

A Sufi Approach to the Contemplative Understanding of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah: The Case of Tuan Guru Haji Ya'kub bin 'Abd al-Rashīd

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the Sufi approach developed by Tuan Guru Haji Ya'kub 'Abd al-Rashīd (TGHY) in understanding and internalising Sūrat al-Fātiḥah within the Patani Islamic intellectual tradition. It specifically analyses the Sufi concepts underlying his interpretation and examines how these concepts are connected to spiritual internalisation in ritual prayer. Employing qualitative textual and thematic analysis, the study examines his treatise, *Ini Keringkasan Arti-Arti yang Dibaca di Dalam Sembahyang*, as the primary source, complemented by selected classical Sufi exegetical works and oral historical accounts. This textual analysis is supplemented by secondary data from authoritative classical Sufi exegeses such as those by al-Ghazālī, al-Qushayrī, and Ibn 'Ajībah, alongside oral interviews with his prominent disciples. The findings indicate that his approach emphasises tazkiyat al-nafs, ḥuḍūr al-qalb, 'ubūdiyyah, and inward contemplation of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah as means of deepening the servant's relationship with Allah SWT during ritual prayer. The study further identifies a localized pattern of Sufi Qur'anic interpretation that integrates classical spiritual concepts with everyday religious instruction in the Patani context. Ultimately, this research underscores the continuity and vitality of localized Sufi hermeneutics in the Malay world.

Keywords: Tuan Guru Haji Ya'kub 'Abd al-Rashīd; Sufism; Sūrat al-Fātiḥah; Tazkiyat al-Nafs; Patani Scholarly Tradition

INTRODUCTION

Sūrat al-Fātiḥah holds a paramount position within the Islamic scriptural canon, serving as a foundational component of the daily ritual prayer (ṣalāh). Classical exegetes have differed in classifying the surah as either Makkiyyah or Madaniyyah (al-'Ujaylī, n.d.). Some exegetical discussions, however, report views that associate its revelation with both the Makkan and Madinan periods (al-Ṣāwī, 2017).

Comprising seven distinct verses collectively designated as al-Sab' al-Mathānī, the surah occupies an important structural and spiritual position in Qur'anic hermeneutics (Ḥijāzī, n.d.). The Basmalah at the beginning of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah also carries important theological and spiritual implications, particularly concerning human dependence upon divine assistance. Its recitation reflects the servant's recognition of human dependence upon Allah and the limitations of human agency without divine assistance.

Given its centrality, scholars throughout Islamic history have interpreted Sūrat al-Fātiḥah beyond its linguistic and jurisprudential dimensions, exploring its esoteric and spiritual meanings. Within Islamic intellectual discourse, Sūrat al-Fātiḥah has been widely regarded as a concise expression of central Qur'anic themes,

including tawhīd, servanthood, praise, and supplication (Ibn Kathīr, 1999). The Sufi interpretive tradition has particularly emphasised the presence of the heart (ḥuḍūr al-qalb) and awareness of servanthood (‘ubūdiyyah) during its recitation. For a Muslim performing the five obligatory prayers individually, Sūrat al-Fātiḥah is recited at least seventeen times daily, making its meaning particularly significant for cultivating sustained spiritual awareness between the servant and the Creator (Mohd Zahir et al., 2025).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Intellectual Landscape of Malay Archipelago

The Malay-Indonesian archipelago has developed a distinctive tradition of Islamic scholarship shaped by interactions among local scholars, transregional centres of learning, and diverse intellectual traditions. Within this landscape, Patani emerged as an important centre for the transmission of Islamic knowledge, particularly in jurisprudence (fiqh) and Sufism (tasawwuf).

A notable feature of this tradition is the effort to integrate the outward dimensions of Islamic practice (ẓāhir) with inward spiritual cultivation (bāṭin), particularly through the teaching of fiqh and tasawwuf. Existing scholarship has documented the pedagogical orientation of Patani scholars towards integrating exoteric legal knowledge with inward spiritual cultivation.

Studies on Southeast Asian Islamic intellectual history emphasize that scholars from this region frequently integrated Sufi teachings to foster holistic spiritual development among the populace. Within this scholarly context, Tuan Guru Haji Ya‘kub ‘Abd al-Rashīd (TGHY) represents a contemporary Patani scholar whose writings provide a localized expression of Sufi-oriented religious instruction.

In Qur’anic studies, tafsīr isyārī refers to an interpretive approach that seeks spiritual or subtle indications within Qur’anic verses while remaining connected to their apparent meanings. Classical Sufi scholars, such as al-Qushayrī (2007) and al-Ghazālī (2018), emphasised the importance of inward awareness and the presence of the heart (ḥuḍūr al-qalb) in religious practice. Recent academic works on Qur’anic hermeneutics reiterate that contemplative readings (tadabbur) serve as an essential conduit for soul purification (tazkiyat al-nafs).

Furthermore, scholarly discourse regarding Sūrat al-Fātiḥah underscores its foundational role in Qur’anic understanding and its central position in daily prayer. Recent empirical and qualitative studies, such as Mohd Zahir et al. (2025), have examined the significance of its repeated recitation in relation to spiritual awareness. However, existing scholarship has paid comparatively limited attention to how local Malay-Patani scholars articulated Sufi-oriented interpretations of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah for practical spiritual internalisation.

In particular, TGHY’s interpretation remains insufficiently examined in relation to the broader tradition of Sufi Qur’anic interpretation. This study therefore examines his interpretation to identify its principal Sufi concepts, compare them with selected classical Sufi exegetical traditions, and examine their expression within the Patani scholarly context.

Author’s Biography and Lineage

Tuan Guru Haji Ya‘kub ‘Abd al-Rashīd (as depicted in Figure 1) was a Patani scholar whose intellectual and educational background encompassed both Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) and Sufism (tasawwuf). His full lineage is recorded as Ya‘kub bin ‘Abd al-Rashīd bin Intan bin Adam Baqa’ Chik Adam, and he was born in Kampung Sedal in 1933 CE. Ancestrally, his lineage traces back to Hadhramaut, Yemen. He married Khadijah binti Abd al-Qadir, the daughter of Tuan Guru ‘Abd al-Qadir from Kampung Changgal, Jala (Abdulloh Salaeh & Idi Amin Diwani, 2021, 2023; Ya‘kub ‘Abd al-Rashid, 2024).



Figure 1: Tuan Guru Haji Ya'kub 'Abd al-Rashid (TGHY)

Author's Educational Background

TGHY commenced his preliminary studies under the tutelage of Tuan Guru 'Abd al-Qadir (Baba Dir), who was also his father-in-law, in Jala for five years. In 1951, at the age of 18, he departed for Makkah al-Mukarramah to further his Islamic scholarly studies. During his twenty-year residence in Makkah (1951–1971), he studied under a number of Arab and Malay scholars across diverse disciplines:

1. Sheikh Ku Jali (Indonesia): Advanced studies in jurisprudential maxims (Qawā'id al-Fiqhiyyah), scholarly debate (Munāẓarah), rhetoric (Balāghah), and logic (Manṭiq).
2. Sheikh Fada'il: Instruction in foundational texts such as Kifāyat al-'Awām, al-Ashmāwī, and Bakūrat al-Amānī.
3. Sheikh Wadin Basu: Intensive study of Kifāyat al-Akhyār, Maqūlāt al-'Asharah, al-Shuja'ī (Arabic grammar), and Qaṭr al-Nadā.
4. Sheikh al-'Alawī: Attendance at lectures covering Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn and the history of Islamic legislation (Tārīkh al-Tashrī').

He also studied classical works including Tadrīb al-Rāwī, Raf' al-Ustādh, and Ḥāshiyat Yāsīn bin Zayn al-Dīn. Although he initially intended to pursue further studies in Egypt, he ultimately returned to his homeland following the advice of his father-in-law. In total, he spent two decades acquiring Islamic knowledge in Makkah before returning to serve his local community (Abdulloh Salaeh & Idi Amin Diwani, 2021).

Written Works

1. **Risalah Kecil: Ini Keringkasan Arti-Arti yang Dibaca di Dalam Sembahyang** (Ya'kub 'Abd al-Rashid, 2024). The edition used in this study is a posthumous edition of TGHY's work, prepared and verified through taḥqīq by his student, Abdulloh Salaeh. Accordingly, the year 2024 refers to the publication of the edition examined in this study and does not indicate the date of the original composition. The work is treated as the primary textual source for analysing TGHY's interpretation of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah.
2. **Hukum Sifat Dua Puluh**: An 8-page treatise on Islamic theology (Uṣūl al-Dīn) addressing core tenets of faith ('aqidah) alongside logical argumentation (manṭiq).
3. **Mukadimah bagi Orang yang Mempelajari Ilmu Tasawuf**: A 5-page manual concerning the Seven Degrees of Existence (Martabat Tujuh) (Ahmad Tok Imam Fusin, 7 August 2018).

4. **Himpunan Wirid Amalan Harian:** A compilation of daily prayers (dhikr) aimed at warding off envy (hasad), verses recited for business propriety, and an introduction to Sufi order litanies (Martabat Tujuh).

His Pedagogical Approach

His pedagogical approach reflects an effort to integrate the outward dimensions of Islamic practice with inward spiritual cultivation within the Sunni Islamic tradition. Within Qur'anic studies, he paid particular attention to Sūrat al-Fātiḥah as a foundation for cultivating a spiritual relationship between the servant and the Divine. He exhibited a strong inclination towards Sufism, which was reflected in his instruction across various disciplines, including Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), Arabic grammar (naḥw), and other fields of Islamic knowledge. In his teaching, he consistently emphasised esoteric knowledge, particularly the “Seven Degrees of Existence” (‘Ilmu Martabat Tujuh), reflecting the presence of Sufi cosmological concepts within his broader intellectual and pedagogical framework.

His interpretation of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah illustrates how these spiritual concepts were incorporated into his pedagogical approach. For instance, in his discussion of the Basmalah, TGHY explains that Bismillah serves as the fundamental root or trunk, al-Raḥmān represents the path of spiritual journeying, while al-Raḥīm denotes the spiritual station (maqām) of the servant before Allah (Ya‘kub ‘Abd al-Rashid, 2024). He further explains that the Basmalah was revealed across four distinct stages or states: first, Bismi Rabbi; second, Bismillāhi Majrāhā; third, Bismillāhi al-Raḥmān; and fourth, its complete form, Bismillāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm (Ya‘kub ‘Abd al-Rashid, 2024). These explanations illustrate how TGHY connected the textual elements of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah with concepts of spiritual progression and inner cultivation.

In addition, TGHY maintained strong ties to the Naqshbandi order (Ṭarīqah Naqshbandiyyah), whose spiritual principles contributed to the formation of his intellectual and mystico-theological orientation. His pedagogical approach can therefore be understood as combining formal Islamic learning with spiritual instruction aimed at cultivating both outward religious practice and inward spiritual awareness.

His Demise

TGHY passed away on Wednesday, 13 June 2007 (corresponding to 27 Jamadilawal 1428H), at 10:40 AM at his residence at the age of 74, following a period of declining health (Abdul Nasir Yaqub & Abdul Karim Khatib, 2018). His funeral was attended by thousands of students and his close companion, Tuan Guru Haji Hussein Pohon Lebai. In accordance with his final wishes, his body was washed by one of his prominent disciples, Ustaz Haji Ahmad Tok Matan Imam Pusing. The funeral prayer was conducted the following day at the Kampung Changgal Mosque, and he was laid to rest adjacent to the tomb of his teacher and father-in-law, Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir, in Kampung Pusing, Jala Province. The burial ceremony was attended by family members, including two of his sons who were pursuing their studies in Malaysia and Egypt and arrived prior to the interment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research design rooted in textual and content analysis to examine the Sufi approach to Sūrat al-Fātiḥah as articulated by TGHY. A qualitative framework is particularly suited to this study because it enables a contextual and interpretive examination of religious texts, spiritual concepts, and localized exegetical traditions within the Malay-Patani scholarly context.

The primary textual source for this study is TGHY’s treatise, *Risalah Kecil: Ini Keringkasan Arti-Arti yang Dibaca di Dalam Sembahyang*. The edition examined in this study was published in 2024 as a posthumous edition and prepared through taḥqīq by Abdulloh Salaeh, one of TGHY’s students. The 2024 publication date therefore refers to the edition used for the present study rather than the original composition of the work. In analysing the text, the study distinguishes TGHY’s interpretive statements from the editorial contribution associated with the preparation of the posthumous edition.

The unit of analysis consists of interpretive passages in the primary treatise that directly address the meanings and spiritual implications of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah. The analysis focuses on recurring concepts, interpretive patterns, and spiritual meanings associated with each verse of the surah. The identified concepts were coded and grouped into analytical categories, including tazkiyat al-naḥs, ḥuḍūr al-qalb, tawḥīd, ‘ubūdiyyah, sulūk, and maqāmāt. These categories were subsequently compared with selected classical Sufi exegetical works to identify elements of continuity, adaptation, and contextualisation.

The analysis follows a descriptive-analytical procedure. First, relevant passages concerning Sūrat al-Fātiḥah were identified from the primary treatise. Second, the passages were organised according to the relevant verses and recurring Sufi concepts. Third, TGHY’s interpretations were examined in relation to selected classical Sufi exegetical discussions. Finally, the comparison was used to identify areas of continuity with established Sufi interpretive traditions, as well as adaptations reflecting the pedagogical and religious context of the Patani Muslim community.

Oral historical information and biographical accounts were used primarily to contextualise TGHY’s educational background, scholarly networks, pedagogical practices, and transmission of knowledge. Such accounts were not treated as the principal basis for determining the meaning of the Qur’anic verses. The interpretation of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah was therefore grounded primarily in the written primary source, while oral and biographical materials served a supplementary contextual function.

Analytical Framework: Sufi Concepts in the Internalisation of Sūrat Al-Fātiḥah

This study employs selected Sufi concepts as an analytical framework for examining the internalisation of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah in TGHY’s interpretation. The framework focuses on the relationship between the recitation of the surah and the cultivation of inner spiritual awareness, particularly through the concepts of tazkiyat al-naḥs (purification of the soul), ḥuḍūr al-qalb (presence of the heart), tawḥīd (divine oneness), ‘ubūdiyyah (servanthood), sulūk (spiritual journey), and maqāmāt (spiritual stations). These categories provide an analytical basis for examining the spiritual dimensions of TGHY’s interpretation without assuming that each category represents a direct statement or explicit terminology used by TGHY himself.

From the perspective of selected Sufi exegetical works, the internalisation of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah extends beyond verbal recitation to include inward engagement with the meanings of praise, servanthood, dependence upon Allah, spiritual guidance, and accountability. Al-Qushayrī (2007), for example, emphasises spiritual meanings associated with Qur’anic verses, while al-Ghazālī (2018) stresses the importance of the presence of the heart in acts of worship, including Qur’anic recitation during prayer. These perspectives are used in this study as comparative references for examining the extent to which similar spiritual orientations are reflected in TGHY’s interpretation.

The surah also contains a fundamental plea for divine guidance in the invocation **Ihḍinā al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm**. In this context, guidance may be examined not only as a request for direction but also in relation to spiritual steadfastness (istiḳāmah) and the transformation of belief into righteous conduct. Recent scholarship, such as Yogi Ardiansyah et al. (2026), similarly discusses the relationship between **Ihḍinā al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm** and steadfastness in belief and conduct. Within the present study, such perspectives provide a comparative framework for analysing how TGHY connects Qur’anic guidance with spiritual development. Accordingly, the analytical framework is used to examine three interrelated dimensions of TGHY’s interpretation: (1) the spiritual meanings attached to the verses of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah; (2) the Sufi concepts through which these meanings are expressed; and (3) the extent to which his interpretation demonstrates continuity, adaptation, and contextualisation in relation to selected classical Sufi exegetical traditions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION:

Ya‘Kub’s Sufi Interpretation of Sūrat Al-Fātiḥah

His interpretation of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah reflects several characteristics associated with Sufi-oriented and isyārī approaches to Qur’anic interpretation. Rather than limiting the meaning of the verses to their outward

linguistic and ritual dimensions, his exposition connects them with spiritual states, ethical transformation, and the servant's relationship with Allah SWT. The analysis below examines these interpretations verse by verse and compares them with selected classical Sufi exegetical perspectives.

Basmalah (Verse 1)

Translation: In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. (Basmeih, 1983).

In his interpretation, TGHY explains the expression as signifying, "I commence (every affair) with the name of Allah SWT." He consistently emphasises acting in accordance with the spirit of the prophetic tradition concerning the commencement of important matters with Bismillah (al-‘Aynī, 2006; al-‘Aẓīm Ābādī, 1415H).

According to TGHY's interpretation, the phrase Bismillah constitutes the primary root or trunk of a believer's existence. Meanwhile, al-Raḥmān symbolises daily earthly existence bound by legal rulings and sacred law (sharī‘ah). Finally, al-Raḥīm represents the spiritual journey or process of sulūk in drawing closer to Allah SWT and dedicating oneself entirely to His servanthood (Ya‘kub ‘Abd al-Rashid, 2024).

This interpretation may be read in relation to al-Jilani's (2010) treatment of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah as Futūḥāt al-Qur‘ān, in which the surah is discussed in relation to dimensions of divine lordship (rubūbiyyah). While both approaches associate the Basmalah with broader theological and spiritual meanings, TGHY places particular emphasis on the believer's spiritual progression, connecting al-Raḥmān and al-Raḥīm with the movement from outward religious life towards inward spiritual development.

The significance of TGHY's interpretation therefore lies in his extension of the Basmalah from a formula of commencement to a framework for spiritual formation. His distinction between al-Raḥmān as associated with worldly existence and al-Raḥīm as connected with the spiritual journey demonstrates how the divine names are interpreted in relation to stages of human spiritual experience. This represents a form of contextualised Sufi interpretation in which established spiritual concepts are presented as practical guidance for the believer's religious and devotional life.

Translation: All praise is due to Allah, Lord of all the worlds **al-Ḥamdu lillāhi Rabb al-‘Ālamīn (Verse 2)**

. (Basmeih, 1983)

According to TGHY's interpretation, the expression "All Praise" refers to four categories of praise (puji) that inherently belong to Allah SWT alone. As the Rabb, Allah governs all realms, including the physical (shahādah), unseen (ghayb), celestial (‘ulwī), and terrestrial (sufī) realms, as well as this world and the hereafter. Consequently, no created entity falls outside the sovereignty of His governance. This understanding is consistent with the Qur’anic declaration: "He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden; and He has full knowledge of all things" (Sūrat al-Ḥadīd 57:3).

The emphasis on divine sovereignty can be compared with the interpretation of Bursawi (n.d.), who discusses the verse in relation to the knowledge and glorification of Allah through His Essence (Dhāt), attributes and actions (af‘āl), and the transcendence of His Essence (tanzīh) from any deficiency. These dimensions highlight the comprehensive nature of divine sovereignty and perfection. Similarly, al-Alusi (n.d.) relates the verse to the principle of absolute monotheism (tawḥīd) encompassing the whole of creation.

TGHY's interpretation further connects divine sovereignty with the Qur’anic affirmation that "Allah created you and that which you do" (Sūrat al-Ṣāffāt 37:96). In this context, Bursawi (n.d.) uses the verse "Say, 'All things are from Allah'" (Sūrat al-Nisā’ 4:78) to emphasise divine creation (khalq) and decree. Within this theological framework, human action is not understood as independent of divine creation and determination. This perspective is associated in the manuscript with the theological orientation of Ahl al-Haqq and spiritual gnostics (ahl al-ḥaqīqah).

Ibn ‘Arafah (2008) extends this understanding of divine sovereignty to the institution of prophethood. Since all creation belongs to Allah, the selection of particular individuals as prophets and messengers is understood as an expression of divine sovereignty and will. This provides a further dimension to the interpretation of Rabb al-‘Ālamīn, linking divine lordship not only to cosmic governance but also to the ordering of prophetic guidance.

A further Sufi dimension identified in the interpretation is the association of al-ḥamdu lillāhi Rabb al-‘Ālamīn with the spiritual stages of the soul, namely *rāḍiyah*, *marḍiyyah*, and *kāmilah*. These stages are presented within a specific Sufi conceptual framework as advanced levels of spiritual purification (*tazkiyat al-naḥs*), in which the servant attains contentment with Allah, becomes pleasing to Him, and ultimately approaches spiritual perfection. In relation to TGHY’s interpretation, these concepts indicate that the verse is understood not only as an affirmation of divine sovereignty but also as a reminder of the servant’s spiritual transformation.

Taken together, the interpretation of al-Ḥamdu lillāhi Rabb al-‘Ālamīn demonstrates two interconnected dimensions. First, TGHY emphasises the absolute sovereignty, creation, and governance of Allah over all existence. Second, he connects this theological understanding with the inward process of spiritual purification and the attainment of higher spiritual states. Compared with the selected classical Sufi interpretations discussed above, TGHY’s approach shows continuity in its emphasis on divine sovereignty and *tawḥīd*, while extending these theological meanings towards the practical cultivation of spiritual awareness and purification of the self.

Al-Raḥmān, Al-Raḥīm and MālikYawm Al-Dīn (Verses 3 and 4)

Translation: The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Master of the Day of Judgment. (al-Qadhahī, 2018)

According to TGHY’s interpretation, the attribute al-Raḥmān pertains particularly to earthly life and physical existence (*jismānī*). Within this interpretive framework, the Divine Throne (al-‘Arsh) is discussed in relation to the physical dimension of creation. TGHY’s explanation draws upon two reports concerning the primacy of creation: “The first thing created by Allah was the Throne” and “The first thing created was my light” (Nizam al-Dīn al-Hasan, 1996).

Based on these reports, TGHY understood the apparent difference between the two claims concerning the first creation through a distinction between physical and spiritual dimensions. The primacy of the Throne is therefore considered from a physical perspective (*jismānī*), whereas the primacy of the Light of the Prophet Muhammad is understood from a spiritual perspective (*rūḥānī*) (*Dimasyqiyyah*, n.d.). Rather than treating the two reports as necessarily contradictory, this interpretation places them within different conceptual domains.

TGHY further explains that the attribute al-Raḥīm is intrinsically connected to the spiritual dimension. On this basis, the Qur’an is understood as a source of spiritual guidance for humanity, including its descriptions of the blessings of Paradise. The expression MālikYawm al-Dīn then points to the manifestation of absolute divine sovereignty on the Day of Judgment, when no created being possesses independent sovereign authority.

This interpretation can be compared with selected Sufi exegetical perspectives. In his exegesis, al-Sha‘rāwī (n.d.) discusses the Throne as a supreme creation whose ultimate reality belongs to the realm of divine knowledge. Similarly, the treatment of al-Raḥīm in al-Ta’wīlāt al-Najmiyyah associates the spiritual dimension with *mukāshafah* (spiritual unveiling) and the progressive contemplation of the Divine (Najmuddin, 2009). These perspectives provide a comparative context for understanding TGHY’s distinction between the outward and inward dimensions of existence.

The comparison indicates that TGHY’s interpretation reflects a Sufi cosmological framework in which physical and spiritual dimensions of creation are conceptually distinguished. His treatment of al-Raḥmān and al-Raḥīm consequently extends beyond the explanation of divine attributes to a discussion of different dimensions of human and cosmic existence. The association of al-Raḥmān and the Throne with the physical domain, and al-Raḥīm and the Light of the Prophet Muhammad with the spiritual domain, represents TGHY’s particular interpretive formulation within this Sufi conceptual framework. It should therefore be understood as

an element of his interpretive discourse rather than as a claim of consensus within the broader field of ḥadīth scholarship.

Iyyāka Na‘budu wa Iyyāka Nasta‘īn (Verse 5)

Translation: You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help.

In his interpretation, TGHY explains these verses as a formal declaration of commitment to true servanthood (‘ubūdiyyah) to Allah SWT. At the same time, they express the servant’s humble dependence upon Allah and his plea for divine acceptance of this commitment, given that all creation remains under His absolute authority. This understanding is consistent with the prophetic injunction: “When you ask, ask of Allah; and when you seek help, seek help from Allah” (al-Ṭabarānī, 1983).

This emphasis on exclusive worship and dependence upon Allah can be compared with the interpretation of Najmuddin al-Kubrā, who associates Iyyāka Na‘budu with the spiritual station of vigilance (maqām al-murāqabah). Conversely, Iyyāka Nasta‘īn is associated with the stage of spiritual vision (kashf al-mushāhadah) (Najmuddin, 2009). While TGHY emphasises the believer’s commitment to servanthood and dependence upon Allah, al-Kubrā develops these meanings through specific stages of spiritual experience.

The verse can therefore be understood as encompassing both an outward devotional commitment and an inward spiritual orientation. In TGHY’s interpretation, Iyyāka Na‘budu represents the believer’s acknowledgement of absolute servanthood, while Iyyāka Nasta‘īn expresses complete reliance upon Allah. These dimensions contribute to the broader process of spiritual development and purification of the soul (tazkiyat al-naḥs).

In comparison with the selected classical Sufi perspectives, TGHY’s interpretation shows continuity in its emphasis on exclusive servanthood, dependence upon Allah, and spiritual purification. However, his exposition presents these concepts primarily as practical dimensions of the believer’s devotional journey rather than as an abstract discussion of spiritual states alone. This practical orientation forms an important feature of his approach to the internalisation of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah.

Ihḍinā al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm (Verse 6)

Translation: Guide us to the straight path.

In his interpretation, TGHY explains this verse as a petition for divine guidance (hidāyah), particularly a request for steadfastness (istiḳāmah) in performing acts of devotion. This understanding places guidance not merely in the acquisition of knowledge, but also in the believer’s continued commitment to righteous practice.

This emphasis on guidance and steadfastness can be compared with the interpretation of Sheikh al-Jamal, who explains the supplication as a request for an increase in guidance towards Allah or for constancy upon the guidance already received (al-‘Ujaylī, 2009). The Qur’an similarly describes divine guidance in relation to the straight path: “And indeed, you guide to a straight path” (Sūrat al-Shūrā 42:52), and “...guides to that which is most suitable” (Sūrat al-Isrā’ 17:9).

The Sufi exegetical tradition provides further distinctions concerning the nature of guidance. In al-Baḥr al-Madīd, Ibn ‘Ajībāh (2002) categorises guidance into two forms: essential guidance, understood as direct guidance to Allah for spiritual witnesses, and effectual guidance, referring to guidance towards righteous deeds through rational proofs. Najmuddin (2009), in his discussion of Ihḍinā, identifies three levels of guidance corresponding to the general public (al-‘ām), the spiritual elect (al-khāṣṣ), and the elite of the elect (al-akhaṣṣ). Al-Qushayrī (2007), in Laṭā’if al-Ishārāt, further associates the request for Ihḍinā with instructional guidance (al-irshād).

In relation to these classical perspectives, TGHY’s exposition highlights the believer’s continuous striving towards higher spiritual stations (maqāmāt), accompanied by the purification of the heart from doubt and

sustained orientation towards Allah SWT. His interpretation therefore shows points of convergence with the selected Sufi exegetical perspectives, particularly in understanding guidance as an ongoing spiritual process rather than a one-time request for direction.

At the same time, TGHY presents these spiritual meanings in a practical devotional context. The request for guidance is connected with steadfastness in worship, purification of the heart, and continuous spiritual striving. His interpretation thus demonstrates how established Sufi concepts of guidance can be communicated as practical spiritual instruction within the context of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah.

Ṣirāṭ Alladhīna An‘amta ‘Alayhim, Ghayri al-Maghḍūb ‘Alaihim wa la al-Ḍāllīn (Verse 7)

Translation: The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favour, not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray.

In his interpretation of the phrase an‘amta ‘alayhim, TGHY explains that it refers specifically to the path of the prophets (al-Anbiyā’). This emphasis corresponds with the broader classical Sufi interpretation of al-Jilani (2010), who identifies those upon whom Allah has bestowed favour as including the prophets (anbiyā’), the truthful (ṣiddīqīn), the martyrs (shuhadā’), and the righteous (ṣāliḥīn). While al-Jilani presents a broader categorisation of those who have received divine favour, TGHY places particular emphasis on the prophetic path.

Within this interpretation, TGHY gives particular attention to Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), whose religious legacy is presented as an important reference point in understanding the authentic path of monotheistic faith. This emphasis is supported by the Qur’anic declaration: “Say, ‘Indeed, my Lord has guided me to a straight path, a correct religion, the sect of Abraham, inclining toward truth. And he was not among those who associated others with Allah.’” (Sūrat al-An‘ām 6:161)

The significance of this emphasis can be further considered in relation to al-Shanqiti (1995), who interprets the verse as scriptural evidence for the truth of the guidance conveyed through the message of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Jawzi (n.d.), citing al-Zajjaj, similarly understands the verse as embodying a petition for guidance towards the religion of truth.

The comparison indicates that TGHY’s interpretation shares continuity with the classical Sufi understanding of an‘amta ‘alayhim as referring to a divinely guided path. However, his exposition selectively emphasises the prophetic dimension of this path, with particular reference to Prophet Abraham. This emphasis may be understood as a contextualised presentation of the concept of divine guidance, in which the prophetic model serves as a concrete reference for religious orientation and spiritual conduct.

Accordingly, TGHY’s interpretation of Verse 7 connects the believer’s request for guidance with the example of the prophets and, particularly, the Abrahamic model of monotheistic submission. Rather than introducing a separate conception of the “straight path,” his interpretation extends an established Qur’anic and Sufi understanding into a practical framework of spiritual and religious orientation.

The Essence of the Millah of Abraham (مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ)

The Qur’an establishes a close connection between the religious tradition of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and the Abrahamic tradition of submission to Allah. Al-Zuhaili (2009) explains that the message brought by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ represents a continuation of the monotheistic teachings associated with Prophet Abraham rather than a departure from them.

Within Sufi and tafsīr isyārī perspectives, the concept of ḥanīf carries a spiritual meaning beyond the rejection of outward polytheism. Al-Qushayri (2007) interprets it in relation to a spiritual orientation in which the heart turns exclusively towards Allah and is purified from hidden forms of polytheism (shirk khafī). Similarly, al-Jilani (2015) associates the essence of the Millah Ibrāhīm with self-surrender (fanā’ and taslīm), reliance upon Allah (tawakkul), and spiritual sacrifice for the attainment of divine pleasure.

These classical Sufi perspectives provide a comparative framework for understanding the significance of the Abrahamic model within the interpretation examined in this study. The emphasis on inward purification, self-surrender, reliance upon Allah, and spiritual sacrifice demonstrates how the Millah Ibrāhīm may be understood not only as a historical religious tradition but also as a model of spiritual orientation.

This outward-inward integration is further discussed by al-Ghazali (2018), who relates the perfection of Islamic religious practice to the integration of outward law (*sharīʿah*) and inward spiritual reality (*ḥaqīqah*) through the concept of spiritual excellence (*iḥsān*). The Abrahamic model therefore provides a conceptual link between outward religious observance and inward spiritual cultivation.

The Qurʾanic description of Prophet Abraham further reinforces this understanding: “Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was one inclining toward truth, a Muslim [submitting to Allah]. And he was not of the polytheists” (Sūrat Āli ʿImrān 3:67). Within the context of the present study, this verse supports the understanding of Millah Ibrāhīm as a paradigm of uncompromising monotheism and submission to Allah.

In relation to TGHY’s interpretation, the Abrahamic model can therefore be understood as contributing to his broader emphasis on spiritual submission, reliance upon Allah, and purification of the heart. Rather than presenting the Millah Ibrāhīm as a separate theological framework, the interpretation examined here places it within the broader Sufi understanding of inward submission and spiritual orientation.

The analysis consequently indicates continuity between the Abrahamic spiritual model and the Sufi concepts identified in TGHY’s interpretation of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah. The significance of this connection lies particularly in the integration of outward religious practice with inward spiritual cultivation, which constitutes a recurring feature of the interpretive approach examined in this study.

Interpretation of al-Maghḍūb ʿAlayhim and al-Ḍāllīn

Translation: Not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray.

In the classical exegetical tradition, Ibn ʿAǧbah (2002) interprets *ghayri al-maghḍūbi ʿalayhim* as referring to the path of those who incurred divine wrath, traditionally associated with the Jews, while *wa lā al-ḍāllīn* refers to those who are considered to have deviated from the truth, traditionally associated with the Christians. A similar interpretation is found in al-Māwardī (n.d.) in *al-Nukat wa al-ʿUyūn*, based on the narration of ʿAdī ibn Ḥātim (RA), while al-Shaʿrāwī (n.d.) identifies *al-maghḍūb* in relation to *Banī Isrāʾīl*.

In his interpretation, TGHY similarly associates *al-maghḍūb ʿalayhim* with the Jewish group and *al-ḍāllīn* with those who are astray (Yaʿkub ʿAbd al-Rashid, 2024). His interpretation therefore retains the basic categorisation found in selected classical exegetical discussions.

However, TGHY extends the discussion of *al-ḍāllīn* beyond the specific Christian referent found in some classical interpretations. In his exposition, the category is broadened to include other contemporary non-Muslim religious communities, including adherents of Buddhism and Hinduism (Yaʿkub ʿAbd al-Rashid, 2024). This extension reflects an attempt to relate the Qurʾanic category of deviation to the religious environment encountered by the Muslim community in the contemporary Patani context.

The comparison therefore indicates both continuity and contextualisation. TGHY retains the established exegetical distinction concerning *al-maghḍūb ʿalayhim* and *al-ḍāllīn*, while extending the latter category within his contemporary pedagogical exposition. His approach demonstrates how a classical exegetical formulation may be presented in relation to the religious context within which Islamic instruction is delivered.

Taken together, the preceding analysis demonstrates that TGHY’s interpretation of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah extends beyond the explanation of textual meanings to emphasise the spiritual internalisation of the verses. The principal interpretive emphases, Sufi concepts, and corresponding contemplative dimensions identified throughout the discussion are synthesised in Table 1.

Table 1: Synthesis of TGHY's Sufi Interpretation and Contemplative Dimensions of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah

Verse/Section	TGHY's Interpretive Focus	Sufi Concept	Contemplative Dimension
Basmalah	Commencing every affair with Allah	ʿUbūdiyyah / Sulūk	God-consciousness
al-Ḥamdu lillāh	Praise, gratitude and recognition of Allah as Rabb	Tawḥīd / Tazkiyat al-nafs	Gratitude and awareness
al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm	Divine mercy in outward and inward dimensions	Raḥmah / Sulūk	Spiritual awareness
MālikYawm al-Dīn	Awareness of divine judgement	Murāqabah	Accountability
Iyyāka Naʿbudu	Exclusive servanthood	ʿUbūdiyyah	Sincerity and devotion
Iyyāka Nastaʿīn	Dependence upon Allah	Tawakkul	Reliance
Ihdinā al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaḳīm	Seeking guidance and steadfastness	Sulūk / Maqāmāt	Spiritual journey
Anʿamta ʿAlayhim	Following those granted divine favour	Sulūk / Qudwah	Spiritual emulation
al-Maghḍūb ʿAlayhim & al-Ḍāllīn	Avoiding deviation	Tazkiyat al-nafs	Moral and spiritual vigilance

As shown in Table 1, TGHY's interpretation consistently connects the meanings of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah with inner spiritual states and practices, particularly tazkiyat al-nafs, ḥuḍūr al-qalb, ʿubūdiyyah, sulūk, and tawakkul. This synthesis further highlights the distinctive features of his contemplative approach discussed in the following section.

Distinctive Features of TGHY's Sufi Approach

The preceding analysis indicates that TGHY's interpretation of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah demonstrates three interrelated characteristics: continuity with classical Sufi interpretive traditions, adaptation of selected spiritual concepts, and contextualisation within the Patani scholarly environment.

First, TGHY's interpretation demonstrates continuity with the broader tradition of Sufi Qur'anic interpretation. His discussion of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah repeatedly associates the verses with concepts such as tazkiyat al-nafs, ḥuḍūr al-qalb, ʿubūdiyyah, sulūk, spiritual guidance, and reliance upon Allah. Similar spiritual orientations can be identified in the selected works of al-Jilani, al-Qushayri, Ibn ʿAjībah, Najmuddin al-Kubrā, and other classical exegetes discussed in the preceding sections. This continuity indicates that TGHY's interpretation is situated within an established Sufi intellectual tradition rather than developed independently from it.

Second, TGHY's approach demonstrates adaptation. Although his interpretation shares important concepts with classical Sufi exegesis, he does not reproduce the classical discussions in exactly the same form. Instead, selected concepts are reformulated around practical concerns of worship, spiritual discipline, purification of the heart, and the believer's relationship with Allah. For example, the interpretation of Bismillah is connected with stages of spiritual progression, Iyyāka Naʿbudu wa Iyyāka Nastaʿīn with servanthood and dependence upon Allah, and Ihdinā al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaḳīm with continuous spiritual striving and steadfastness. These interpretations illustrate how broader Sufi concepts are translated into practical devotional instruction.

Third, TGHY's interpretation reflects contextualisation within the Patani scholarly environment. His exposition presents Sufi concepts in a form connected with everyday prayer, religious instruction, and the spiritual concerns of the Muslim community. His discussion of the Abrahamic path and his treatment of al-maghḍūb ʿalayhim and al-ḍāllīn further demonstrate how classical exegetical categories are presented in

relation to contemporary religious contexts. In this respect, his interpretation represents a localised mode of transmitting Sufi Qur'anic understanding within the Patani Malay scholarly tradition.

Taken together, these three dimensions suggest that TGHY's contribution lies not in establishing an entirely new Sufi theory of Qur'anic interpretation, but in the contextualised transmission, adaptation, and pedagogical articulation of established Sufi concepts. His interpretation demonstrates how classical spiritual meanings can be re-expressed through the practical context of prayer and religious instruction while remaining connected to the broader intellectual tradition of Sufi Qur'anic interpretation.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the Sufi-oriented interpretation of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah articulated by TGHY through his treatise, *Ini Keringkasan Arti-Arti yang Dibaca di Dalam Sembahyang*. The findings demonstrate that his approach extends the meaning of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah beyond verbal recitation by emphasising spiritual internalisation, tazkiyat al-nafs, ḥuḍūr al-qalb, 'ubūdiyyah, and the believer's continuous dependence upon Allah SWT.

The analysis further demonstrates three interconnected dimensions of TGHY's approach: continuity, adaptation, and contextualisation. His interpretation shows continuity with selected classical Sufi exegetical traditions through its emphasis on spiritual purification, servanthood, divine guidance, reliance upon Allah, and inward spiritual awareness. At the same time, TGHY adapts selected Sufi concepts by presenting them through practical concerns related to worship, spiritual discipline, and the internalisation of Qur'anic meanings. His interpretation consequently demonstrates that classical Sufi concepts are not merely reproduced but are articulated in forms relevant to devotional practice.

More significantly, TGHY's contribution lies in the contextualisation of these spiritual concepts within everyday prayer and religious instruction in the Patani Malay context. His approach combines textual engagement with spiritual reflection, illustrating how Sufi Qur'anic interpretive traditions can be transmitted and re-expressed within a localised scholarly environment. In this respect, the study highlights the role of local scholars in sustaining, adapting, and contextualising Sufi approaches to Qur'anic interpretation within Southeast Asian Islamic intellectual history.

The study does not position TGHY as establishing an entirely new Sufi theory of Qur'anic interpretation. Rather, his significance lies in the contextualised transmission and pedagogical articulation of established Sufi concepts through the interpretation of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah. Future research may further examine TGHY's other writings, his relationship with Sufi networks, and the transmission of his teachings among students and subsequent generations.

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