

PURITANICAL DISCOURSE IN ‘ABD AL-HAMĪD AL-KHATĪB’S NAHJ AL-BURDAH: RESPONSE TO EXCESSIVE PRAISE OF THE PROPHET

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Abstract

al-Madīh al-nabawī has traditionally been regarded as an expression of love for the Prophet Muhammad, encompassing accounts of his birth, miracles, praises, prayers, and hopes. However, recently, *al-madīh al-nabawī* has not only aimed to praise the Prophet but has also been transformed to serve the purpose of constructing specific discourses. *Nahj al-Burdah* by ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd, which includes praises of the Prophet, is suspected of containing the agenda of puritanism and criticism of religious practices deemed inconsistent with the Qur’an and Sunnah. This paper aims to uncover the discourse of puritanization in *Nahj al-Burdah* through Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis approach. The research reveals that *Nahj al-Burdah* contains puritanical discourse against excessive praise of the Prophet. This is demonstrated through the textual dimension containing ideological words and the discourse practice where the text is produced in the context of the Wahhabi reform movement to support what it believes as the purification of Islamic teachings and distributed by media and newspapers in Saudi Arabia to shape readers’ understanding of the importance of following the teachings of the *salaf al-ṣāliḥ*. Meanwhile, from a sociocultural practice perspective, *Nahj al-Burdah* serves as an effective tool for promoting puritanical discourse and reinforcing religious and political authority in Saudi Arabia during that period.

Keywords: *al-Madīh al-Nabawī*, *Nahj al-Burdah*, Puritanism, Ghuluww

Abstrak

al-Madīh al-nabawī selama ini hanya dianggap sebagai bentuk ekspresi kecintaan terhadap Nabi Muhammad yang memuat sejarah kelahiran, mukjizat, pujian, doa dan harapan. Namun, belakangan, *al-madīh al-nabawī* tidak saja bertujuan memuji Nabi tetapi juga ditransformasi untuk kepentingan membangun wacana tertentu. *Nahj al-Burdah* karya ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd yang memuat pujian kepada Nabi ditengarai memuat kepentingan wacana puritanisme dan kritik terhadap praktik keagamaan yang dianggapnya tidak sesuai dengan *al-Qur’an* dan *Sunnah*. Tulisan ini bertujuan mengungkap wacana puritanisasi dalam *Nahj al-Burdah* melalui pendekatan Analisis Wacana Kritis Norman Fairclough. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa *Nahj al-Burdah* memuat wacana puritanisme terhadap pujian yang berlebihan kepada Nabi. Ini ditunjukkan melalui dimensi teks yang memuat kata-kata ideologis, *discourse practice* di mana teks diproduksi dalam konteks gerakan reformasi Wahhabi untuk mendukung pemurnian ajaran Islam dengan didistribusikan oleh media-media dan surat kabar di Saudi Arabia untuk dapat membentuk pemahaman pembaca tentang pentingnya mengikuti ajaran *salaf al-ṣāliḥ*. Sementara dari *sociocultural practice*, *Nahj al-Burdah* menjadi alat yang efektif dalam mempromosikan wacana puritanisme dan memperkuat otoritas religius serta politik di Arab Saudi pada masa itu.

Kata Kunci: *al-Madīh al-Nabawī*, *Nahj al-Burdah*, Puritanisme, Ghuluww

Background

al-Madīh al-nabawī, as a form of piety as reflected in Arabic literature, generally depicts

apoet’s religious experiences. These religious experiences are based on the author’s concrete life experiences.¹ Zakī Mubārak states that *al-madīh al-*

¹ Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, *The Mantle Odes: Arabic Praise Poems to the Prophet Muhammad*, *The Mantle Odes:*

Arabic Praise Poems to the Prophet Muhammad (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2010), 83; Ines Weinrich, ‘Forms of Piety as

nabawī, as a high-value literary work, is a way to express religious spirituality born from a heart filled with truth and sincerity.² It is not surprising that many *al-madīḥ al-nabawī* literary works are written by Sufi poets. However, this definition is more appropriately applied to *al-madīḥ al-nabawī* works from the medieval period.³ In contrast, in the modern era, it has extended beyond the realm of Sufism to include worldly matters, nationalism, and socio-political issues. One modern *al-madīḥ al-nabawī* work that not only expresses love for the Prophet Muhammad but also contains religious discourse is *Nahj al-Burdah*.

Nahj al-Burdah, a work that praises the Prophet, was written in the early 20th century in Saudi Arabia by Sheikh ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Aḥmad al-Khaṭīb al-Minangkabawī (1316-1381 H/1898-1961 CE), a poet, scholar, and member of the Ḥijāz Parliament.⁴ He also served as the first Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The work was published in the Ḥijāz Magazine at that time. Its significance in constructing his works is still connected to his important position in the Saudi Arabian kingdom with Wahhabism as the state ideology. Despite initial political turmoil in his life, experiencing two different political regimes—the Hashemite kingdom and the Ibn Saud kingdom—‘Abd al-Ḥamīd managed to navigate these changes. When power shifted from the Hashemite descendants to the Saud descendants in 1926, ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd fled to Egypt and later returned to Saudi Arabia after receiving a pardon from King ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Sa‘ūdī (d. 1373 H/1953 CE). This part of his life indicates the specific discourse the author raised in his work.

Nahj al-Burdah as a work of *al-madīḥ al-nabawī* is assumed to contain religious discourse practices and certain interests behind the text. This work, when examined from a linguistic perspective, reveals hidden ideological discourse. The power of the text constructed by the poet in the *Nahj al-Burdah* is evident in the ideological words that are advocated and debated. Through these words, ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd aims to convey his ideology and invites readers to understand the ideological terms he uses in the *qaṣīdah* text. For instance, the author repeatedly uses the contested and debated vocabulary, such as the prohibition against *ghuluww* (excessiveness). This term originates from Arabic, consisting of the basic letters *ghayn*, *lām*, and *nāw*, indicating something that is elevated, violates, and exceeds boundaries.⁵ *Ghuluww* refers to the poet’s stance of excessiveness in praising the Prophet Muhammad.

Nahj al-Burdah, as a literary work, is not merely considered a cluster of narratives, poetic, or dramatic forms that provide beauty, entertainment, or even tears to its readers, as per Horace’s concept that literature serves the function *dulce et utile*, or the pleasant and the useful.⁶ Furthermore, this work is positioned as a written document that participates in the historical process where a discourse formation is constructed. Through narrative-poetic strategies and techniques, an author constructs a discourse interconnected with other discourses within society. As a discourse practice, knowledge in poetry does not emerge on its own; rather, there exists a social production system for poetry because poetry is an ideological product of the author, thus accepted by society. This perspective underscores why critical discourse analysis of this work is significant for further research.

Reflected in Arabic Literature: Introduction’, in *In Praise of the Prophet: Forms of Piety as Reflected in Arabic Literature*, ed. by Ines Weinrich (Baden-Baden: Ergon Verlag, 2022), 13.

² Zakī Mubārak, *al-Madīḥ al-Nabawīyah fī al-Adab al-‘Arabī* (Beirut: Dār al-‘Ilm, 1935), 15.

³ Ines Weinrich, ‘Between Poem and Ritual: The Burda by Al-Būṣīrī (d. 1294-1297)’, in *Performing Religion: Actors, Contexts, and Texts. Case Studies on Islam*, ed. by Ines Weinrich (Beirut and Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2016), 106.

⁴ Akhira Nazwar, *Abmad Khatib: Ilmuan Islam di Abad Ini* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1983), 50.

⁵ Sadiq Meisam, ‘Ghuluww and the Belief in Supernatural Abilities for Human: An Investigation into the Concept of Ghuluww in the Qur’an’, *Turkish Journal of Shiite Studies*, 5.1 (2023), 8.

⁶ A. Teeuw, *Sastra dan Ilmu Sastra: Pengantar Teori Sastra* (Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya, 1998), 8.

Abd al-Ḥamīd was an Islamic scholar at al-Masjid al-Ḥarām, descended from scholars of the Nusantara region. Some of his works include Arabic poetry such as *Nazm al-Ṣirah al-Nabawiyah*, *Tā'iyah al-Khaṭīb*, *Munājāh ilā Allāh fī ḥubbillāh wa-Rasulih*, *Qaṣīdat al-Istighāthah al-Kubrā*, and *Nahj al-Burdah*. Studying his works is crucial to examine the discourse of purifying Sufi teachings in poetry, especially regarding issues of excess (*ghubūm*) in praising the Prophet Muhammad. *Nahj al-Burdah*, written by Abd al-Ḥamīd, holds a significant position in Saudi Arabia, and his ode praising the Prophet is taught in the *majlis al-shūrā* of Mecca.

The study of Arabic poetry related to the purification of Sufism is an area that has not received sufficient attention, especially concerning the works of modern Arab poets. Traditional studies have predominantly focused on classical Sufi Arabic poetry such as that of Ibn 'Arabī (d. 638 H/1240 CE), Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī (d. 1273 H/1854 CE), and Ibn al-Fāriḍ, among others.

Research on Arabic poetry with a critical discourse analysis (CDA) paradigm is also still limited. Through CDA in literary works, poetry can understand that discourse, knowledge/power, cannot be detached from the economic, political, and ideological systems operating within society, where certain groups continue to benefit from discursive formations and practices. In Fairclough's view, this approach aims to uncover social power dynamics, exploitation, domination, and inequality that are reproduced and maintained through texts, which are discussed in relation to social and political contexts. Thus, the analysis focuses on questions regarding the processes of language formation and how specific social relations and social contexts influence them. Fairclough's CDA model, known as a model of social change, attempts to integrate discourse analysis based on linguistics with social and

political thought, which is then linked to social change.⁷

This article utilizes the CDA approach, interpreting discourse as a process that generates ideas, concepts, or effects, in line with Foucault's perspective. According to Eriyanto, this analysis not only studies language but also connects it with context, including power practices.⁸ Language in discourse can serve as a tool for one party to dominate another.⁹ Therefore, this study analyzes the work *Nahj al-Burdah* in three dimensions: text, discourse practice, and social practice. In Fairclough's model, text analysis includes linguistic aspects such as vocabulary, sentences, and semantics, while also considering cohesion and coherence. Social practice involves the process of text production and consumption and how language is influenced by socio-cultural and power contexts.¹⁰ Critical discourse analysis also considers macro aspects such as the background and production of discourse.

In this study, the data source used is *Nahj al-Burdah* by 'Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Aḥmad al-Khaṭīb al-Minangkabawī, which is a collection of poems praising the Prophet (*al-madīḥ al-nabawī*). Works of *al-madīḥ al-nabawī* generally have a distinctive structure in terms of content and form, typically including prayers, seeking forgiveness (*istighfar*), repentance (*taubah*), and intercession (*shafa'ah*).

Based on this background, the focus of this research is formulated to answer the following questions: What Islamic discourse is constructed by Abdul Hamid in the work *Nahj al-Burdah*? and how is the discourse of puritanism examined and revealed through Fairclough's model of critical discourse analysis?

A comprehensive study on *al-madīḥ al-nabawī* with the method of CDA, especially focusing on works of *al-madīḥ al-nabawī* written in the modern era, are highly important. These works are not merely expressions of religious sentiments by poets

⁷ Norman Fairclough, *Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 206.

⁸ Eriyanto, *Analisis Wacana: Pengantar Analisis Teks Media* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2012), 65.

⁹ Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power* (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1989), 60.

¹⁰ Norman Fairclough, *Discourse: Textual Analysis ...*, 206.

but have been transformed with religious and political interests.

***Nahj al-Burdah* by ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd: Structure, Content, and Dissemination**

‘Abd al-Ḥamīd was born in Mecca on 24 Safar 1316 AH (14 July 1898) and passed away in Damascus in 1381 AH (1961).¹¹ His full name was Shaykh al-Ḥamīd ibn Aḥmad al-Khaṭīb al-Minangkabawī. His father, Aḥmad Khaṭīb (1860-1916), was a reformer from West Sumatra who served as the Shāfi‘ī Imam of the Grand Mosque in Mecca. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd studied under his father and other scholars at the Grand Mosque and was later appointed as a teacher there.¹²

‘Abd al-Ḥamīd was a scholar, politician, poet, and preacher with a Salafī orientation, emphasizing the teachings of his early pious predecessors (*salaf al-ṣāliḥ*). His works, both fiction and non-fiction, aim to instill true Islamic faith and love for Allah, urging a return to the Prophet’s sunnah.

His major works include *Asmā al-Risālāt* (The Nobility of the Prophetic Message), published in 1954, which discusses the life and mission of Prophet Muhammad.¹³ Another significant work is *Tafsīr al-Khaṭīb al-Makki*, first printed in Cairo in 1947.¹⁴ He was also involved in literary activities, composing poetry that promoted his religious beliefs, with *Munājātullāh* being a notable example, advocating pure monotheism. *Munājātullāh*, written in 1355/1936 and broadcast on Egyptian Radio, is a *naẓm* focused on pure monotheism and the creed of the *salaf al-ṣāliḥ*. The author encourages people to turn back to Allah, away from worldly distractions. Each verse is accompanied by commentary, including quotes from the Qur’an,

Sunnah, scientific theories, and opinions of the *fuqahā’*.¹⁵

Although he was born and built his career in Saudi Arabia, Abd al-Ḥamīd maintained strong ties with Indonesia, reflecting his father's heritage. He served as a special envoy and Extraordinary Ambassador during the transfer of sovereignty from the Netherlands to Indonesia in December 1959,¹⁶ and gave a speech at the Maulid Nabi celebration at the Merdeka Palace on January 2, 1950.¹⁷

Nahj al-Burdah is one of ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd’s important works containing poetry and reflects the traditional structure and content of the *madḥ al-Nabī* (praise of the Prophet).¹⁸ The poem is structured with a distinctive form that includes prayers, seeking forgiveness (*istighfar*), repentance (*tawbah*), and supplications for intercession (*shafa‘ah*). The content is deeply rooted in Islamic spirituality, emphasizing the virtues of the Prophet Muhammad and encouraging a return to the pious practices of early Islam.

Nahj al-Burdah contains 11 themes, including the poet’s nostalgia (*al-nasīb*), glad tidings for the soul, repentance, submission and supplication, praise of the Prophet Muhammad (*madḥ al-Rasūl al-ḥarīm*), his birth (*mawlid*), his miracles (*mu‘jizat*), the greatness of the Holy Qur’an, the Prophet’s jihad and battles (*jibād al-Rasūl wa-ghaẓawātibi*), the *isrā’* and *mi‘raj*, seeking forgiveness from Allah, and a heartfelt supplication (*al-munājāb*).

The dissemination of *Nahj al-Burdah* has extended beyond its initial creation, influencing Islamic literature and devotional practices in various regions. The poem has been recited and studied in religious gatherings, contributing to its

¹¹ ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Khaṭīb, *Aḥmad al-Khaṭīb: Bā‘ith al-Nahḍah al-Islāmiyah al-Tahririyah fī Indunisiyā, al-Mudarris wa-al-Khaṭīb bi-al-Masjid al-Ḥaram, wa-al-Imām bi-al-Maqām al-Shāfi‘ī* (Saudi Arabia, 1958), p. 23; Deliar Noer, *Gerakan Modern Islam di Indonesia (1900-1942)* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1982), 39.

¹² Hamka, *Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup DR. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera* (Jakarta: Umminda, 1982), 271.

¹³ ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Khaṭīb, *Asmā al-Risālāt* (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1954).

¹⁴ ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Khaṭīb, *Tafsīr al-Khaṭīb al-Makki* (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1947).

¹⁵ ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Khaṭīb, *Munājātullāh* (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1938).

¹⁶ Hamka, *Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup DR. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah ...*, 271-273.

¹⁷ ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Khaṭīb, *al-Imām al-‘Adil: Ṣaḥīb al-Jalālah al-Malik ‘Abd al-Azīz ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Fayṣal Sa‘ūd* (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1951).

¹⁸ ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Khaṭīb, *Nahj al-Burdah* (Makkah, 1937).

widespread reach and enduring impact within the Muslim community.

Nahj al-Burdah was taught by ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd in Mecca, where he served as one of the teachers. He also taught this work to his students from Indonesia. When he visited Indonesia, he brought his *Nahj al-Burdah* to his hometown in West Sumatra and distributed it for free as a gift. Some copies of *Nahj al-Burdah* became part of the collections in several *surau* (Islamic prayer houses) in West Sumatra.

Interpreting Ideological Words

In the *qaṣīdah* of *Nahj al-Burdah* by ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd, various words carry significant ideological weight. These words reflect the values and principles that ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd seeks to uphold, both in religious and socio-political contexts.

‘Abd al-Ḥamīd utilizes ideological words that is advocated and debated as a discourse strategy in his praising the Prophet Muhammad. Through these words, he aims to express his ideology and invites readers to interpret the ideological words used in the *qaṣīdah* text. Among the ideological words he uses are *ghulāt/ghuluww*, *shafā‘at*, *khurāf*, *tawḥīd*, and *shirk*.

1. *Ghulāt* and *Ghuluww*

‘Abd al-Ḥamīd uses the word *ghulāt* and *ghuluww* several times in the *qaṣīdah* of *Nahj al-Burdah*.

دع عنك قول غلات في مدائحه *

وما ادعته النصارى في نبههم¹⁹

“Abandon the words of *ghulāt* (excessiveness and overstepping) in praising him * and what the Christians claim about their Prophet”.

فما غلوك إلا إن وجدت به *

نقصا نكملة من قول متهم²⁰

“Therefore, you do not exaggerate except if you find * any deficiency in what we perfect from the words of the accusers”.

In the first verse, ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd uses the term *ghulāt*, while in the second verse he uses the term *ghuluww*. The term *ghuluww* originates from Arabic, consisting of the basic letters *ghayn*, *lam*, and *waw*, indicating something that exceeds, violates, or surpasses boundaries. It can be said that *ghalā, yughālī fa-huwa mughālīn. Ghalawta bi-al-sabm* means to shoot an arrow beyond the expected or set limit. In Islamic (*shari‘ah*) terminology, *ghuluww* refers to excessive behavior towards a matter or extremism in an issue, surpassing the limits prescribed by Shariah.²¹ Thus, ‘*ghuluww*’ represents an exaggerated understanding of religious teachings that deviates from their original meaning.

According to Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, *ghuluww* is an excessive reverence towards creatures that elevates them to a position only suitable for Allah. Ibn Taymīyah and Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb share a similar definition. In their view, *ghuluww* entails exceeding limits by adding something, whether praise or criticism, to what is rightfully due or similar to it. However, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb adds the criterion that *ghuluww* exceeds what Allah has commanded.²²

Ghuluww can generally be distinguished into two categories; namely, *ghuluww i’tiqādi* (belief) and *ghuluww ‘amalī* (action). *Ghuluww i’tiqādi* pertains to the totality of Islamic law and its fundamental issues. *I’tiqādi* refers to matters of belief. Whereas, *ghuluww ‘amalī* relates to a partial matter or more from various partial matters within Islamic law. ‘*Amalī* refers to actions restricted to the practical aspects, whether through words spoken or actions performed with the body. The ‘*amalī* referred to here is pure actions, not those resulting from damaged beliefs.²³ Therefore, the term *ghuluww* carries an ideological meaning related to the model or type of religious beliefs that lead someone astray from the religion.²⁴ It can be said that *ghuluww* in is intended by ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd, regarding the excessive

¹⁹ ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Khaṭīb, *Nahj al-Burdah*, 7.

²⁰ ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Khaṭīb, *Nahj al-Burdah*, 7.

²¹ Sadiq Meisam, *Ghuluww and the Belief* . . . , 8.

²² ‘Abd al-Raḥman ibn Mu‘allā al-Luwayḥīq, *al-Ghuluww fi al-Dīn fi Ḥayāti al-Muslimīn al-Mu‘aṣirah* (Beirut: Muasasat al-Risālah, 1421), 43.

²³ ‘Abd al-Raḥman ibn Mu‘allā al-Luwayḥīq, *al-Ghuluww fi al-Dīn* . . . , 44.

²⁴ Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, 5 (Beirut: Dār al Iḥyā’ Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1985), 131.

attitude in praising the Prophet Muhammad. This *ghulumw* can be categorized as *ghulumw i'iqādi*.

2. *Shafā'ab*

The word *shafā'ab* is another ideological term used by 'Abd al-Ḥamīd in his *qaṣīdah*.

وأذن لعبدك طه بالشفاعة لي *

يوم الزحام إذا ما عز ذو رحم²⁵

“And allow your servant named Ṭaha to intercede for me * on the tumultuous day, when each relative seeks one another”.

وقال عنه حبيبي ثم قال له *

أنت الشفيع غدا في سائر الأمم²⁶

“And He said about him, ‘My beloved!’ Then He said to him, * ‘You will be an intercessor on behalf of all people on the Day to come’”.

'Abd al-Ḥamīd uses the word *shafā'ab* in the form of the verbal noun (*maṣḍar*) and in the active participle form (*ism fā'il*). This word originates from Arabic, specifically from the verb *sha-fā-'a* conveying the concept of joint participation between two parties. The term *shaf* also implies evenness, contrasting with *witr* which means odd. The act of interceding on behalf of someone to save them from punishment is termed *shafā'ab*, where the position and influence of the intercessor merge with the elements of salvation present in the person being interceded for. Both parties collaborate to rescue the guilty individual.²⁷

In Islamic terminology, *shafā'ab* refers to the presence of a revered figure who acts as an intermediary between Allah and the one for whom intercession is sought, either to ward off punishment or to seek benefit.²⁸ It can be said that 'Abd al-Ḥamīd in his *qaṣīdah* refers to the

Prophet's intercession on the day of resurrection (*yawm al-ba'th*).

3. *Khurāf*

The word *khurāf* is also used by 'Abd al-Ḥamīd in his *qaṣīdah*.

وما شريعته الا السماحة مع *

يسر ونبد خراف سابق وخم²⁹

“And his Sharia is nothing but tolerance accompanied * by ease, and discarding the filthy superstitions that occurred before”.

Khurāf is the plural of the word *khurāfab*. Ibn Manzūr explains the meaning of *khurāfab* by quoting a hadith.

والخرافة الحديث المستملح من الكذب وقالوا: حديث خرافة³⁰

“*Khurāfab* is news that is flavored with falsehood. People say: the news is *Khurāfab*”.

In the view of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, *khurāfab* has been rampant since before the birth of Prophet Muhammad. The Arab society of that time was engulfed in various innovations, superstitions, and irrational beliefs, as if human reason had become useless. Then, the Prophet struggled to eradicate these practices among his followers who had believed, so that they would no longer submit and enslave themselves to other than Allah. The Prophet prohibited fortune-telling or predicting future events based on specific occurrences. This phenomenon also occurs today, where Muslim communities hang talismans and amulets on their bodies, akin to the practices of the pre-Islamic and idolatrous Jahiliyyah era. Furthermore, some Muslims build mosques near or around the tombs of righteous individuals. They visit these graves to seek blessings, slaughter animals, and make vows at these graves, similar to the practices of the Jahiliyyah period. These actions can erode faith and

²⁵ 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Khaṭīb, *Nahj al-Burdab*, 7.

²⁶ 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Khaṭīb, *Nahj al-Burdab*, 7.

²⁷ Ja'far al-Subḥānī, *al-Wahābiyah fi al-Miṣrān* (Qom: Mu'assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 1995), 143.

²⁸ Fā'iz Muḥammad Ḥasan Abū Najā, 'Shafā'at al-Rasūl Ṣallallāh 'Alayhi wa-Sallām wa-Wasā'il al-Ḥuṣūl 'Alayhā', *Majallah Kulliyat al-Dirāsāt al-Islāmiyah wa-al-'Arabiyah li-al-Bann bi-al-Qahirah*, 34.2 (2017), 1802 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21608/bfsa.2017.2681>

3>; Radwan Jamal Elatrash and Luqman al-Hakim, 'Mawqif al-Imām al-Zamakhsharī min Shafā'at al-Nabī Ṣallallāhu 'Alayhi wa-Sallām li-Aṣḥāb al-Kabā'ir: Dirāsah Taḥlīliyah', *Journal of Islam in Asia*, 12.2 (2015), 49 <<https://doi.org/10.31436/jia.v12i2.482>>.

²⁹ 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Khaṭīb, *Nahj al-Burdab*, 6.

³⁰ Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, 9 (Beirut: Dār al Iḥyā' Turāth al-'Arabī, 1985), 65.

monotheism (*tawḥīd*) as they constitute acts of polytheism (*shirk*).³¹

4. *Tawḥīd*

The word *tawḥīd* is another ideological term used by ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd in his *qaṣṣīdab*.

لا فضل الا لتقوى الله بينهموا *

وقد دعاهم إلى توحيد ربهم³²

“There is no virtue except in God-consciousness among them; * He calls them to worship His singular Lord”.

وظل يدعوا إلى التوحيد فانظمت *

من حوله الصحب والأنصار كالرحم³³

“And he continued to call for monotheism, so his companions * and supporters around him were organized, like orderly arranged stones”.

The term *tawḥīd* literally derives from the root word *wahḥada*, *yuwahḥidu*, *tawḥīdān*, which means to unify, affirm the oneness of, or make something one. In the context of Islam, *tawḥīd* represents the belief in the absolute Oneness of God.³⁴ According to ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, it means to worship Allah alone in all aspects of worship. Broadly, it encompasses affirming Allah’s Oneness in what is specific to Him. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb divides *tawḥīd* into three categories: *tawḥīd rubūbiyah*, *tawḥīd ulūbiyah*, and *tawḥīd al-asmā’ wa-al-ṣifāt*. *Tawḥīd rubūbiyah* acknowledges that Allah is the Creator, Provider of sustenance, the One who gives life and death, and who establishes laws.³⁵ The next aspect of tawḥīd asserts the testimony that there is no god but Allah, and that Allah alone is worthy of

worship without associating partners with Him.³⁶ Everything besides Allah is His creation. He is the One who brings benefit and harm to His creatures, and no one can thwart His will.

Tawḥīd ulūbiyah affirms that Allah is the sole deity worthy of worship without associating partners with Him. Lastly, *tawḥīd al-asmā’ wa-al-ṣifāt* asserts that Allah has beautiful names and attributes, as mentioned in the hadith of the Prophet narrated by Imam Bayhaqī, which lists the 99 names (*asmā’ al-ḥusnā*).³⁷ In the context of ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd’s verse above, tawḥīd relates to the call to monotheism (the Oneness of Allah) in preaching, emphasizing the elevation of Allah’s word (Islam). This concept closely aligns with the tawḥīd advocated by ‘Abd al-Wahhāb and his followers.

5. *Shirk*

Terminology of shirk also becomes an ideological vocabulary expressed by ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd.

قضى على كل ذى كبر وغطرسة *

وحارب الشرك والطاغوت مع صنم³⁸

“He passes judgment on everyone who has arrogance and pride, and fights against polytheism, tyranny, and idols”.

In the Qur’an, the term *shirk* is defined as deviation, a major sin, and the greatest injustice.³⁹ According to Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, it is the opposite of *tawḥīd*. *Shirk* is divided into two categories: *shirk akbar* (major *shirk*) and *shirk aṣghar* (minor *shirk*). He asserts that anyone who worships other than Allah considers them as gods. Indirectly, they commit *shirk akbar* against Allah,

³¹ ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Khaṭīb, *Asmā a-Risālat*, 286.

³² ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Khaṭīb, *Nahj al-Burdab*, 9.

³³ ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Khaṭīb, *Nahj al-Burdab*, 10.

³⁴ Unang Setiana, Zouhrotunni’mah, and Yono, ‘Dampak Pemikiran Tauhid Muhammad Bin Abdul Wahhab dan Abul Hasan Al-Asy’ari terhadap Dakwah Kontemporer’, *Komunika: Journal of Communication Science and Islamic Da’wah*, 2.2 (2018), 148 <<https://jurnal-fai-uikabogor.org/index.php/komunika/article/view/42>>.

³⁵ Diran Murtado and Muhammad Roflee Waehama, ‘Islamic Puritanism and Wahhabi Development’, *Focus*, 5.1 (2024), 38 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.26593/focus.v5i1.7658>>.

³⁶ Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, *Kashf al-Shubbāt* (Riyadh: Wizārat al-Shu’ūn al-Islāmiyah wa-al-Awqāf wa-al-Da’wah wa-al-Irshād, 1418 H), 16.

³⁷ Itah Miftahul Ulum, ‘Konsep Tauhid Menurut Abdul Wahhab dan Implikasinya bagi Tujuan Pendidikan Islam’, *Logika: Jurnal Ilmiah Lemlit Unsnagati Cirebon*, 9.3 (2013), 96 <<https://jurnal.ugj.ac.id/index.php/logika/article/view/1074>> [accessed 31 August 2024].

³⁸ ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Khaṭīb, *Nahj al-Burdab*, 9.

³⁹ M. Nasri Hamang, ‘Sirik dan Wasilah dalam Al-Qur’an: Sebuah Kajian Syar’iyyah Berdasarkan Metode Tafsir Maudhu’i’, *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Syir’ah*, 1.1 (2003), 89 <<https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.30984/as.v1i1.189>>

which can lead a Muslim to apostasy from Islam. Examples of major shirk include seeking fulfillment of needs from deceased individuals and making vows to them in the hope that they can intercede with Allah. On the other hand, minor shirk includes actions like showing off (*riyā'*), swearing oaths in the name of entities other than Allah, and saying things like “this is from you and also from Allah”.⁴⁰ In the verse above, ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd appears to elevate the term *shirk* as an act that must be fought against, similar to the acts of *ṭāghūt* and idol worship.

Historical and Social Context

The puritanical discourse in *Nahj al-Burdah* must be understood within its historical and social context. Written during a time when Wahhabism, a puritanical reform movement within Islam, was gaining prominence in Saudi Arabia, ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd’s work reflects the religious and political climate of the period. His close association with the Saudi ruling elite, who were staunch advocates of Wahhabism, influenced his writing and reinforced the puritanical themes within his *qaṣīdah*.

The *qaṣīdah* of *Nahj al-Burdah* written by ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd was not merely born from the poet’s emotional expressions but was also influenced by many social factors. Among these social factors are: first, the religious education instilled in ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd by his father from a young age significantly influenced the writing of his works. As previously mentioned, despite his later inclination towards journalism and politics, this early education played a crucial role. Second, his life in Egypt. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd’s composition of *Nahj al-Burdah* was profoundly influenced by the neo-classical revival poets (*shu‘arā’ al-iḥyā’*), such as Maḥmūd Sāmī al-Bārūdī (1274-1340 H/1840-1904

CE) and Aḥmad Shawqī (1284-1350 H/1868-1932 CE), who wrote works in praise of the Prophet (*madḥ al-Nabi*) and emulated the style of al-Būṣīrī’s *Burdah*, while also incorporating a renewed spirit.⁴¹

The trend of *mu‘aradab* literature against al-Būṣīrī’s work grew significantly, especially in Egypt, with the spirit of revival (*al-iḥyā’*). This movement aimed to revive the euphoria of the past as a reaction to Napoleon’s arrival in Egypt in 1798 CE, which marked the introduction of French culture into the Arab world. This revival maintained strong Arabic poetic principles, such as the use of meter (*waẓn*), rhyme (*qāfiyah*), and style (*uslūb*), as well as a large number of words and the transition from one theme to another within a single *qaṣīdah*.

It can be said that one of the reasons ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd produced his *qaṣīdah* of *Nahj al-Burdah* was due to the spirit of revival promoted by neo-classical poets in Egypt. Historically, poets like al-Bārūdī, Aḥmad Shawqī, and ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd were contemporaries, living during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, although ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd was born later than the two Egyptian poets. His engagement with the spirit of revival was further strengthened by his move from Ḥijāz to Egypt, just before the fall of King Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī’s reign, which was succeeded by his son, ‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn, in Ḥijāz. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd lived in Egypt for 15 years, interacting with scholars from al-Azhar and Egyptian literary figures (*al-udabā’*). This greatly influenced his knowledge and ability to produce *Nahj al-Burdah*. With the spirit of revival, ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd aimed to revive *al-madḥ al-nabawī* poetry but repackage it in a different form suited to his religious and political interests.

⁴⁰ Engku Ibrahim Engku Wok Zin, Abdul Rahman Mahmud, and Syed Hadzrullathfi Bin Syed Omar, ‘Syaiikh Muhammad Bin Abd Al-Wahhab dan Kaitannya dengan Isu Takfir’, *Jurnal Islam dan Masyarakat Kontemporer*, 4 (2011), 61–67
<<https://journal.unisza.edu.my/jimk/index.php/jimk/article/view/24>> [accessed 31 August 2024].

⁴¹ Hamed Rwashdeh, ‘The Intermingling of Alana with the Formation of the Intellectual Structuralism in the

Poetry of Mahmoud Sami Albourdi’, *Dirāsāt: Human and Social Sciences*, 44.2 (2017), 128
<<https://archives.ju.edu.jo/index.php/hum/article/view/8477>> [accessed 31 August 2024]; Abū Ṣāliḥ Muḥammad Ṭaha, ‘Ta’thīr al-Shi‘r al-‘Arabī al-Ḥadīth fī al-Ḥurrīyah’, *Journal of Islam in Asia*, 16.3 (2019), 191–214
<<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31436/jia.v16i3.911>>.

‘Abd al-Ḥamīd also received extraordinary appreciation from the court poets of the Saudi kingdom of his time, such as Aḥmad Ibrāhīm al-Ghazāwī, the poet of King ‘Abd al-Azīz. Al-Ghazāwī mentioned that ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd was an exceptional literary figure who, with his religious zeal, urged people to return to the teachings of the righteous predecessors (*salaf al-ṣāliḥ*) and pure Islamic law (*shari‘ah*). Thus, it can be said that the poets associated with ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd, as mentioned above, had some influence on shaping his *qaṣīdah*.

Thirdly, his life upon returning to Saudi Arabia. In writing the *qaṣīdah* of *Nahj al-Burdah*, ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd was also influenced by what he experienced upon returning to Saudi Arabia, with the religious beliefs that were evolving at that time, closely related to the tradition of political elite patronage.

The works of ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd were published by many publishers in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. In Egypt, one of the prominent publishers of his works was Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, whose printing press was established by Sharīf Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī in 1859 and reached its peak during the 1940s as a leading publisher in the Islamic world. Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī published works of scholars from the Arabian Peninsula and Southeast Asia, including ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd’s father, Aḥmad Khaṭīb al-Minangkabawī. Additionally, Abd ‘al-Ḥamīd’s works were also published by Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, al-Maktabah al-Salafīyah in Cairo, and al-Maktabah al-Ittiḥādīyah.

‘Abd al-Ḥamīd’s works were also featured in Umm al-Qura newspaper, the first Arabic-language newspaper based in Mecca and the official newspaper of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, founded by King Abdul Aziz and first published on December 12, 1924. Other newspapers that published ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd’s works include *Ṣawt al-Hijāz* (The Voice of Hijaz) and al-Madinah al-Munawwarah, which emerged in the 1930s. All of this has, to some extent, influenced his interests in da’wah and demonstrates his commitment to

promoting the teachings of the salaf al-ṣāliḥ, not only in Saudi Arabia but also in other regions.

In terms of discourse practice, ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd developed critical discourse and progressive ideological resistance against the order he deemed inappropriate, such as when describing the Prophet with attributes akin to Allah.

وصفه حقاً بما فيه ولكن حذراً *

من أن تصفه بوصف الله ذي القدم⁴²

“Describe him with his true attributes, but beware not to * describe him with attributes that belong to Allah alone, such as those of Qidam (eternity)

It seems that ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd is very critical in exploring and explaining the attitudes of some Muslim communities regarding praising the prophet Muhammad, including describing the Prophet with attributes that belong uniquely to Allah, such as *qidam* (eternity).

The discourse of progressive ideological resistance against extremism also appears in his *qaṣīdah*.

دع عنك قول غلات في مدائحه *

وما ادعته النصارى في نبيهم⁴³

“Abandon the words of *ghulāt* (excessiveness and overstepping) in praising him * and what the Christians claim about their Prophet”.

The discourse of progressive ideological resistance that ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd brings forth in his textual productions also appears as a form of critique related to the verses of al-Būṣayrī’s *qaṣīdah*. This seems to be connected to the spirit of revival in restoring the authority of Allah in the praise poetry of the Prophet.

It seems that in the above verse, ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd uses grammatical sentence structures that are easily understood by readers, particularly using sentences that contain discourse representation. This provides readers the opportunity to develop their interpretations regarding religious attitudes that should be avoided. The above verse explains ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd’s warning to those who write about

⁴² ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Khaṭīb, *Nahj al-Burdah*, 7.

⁴³ ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Khaṭīb, *Nahj al-Burdah*, 7.

the Prophet Muhammad: do not attribute to him anything other than his true qualities, and do not be excessive in praising the Prophet.⁴⁴

Institutional Influence

Nahj al-Burdah by ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd emerged during a time when the literature of *mu‘araḍah* (a genre of poetry that contests or responds to a preceding work) against the *qaṣīdah* Burdah by al-Būṣhīrī was flourishing in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. During this period, *mu‘araḍah* literature was not merely imitative but was combined with new enthusiasm based on the experiences, knowledge, social environment, conditions, and circumstances felt by the literary figures. *Nahj al-Burdah* was written in 1937 AD, during a time when Saudi Arabia was under the leadership of King ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, with Wahhabism as the state ideology. Specifically, this work was written during the period when ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd was appointed as a member of the consultative council (*majlis al-shūrā*) alongside King ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. He was appointed to the *majlis al-shūrā* in 1355 AH/1936 AD-1366 AH/1947 AD, and his work was written during his tenure in 1356 AH /1937 AD as previously mentioned.

Historically, the *majlis al-shūrā* was first established by King ‘Abd al-‘Azīz on January 13, 1926, and led by his son, Prince Faisal. However, its full institutionalization was completed in 1932. The function of the *majlis al-shūrā* was to strengthen the bureaucratic power of Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia. Its main task was to serve as a means for the rulers of Saudi Arabia to consult with academics, scholars, community leaders, and prominent figures. This certainly reinforced the notion that ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd and his works, including the *qaṣīdah* of *Nahj al-Burdah*, supported the dissemination of matters aligning with the mission and vision of the Saudi kingdom, including combating *ghulumw* (excessiveness) in praising the Prophet. Additionally, the *majlis al-shūrā* was responsible for proposing or amending laws and

providing opinions on various government policies, thereby becoming an institution that reinforced the religious foundation protected by the Saudi kingdom.⁴⁵ As part of the Saudi dynasty, the works of this Nusantara descendant, including the *qaṣīdah* of *Nahj al-Burdah*, were broadcast by radio stations and published in the Ḥijāz newspapers.

From this perspective, it is essential to reveal how institutional organization influences the practice of discourse production. Among the institutional factors that influence the discourse constructed in texts is the political factor. For instance, the state institution can influence the formation of discourse in texts. In this case, it appears that ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd, in writing his *qaṣīdah* of *Nahj al-Burdah*, was significantly influenced by his closeness to King ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, who firmly adhered to the teachings of Allah and His Messenger, despite initially opposing the Saudi King. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd once established a political party in Egypt consisting of people from Ḥijāz, named the Ḥijāz Independence Party, which aimed to oppose the power of the Saudi King, who was reported in radio newspapers as adhering to the Wahhabi doctrine, which was considered by some to deviate from the four madhhabs. However, he later became a supporter of the king.

‘Abd al-Ḥamīd’s closeness to the ruling elite is undeniable as most of his works were dedicated to the Saudi elite, including King ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. For example, his works *Asmā al-Risālāt* and *Munājātullāh* were written in 1355 AH/1936 AD. These works were written after meeting and affiliating with King ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. He also dedicated *Munājātullāh* to King ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, referring to him as the guardian of the religion of *sayyid al-mursalin*, an Islamic figure who disseminated the principles of *sharī‘ah*, restored glory, revived the Sunnah, and served as the custodian of the Sacred House (*khadīm bayt al-amin*). Additionally, ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd received appreciation from Saudi scholars, such as Sheikh

⁴⁴ ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Khaṭīb, *Asmā al-Risālāt*, 5.

⁴⁵ Nur Khalik Ridwan, *Sejarah Lengkap Wahhabi: Perjalanan Panjang Sejarah, Doktrin Amaliah dan Pergulatannya* (Yogyakarta: IRCiSoD, 2020), 502.

Ibrāhīm Dāwud Fatānī, a prominent scholar of Ḥijāz, who acknowledged ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd as a successful figure in the fields of knowledge and politics. His political success was evident in building relations between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, while his academic success was reflected in the numerous works he produced and presented in a beautiful and attractive language. Sheikh ‘Umar ibn Ḥasan Alu Sheikh, the head of Jamā‘ah Amr Ma‘rūf Nahī Munkar (promotion of virtue and the prevention of vice) in Riyadh, stated that in his work, Alu Sheikh explained the beliefs of *al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ* and invited readers to return to the pure sources of *sharī‘ah Muḥammadiyah*.

In his *Nahj al-Burdah*, ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd writes about the history of the Prophet’s call to *tawḥīd*, seemingly with the aim of projecting it onto the *da‘wah* being conducted at the time by King ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, an Islamic figure who steadfastly adhered to the principles of *sharī‘ah* based on the Qur’an and Sunnah. This is reinforced by the term companions, which could also refer to King Sa‘ūd. Additionally, ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd mentions the special status of the Quraysh tribe, who took care of the Ka‘bah, projecting this role onto King ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, who was then serving as the *khadīm bayt al-‘amīn*. All of this is integrated into the verses of *Nahj al-Burdah* as follows:

تمسكوا بكتاب الله واتبعوا *

محمدًا فغدوا في موضع السنم⁴⁶

“They adhered to the Book of Allah and followed Muhammad. Thus, they were in a position of great honor”.

‘Abd al-Ḥamīd, as the poet of the *qaṣīdah* of *Nahj al-Burdah*, a scholar, and a member of the *majlis al-shūrā* as well as a diplomat, likely had social power interests in strengthening the religious foundation that serves as the ideology of his country, Saudi Arabia. The relationship between language and power in the work *Nahj al-Burdah* suggests that literary works are considered a

medium to achieve specific objectives for its readers.

Puritanical Elements in *Nahj al-Burdah*

Nahj al-Burdah by ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd is analyzed using the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach based on Norman Fairclough’s model. This approach examines three dimensions: First, the text or linguistic dimension, also known as microstructure analysis, where the text of the *Nahj al-Burdah qaṣīdah* is carefully analyzed to obtain data that represent the text. Second, the discourse practice dimension, which examines the aspects of text production and consumption. In the first part, the focus is on the process of text creation, emphasizing the poet’s experiences, knowledge, social environment, and the conditions and circumstances they experienced. Regarding text consumption, the emphasis is on the reader—how the author ensures that the text is received by the reader. Third, the socio-cultural practice dimension, which is used to examine the social context outside the *Nahj al-Burdah* text that influences the discourse within it. In other words, the social context or sociocultural practice outside the text is a factor that influences the emergence of discourse within the text, showing that the author is greatly influenced by external factors.

In the text of *Nahj al-Burdah* by ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd, there appears to be a social struggle that influences the discourse, with the text and social structure being mediated by the social context of the discourse. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd constructs a discourse of purification in the praising of the Prophet Muhammad (*madḥ al-Nabī*), which seems to indicate that the discourse built in this *qaṣīdah* is linked to the agenda of Sufistic purification promoted by the religious movement prevalent in the region where *Nahj al-Burdah* originated.

During the reign of King ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, there was an agreement among scholars who called and invited people to the true teachings of Wahhabism. They agreed with Ibn Sa‘ūd on realizing the truth and eradicating falsehood. There were several

⁴⁶ ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Khaṭīb, *Nahj al-Burdah*, 10.

fundamental and secondary issues that the scholars from various circles in Saudi Arabia at that time, including representatives of different madhabs, agreed upon concerning the agenda promoted by the religious movement in the region where Nahj al-Burdah was born. These issues can be summarized as follows: (1) The creed of *al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ* is the safest creed that must be followed; (2) there are five pillars of Islam, which include the shahādah, and whoever denies any of these pillars is a disbeliever, and must repent, otherwise, they should be executed; (3) requesting prayers from anyone other than Allah to bring benefits or ward off harm, and worshipping anyone other than Allah even with the intention of drawing closer to Allah (al-taqarrub), is considered disbelief (*kufr*); (4) building graves and praying on them is a forbidden innovation according to *shari'ah*; (5) asking Allah through the prestige of any of His creations is considered a complex innovation and is prohibited.

Thus, it is evident that the discourse of purification in the texts by scholar ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd regarding the prohibition of excessiveness (*ghuluw*) in the praising of the Prophet Muhammad and the prohibition of other religious social behaviors, such as the use of titles or laqab like sayyid, is an inseparable part of the agendas agreed upon and the *da'wah* agendas of scholars in the region where *Nahj al-Burdah* originated and the Saudi government at that time. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd’s critical stance against *ghuluw fi al-Nabī* is also a discourse among Wahhabi scholars. According to ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (1115-1206 H/1701-1793 AD), there is *shirk* and *ghuluw fi al-dīn* in al-Būṣīrī’s *Burdah*. Therefore, it is obligatory to reject that *qaṣīdah* and explain that anyone who believes in it outwardly can become a polytheist and disbeliever. Furthermore, according to Al-Shawkānī (1173 H-

1250 H), the *qaṣīdah* contradicts the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad.

Wahhābī scholars argue that over-venerating the Prophet has resulted in the divinization of Muhammad and a breach of monotheistic beliefs.⁴⁷ The attitudes of Wahhabi scholars towards excessiveness *ghuluw* are integrated by ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd into the verses of his *qaṣīdah*, *Nahj al-Burdah*. He states that Allah commands the love for His Messenger and makes this love a sign of faith. This is as mentioned in *Surah al-Tambah*, verse 24:

“Say: if your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, the wealth you have acquired, the commerce you fear may decline, and the dwellings you love are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving in His cause, then wait until Allah brings about His decision. And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people.”⁴⁸

However, ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd emphasizes that the love for the Messenger of Allah has its limits. The Prophet Muhammad himself set these limits with his saying:

“Do not exaggerate in praising me as the Christians exaggerated in praising Jesus, the son of Mary. I am only a servant, so say ‘Abdullah wa Rasūluhu (the servant of Allah and His Messenger).”⁴⁹

The words of the Prophet Muhammad illustrate his perfect knowledge and recognition of humility before Allah, the Almighty, Creator of all worlds. However, some of his companions, in their love for him, sometimes directed their hopes towards the Prophet for things that should be directed to Allah. For example, asking the Prophet to remove dangers or difficulties to fulfill their needs or remembering the Prophet before remembering Allah. Such actions are forbidden in Islam. Despite the Prophet Muhammad being honorable and noble, he remains a human being

⁴⁷ Besnik Sinani, ‘Devotional Extremism (Ghuluw)? Muḥammad ‘Alawī Al-Mālikī and the Debate over the Veneration (*Ta’zīm*) and the Characteristics (*Khaṣā’iṣ*) of the Prophet Muḥammad in Saudi Arabia’, in *The Presence of the Prophet in Early Modern and Contemporary Islam*, ed. by Denis

Gril, Stefan Reichmuth, and Dilek Sarmis (Leiden: Brill, 2023), pp. 489–52.

⁴⁸ Qur’an 9:24.

⁴⁹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 3455.

and must not be worshipped or revered in the same manner as Allah.

Another hadith from the Prophet Muhammad that prohibits the act of *ghulumw* states: 'Beware of *ghulumw* (excessiveness) in religion, for it has destroyed those who were before you'. In this hadith, the Prophet uses a general expression that encompasses all prohibitions against *ghulumw* in all aspects of religion, whether in creed or practice. He also explains that what destroyed previous nations was their *ghulumw* in religion. Among them, the habit of the people of Prophet Noah was due to their excessive veneration of righteous people. The destruction of the Jews was due to their *ghulumw* towards Uzair and the golden calf, which they considered a deity. Additionally, they belittled and killed the Prophets and altered the holy scriptures. Similarly, the destruction of the Christians was due to their *ghulumw* towards Prophet Isa (Jesus). They created laws and acts of worship that were never sanctioned by Allah. Another hadith also speaks about *ghulumw*: 'From Ibn Mas'ud: The Prophet said: Destroyed are the extremists, he repeated it three times.'

In his *qaṣīdah*, 'Abd al-Ḥamīd not only prohibits *ghulumw*, which is excessive praise of the Prophet, but also urges people to reject what Christians claim about their Prophet. *Ghulumw* in Christianity is related to their statement that Jesus is the son of God. They elevate Jesus to a divine status, raising his prophetic position to that of a deity besides Allah.⁵⁰

On the other hand, regarding intercession (*shafā'ah*), scholars agree that certain individuals, especially the Prophet, will be granted the ability to intercede on the Day of Judgment. The debate among Wahhabi scholars about *shafā'ah* primarily concerns the manner of requesting it. According to them, *shafā'ah* should be requested from Allah, not from the one who provides the intercession. Therefore, it is essential to ask it from the One who

possesses and grants permission for it by praying, 'O Allah, grant us the intercession of our Prophet on the Day of Judgment' or 'Allahumma, O Allah, grant us intercession through Your righteous servants'.⁵¹

'Abd al-Ḥamīd, in his *qaṣīdah*, clearly shares the same view as Wahhabi scholars, particularly regarding the way to request *shafā'ah*, which should be asked from Allah and the intercession given only to those whom He has permitted. This is evident in the verses of his *qaṣīdah* about intercession. The use of the word '*wa'dhan*' is a direct plea to Allah for intercession, but through the Prophet as His servant.⁵² From this, it can be understood that 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, in his *qaṣīdah Nahj al-Burdah*, strives to return the authority of Allah in matters of intercession by requesting it solely from Allah, who owns and grants permission, rather than directly from the Prophet, as criticized by Wahhabi scholars regarding al-Būṣīrī's *Burdah*, which they believe shifts God's authority as the creator by placing the Prophet in a divine position.

Conclusion

Nahj al-Burdah contains a discourse on puritanism in the praise of the Prophet (*madhī al-Nabi*), which is greatly influenced by Wahhabi ideology. This influence can be demonstrated through Fairclough's critical discourse analysis from three dimensions. First, in the textual dimension, the *qaṣīdah* uses ideological vocabulary that is advocated and debated, such as *ghulāt/ghulumw*, *shafā'ah*, *khurāf*, *tawhīd*, and *shirk*. Second, in the discourse practice dimension, the text of *Nahj al-Burdah* is influenced by the religious education taught by his father, life in Egypt which was influenced by the neo-classical school, as well as his life in Saudi Arabia which is closely tied to the patronage tradition of the Saudi political elite. Third, in the socio-cultural practice dimension, the social context outside the text influences the

⁵⁰ 'Abd al-Raḥman ibn Mu'allā al-Luwayḥīq, *al-Ghulumw Fi Al-Din*, 35.

⁵¹ Ja'far Subhan, *Tentang Dibenarkannya Syafa'at Dalam Islam Menurut Al-Qur'an dan Sunnah* (Jakarta: Pustaka Hidayah, 1992), 21.

⁵² 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Khaṭīb, *Nahj al-Burdah*, 7.

discourse that appears in the text, particularly in the situation where Saudi Arabia was under the leadership of King ‘Abd al-‘Aziz with Wahhabism as the state ideology.

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