method of explanation, he differs from other exegeses by using imaginative stories or analogies that culminate in the wisdom of the verse. His interpretation thus facilitates the understanding of their sacred scripture for the general Muslim community:

"Through the following imaginative story, you can see the difference between the wisdom of the Our'an and the wisdom of science: A great ruler, deeply religious, skilled, and creative, wanted to write the Quran Al-Hakim with handwriting that matched the sanctity of its profound meaning and the miraculousness of its beautiful sentences. As a skilled writer, he began to write the Quran with incredibly impressive handwriting, using all kinds of precious gems and gemstones to illustrate its magnificent truths. Until finally, he added beautiful and astonishing touches, captivating everyone who saw it, whether they could read or not. Everyone stood in front of the beautiful writing in awe, knowing that its extraordinary beauty revealed the profound spiritual beauty behind it, shining brilliantly and captivatingly. Then the wise ruler displayed the Ouran with its beautiful and astonishing writing to foreign philosophers and Muslim scholars. He commanded both of them, saying: "Write a book discussing the wisdom of the Quran!" He wanted to test them to reward both. The book of the philosopher discussed a number of letter

⁴⁷ RI, Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahnya, 60.

carvings and their beauty, as well as the interconnection between them, their respective positions, and the characteristics of the gems alone. However, he did not understand that the beautiful Ouran was a great book where every letter contained beautiful meanings. On the other hand, the Muslim scholar, upon seeing the beautiful writing, immediately understood that the book contained explanations and wisdom of the Ouran. He also was not concerned with its beautiful letter decorations. He discussed a number of special truths and various shining and astonishing secrets behind the beautiful carvings. He wrote a commentary that contained valuable explanations of the Quran very well. First, the ruler took the philosopher's writing and glanced at it. He saw that the figure, who was impressed with himself and worshiped nature, did not write any real wisdom at all. He showed a lack of respect and appreciation for the Quran, ignoring its noble meanings. Therefore, the wise ruler rejected the philosopher's writing. Then the ruler took the careful and diligent writing of the Muslim scholar. While the other was merely an artist who went beyond limits. As his reward, he gave the Muslim scholar ten gold coins for each letter in his book."

Therefore, from the above imaginative story, Nursi then explains the essence of the story, which is:

"The adorned Qur'an is this astonishing universe. The noble ruler is the Eternal Everlasting God. As for the two men, the first (the foreigner) represents the science of philosophy and its proponents, while the second represents the Qur'an and its disciples."

Then Nursi continued, "Yes, the Noble Qur'an (that is recited) is the greatest interpreter and eloquent translator of the vast universe, which is the 'visual Qur'an' (that is seen)."

Until finally, at the end of his explanation, Nursi elucidated the wisdom and expounded his ideas regarding the meanings of Harfi and Ismi as follows:

"The Book of al-Furqan, full of wisdom, teaches the jinn and humans the cosmic verses inscribed by the divine pen of power upon the scroll of the universe and time. It is the Quran that perceives the entities, where each of its letters carries the meaning of Harfi (indicating the existence of the Almighty Creator). As for what is called the wisdom of philosophy, it gets immersed and preoccupied with decorating each letter of the entities. When it should be observing the book of nature directed towards its letters indicating its author, it instead views it with the meaning of Ismi, that the entities stand on their own."

Furthermore, Nursi concludes that: "With such an expression, one eliminates the true beauty of something. By attributing beauty to the entities themselves, it means they have belittled all creatures, thus making them complain on the Day of Judgment. Indeed, atheistic philosophy is mere nonsense and a form of disrespect towards nature." **

Therefore, from the imaginary story about nature and its essence above, it can be said that in interpreting and understanding a verse, Nursi uses these two approaches: the Harfi and Ismi meanings. The Harfi meaning is to perceive all the beauty of nature and objects in the world as indications of the existence and signs of Allah the creator. Whereas the Ismi meaning is to view all the beauty of nature and objects in this world only as material existence without indicating the existence of Allah the creator. This approach is one aspect of the novelty of his interpretation from the perspective of his view and interpretation of nature.

The correlation between Science and the Beautiful Names of Allah in Kulliyyāt Rasāil al-Nūr

After the explanation of the novelty of the scientific interpretation in terms of its characteristics and interpretation above, this discussion will now detail the novelty of the scientific interpretation from another perspective, namely the connection between the science and the Beautiful Names (Asmā' al-Husna) in the Kulliyyat Rasāil al-Nūr as follows:

⁴⁸ Nursi, Al-Kalimat, 183–86.

The Scientific-Cum-Sufistic Interpretation of Said Nursi ...

Beginning his interpretation, Said Nursi cites one of the verses that forms the basis of his study, which is Surah Al-Baqarah: 31, as follows:

And He taught Adam the names of all things,....⁴⁹

Then, from the above verse, Nursi interprets the greatest miracle of Prophet Adam (A.S), especially in his acknowledgment of his greatest caliphate, which is that Allah SWT taught him various names. Then thereafter, Nursi explains the greatness of the miracles possessed by the prophets, so that he becomes more specific about Prophet Adam, whom he considers to be the "pinnacle of human perfection, the peak of advancement, and the ultimate goal." Finally, from his interpretation, Nursi motivates the descendants and heirs with their potential, especially to learn from all the names and to be worthy of carrying out this great trust before all creatures. Nursi further adds that "the path has been opened before you to reach the highest level in the world. The earth, this very great creation, has been subdued for you." Therefore, Nursi urges all descendants of Adam to advance and move forward, that is, "get up and move forward. The path is open before you. Hold onto every name of my noble names. Rely on them so that you can ascend and rise high." Afterwards, Nursi warns the descendants of Prophet Adam to be cautious of Satan's temptations, stating, "Beware, Satan has once succeeded in deceiving your father until he fell from paradise (that high position) to the earth for a while."50 As a result, at the end of the first subsection of his interpretation, Nursi gives warnings to the descendants of Adam, especially when they have reached a high level or advancement, along with its wisdom.

'Therefore, in your elevated and advanced state, you must not follow Satan, for it will lead you from the heaven of divine wisdom to the abyss

⁴⁹ RI, Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahnya, 7.

⁵⁰ Nursi, *Al-Kalimat*, 372–73.

of material delusion." Then, "Raise your heads high. Observe and contemplate my noble names. Make your knowledge and progress as a ladder to reach that heaven so that you can attain various truths of knowledge and your perfection. From there, you will reach its original sources. Those are my noble names. Look at your Lord with the eyes of the heart through the lens of those names" 51

In the second paragraph of his interpretation regarding the verse, Nursi provides a major heading titled "important lessons and secrets" within it. Additionally, he touches upon the scientific perfection and advancements made by humans, as well as their ability to achieve industry and various other astounding discoveries revealed by the aforementioned Quranic verse, with the teaching of several names: "He taught Adam all the names." Nursi suggests that this verse contains an important and noble guidance:

"Every perfection, knowledge, progress, and discipline of any kind has a high and noble essence. This essence relies on one of its noble names. By relying on that name, which has various different veils, diverse manifestations, and various domains of appearance, every discipline, perfection, and creation finds its perfection and becomes a tangible reality. Without it, it is merely an imperfect, severed, faded, and confusing shadow."

This, as Nursi illustrates, applies to several disciplines of science that embody the essence of the Beautiful Names and have their main objectives within them:

"For example, engineering is one field of knowledge that acquires the ability to fully manifest the wisdom of the names al-'Adl (the Just) and al-Muqaddir (the All-Decreeing), which are reflected in all its magnificence in the mirror of technical knowledge." Next, the field of medicine: "Medicine, is a science, art, and profession, whose pinnacle and essence also refer to medicine, whose noble name is al-Shafi (the ultimate healer). The greatness of pharmaceutical treatment reaches its

⁵¹ Nursi, 373.

⁵² Nursi, 373–74.

perfection and becomes a reality by witnessing a series of manifestations of the blessings of the Name Al-Shafi in various medicines scattered across the earth." Furthermore, "Physics, chemistry, botany, zoology, and other exact sciences, all become 'true wisdom' by witnessing the various great manifestations of the Name of Allah (the Most Wise) in everything. I can announce the arrangement and maintenance. By experiencing different benefits and manifestations of different benefits, the differences in insights mentioned above become real wisdom."

In other words, when someone relies on Allah and His presence, then the wisdom of that Name is revealed. If not, it might become superstition and wasted in vain. Or perhaps it opens the way for the errors that now occur in materialistic philosophy. Then, Nursi presents the conclusion of his interpretation as follows:

"Through the above verses, the Qur'an provides motivation to humanity, and in the era of progress today, many things indicate the highest point, namely its limit, the difficult peak position to reach." It's as if saying, "Let's move forward!"⁵³

Thus, from Nursi's interpretation regarding the novelty of scientific interpretation seen from the connection of scientific knowledge and the Asma al-Husna in Kulliyyat Rasail al-Nur above, it can be concluded that scientific knowledge that is not connected with the Asma al-Husna will not obtain spiritual values and theistic elements within it. This is certainly essential when reflecting on education in the contemporary era. Because if these values are disregarded, scientific knowledge will only give rise to secular knowledge devoid of spirituality and faith in Allah, and thus will not realize the aspirations of an integrated Islamic education with religious sciences. Moreover, the aim is to produce holistic, balanced, and well-informed outcomes for the advancement of Islamic civilization.

⁵³ Nursi, 374.

Conclusion

After conducting a review and research on the scholarly interpretation perspective of Badi' al-Zaman Said Nursi from his aforementioned work, two conclusions are drawn. Firstly, the scientific interpretation conducted by Said Nursi in his work, Kulliyyat Rasail al-Nur, tends to emphasize the essence of faith and theology, which certainly focuses on the ultimate purpose or the afterlife, unlike other contemporary scholarly interpreters whose interpretations lean more towards general scientific books, thus removing the guidance and purpose of the revelation of the Qur'an. However, in his interpretation style, Nursi does not neglect the scientific aspect. Moreover, in his interpretation of verses related to scientific phenomena such as the universe, earth, stars, mountains, animals, and others, he interprets them only as means and materials for contemplation of Allah, as well as glorifying and acknowledging Him as the Lord of the universe. Additionally, before interpreting the essence of his scientific interpretation, Nursi provides imaginative stories or parables, which end with the wisdom of a Thus, his interpretation facilitates particular verse. understanding of the holy book of the Qur'an for the general public of the Islamic community.

Secondly, as for the novelty of the scientific interpretation proposed by Said Nursi in his interpretation work, it is divided into three aspects: first, from the aspect of the characteristics of his interpretation, he uses a scientific cum Sufi pattern, namely a scientific interpretation combined with a Sufi interpretation pattern. Second, from the perspective and interpretation of nature, Nursi uses two meanings, namely the Harfi (literal) meaning and the Ismi (symbolic meaning). Third, the impact of the connection between science and the Asmā' al-Husna (the beautiful names of Allah) in his interpretation, which will create integration between general knowledge (science) and religious knowledge.

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