Muasarah: Jurnal Kajian Islam Kontemporer

E-ISSN 2828-7746, Vol. 7 No. 1 2025 pp: 43-49 DOI: https://doi.org/10.18592/msr.v7i1.16034

Rûh in the Qur'an: an Analysis of Al-Naisâbûrî's Exegesis

Siti Salbiyah UIN Antasari Banjarmasin, Banjarmasin, Indonesia e-mail: sitisalbiyah@gmail.com Wardani

UIN Antasari Banjarmasin, Banjarmasin, Indonesia e-mail: wardani@uin-antasari.ac.id

Hanafi

UIN Antasari Banjarmasin, Banjarmasin, Indonesia e-mail: Hanafirayyan92@uin-antasari.ac.id

Abstract: The concept of rûh has been a subject of profound intellectual inquiry within the domain of Islamic thought, particularly within the discipline of Qur'anic exegesis. While the Qur'an itself acknowledges the limited knowledge granted to humanity regarding rûh (Q.S. al-Isra'/17:85), various interpretations have emerged to explore its possible meanings. This study provides a focused analysis of rûh through the lens of al-Naisâbûrî's tafsir Gharâ'ib al-Qur'ân wa Raghâ'ib al-Furqân. Employing a qualitative, descriptive-analytical approach rooted in library research, the study reveals that al-Naisâbûrî provides a multidimensional interpretation of rûh, including meanings such as the soul, divine revelation, the angel Gabriel, and the Qur'an. His exegetical approach combines the tahlîlî method with isyârî tendencies, reflecting an effort to balance the exoteric and esoteric dimensions of meaning. This research makes a significant contribution to the field of Qur'anic studies by underscoring al-Naisâbûrî's distinctive integration of rational, mystical, and linguistic approaches in interpreting rûh, thereby offering novel insights into the interpretive diversity inherent within classical Islamic scholarship.

Keyword :. Rû<u>h</u>; Qur'anic Exegesis; Al-Naisâbûrî; Isyârî Interpretation; Tafsir Studies

Introduction

The concept of $ri\underline{h}$ has long been a fundamental subject of inquiry within Islamic thought, particularly in theological, philosophical, and exegetical disciplines. It is often discussed as the source of life(Hakamah, 2015: 244) or as a metaphysical and spiritual reality(Afandi & Shodiq, 2017: 184). Its relevance extends across various fields of knowledge, including philosophy and religious studies(Al Fikri Ys, 2021: 1). Despite its prominence, the precise nature of $ri\underline{h}$ remains enigmatic. Al-Baijuri notes that the study of $ri\underline{h}$ is inherently limited, in line with Q.S. al-Isra'/17:85, which affirms that Allah alone possesses knowledge of $ri\underline{h}$ (al-Baijuri, 2007: 136; Purnomo & Azhar, 2022: 48).

Nevertheless, throughout Islamic intellectual history, scholars have attempted to elucidate the concept. For example, al-Tirmidzi described rih as an immaterial malakut element in the human body(Ibn Bisyr at-Tirmidzi, 2008: 905), and Ibn 'Ajibah viewed it as a subtle essence associated with nafs, qalb, and sir(Ibn 'Ajibah al-Hasani, 2000: 112). In his interpretation of the Qur'an, Imam al-Shukani identified 108 different scholarly views on the rih, spanning 20 verses(al-Syaukani, 2006: 840; Bâqî, 1346 H: 326). Contemporary scholars, such as Quraish Shihab, classify its meanings in the Qur'an into three primary interpretations: the life-giving soul, the angel Gabriel, and divine revelation(Shihab, 2011: 198, 425, 497).

Seeing the diversity of meanings, the author is interested in analysing al-Naisâbûrî's views



in the interpretation of *Gharâ`ib Al-Qur'an wa Raghâ`ib Al-Furqân*. The selection of this interpretation is based on its *isyârî* style (al-Dzahabî, 1997: 233) as well as al-Naisâbûrî's cleverness in pairing exoteric with esoteric interpretations. This study aims to analyse al-Naisâbûrî's interpretation of rûh and examine the methods he used in the interpretation.

Various previous studies have discussed the concept of nh from various perspectives, but no one has studied rûh in al-Naisâbûrî's interpretation. For example, Ghina Ainul Hanifah's research focuses on the discussion of nh with semantic studies, "Rh dalam Al-Qur'an (Kajian Semantik Toshihiku Izutsu)". It was found that the word rûh has a periodisation of meaning in its development, both after and before Islam descended. The research "Rh dalam Al-Qur'an (Telah Penafsiran Syekh 'Abdul Qâdir al-Jîlânî dalam Tafsir al- Jîlânî) by Muhammad Imam Maedi which examines nh in al-Jîlânî's tafsir. This research uses the Sufi interpretation point of view which finds the meaning of rûh is the substance of God's light and the representation of the attributes of God and His names in the world.

In addition to research on the meaning of $r\hat{n}\underline{h}$, there are other studies that discuss the book of tafsir al-Naisâbûrî. The research entitled "'Atsar al-Siyâq fî al-Tarjîh 'inda al-Naisâbûrî fî Tafsîrihi Gharâ'ib Al-Qur'an wa Raghâ'ib al-Furqân Dirâsah Istiqrâ'iyyah Tahlîlyyah'' was written by Ranâ Mûsa and 'Aly 'As'ad which aims to see how the context affects al-Naisâbûrî's interpretation, although the interpretation tends to be isyârî. Ahmad Taher's research, UIN Sunan Kalijaga just saw the interpretation from a different perspective, namely the concept of isyârî interpretation of al-Naisâbûrî entitled "Tafsir Sūfī Isyārī Al-Naisābūrī (Studi atas Kitab Garaīb Al-Qur'ān wa Ragāib al-Furqān)".

Method

This research is a library-based investigation, employing written sources that are pertinent to the subject matter. The approach employed is qualitative, utilizing descriptive-analytical methods(Rahmadi, 2011: 59), thereby enabling a comprehensive description of the object of study(Baidan & Aziz, 2019: 103-112). The primary data set consists of verses from the Qur'an that feature rûh, along with their interpretations found in Gharâib Al- Qur'an wa Raghâib Al-Furqân. The selection of verses is based on al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li Alfâzh al- Qur'ân to ensure comprehensive coverage. Secondary data are obtained from books, journals, and other relevant scientific works. The analysis employs a content analysis approach, which involves the identification of themes and their subsequent interpretation in the context of the text.

Discussion

Definition of Rûh

In addition, in the al-Munawir dictionary the word ($r\hat{u}\underline{h}$) means soul, revelation, Allah's law and commands, angels, the angel Gabriel, essence, evil and friendly spirits. Munawir also mentions about al-rûhy wa al-ruhâny which is spiritual or spiritual (Al-Munawwir, 1997: 545). In the Mausû'ah al-Wujûh wa al-Nazhâir fî al-Qur'an al-Karîm, it is mentioned that the meaning of $r\hat{u}\underline{h}$ in the Qur'an

has 9 forms, namely animal *rû<u>h</u>*, Jibril, angelic leader, revelation, Grace, command, gust of wind, life and Isa (al-Baridî & al-Dhâli', 2014: 579).

Biography and Book Profile of Al-Naisâbûrî

Biography of Al-Naisâbûrî

The full name of al-Naisâbûrî is Nizhâm al-Dîn Ibn al-Hasan bin Muhammad bin al-Husain al-Khurâsânî al-Naisâbûrî or Nizhâm al-'A'raj. The relatives and family of al-Naisâbûrî came from Qum (al-Qummi) and grew up in Naisabur (al-Dzahabî, 1997: 228).

Regarding the death of al-Naisâbûrî is disputed by scholars, al-Dzahabî said he did not find an explanation of his death, but he quoted from *Raudhât al-Jannât*, 'Al-Naisâbûrî was contemporary with Maula Jalâl al-Dîn al-Diwânî, Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalânî and many of the general scholars (al-Dzahabî, 1997: 229). Tanggal penyelesaian tafsirnya disebutkan tahun 850 Hijriah. The date of completion of his tafsir is mentioned in 850 Hijri. Muhammad 'Alî Iyâzî argues after 728 AH or 1328 AD (Iyâzî, 1386: 895).

'Alî Iyâzî argues that al-Naisâbûrî is master of the majority of scientific fields (Iyâzî, 1386: 896). He was a philosopher, a master of 'ulûm al-'Aqliyyah, a master of the Arabic language, had precision and consistency in the science of composition, had an understanding of ta`wîl and tafsir, and was a leader among the hafidzh and muqri`in. He was taqwa, wara, zuhud, and knowledgeable in Sufism (al-Dzahabî, 1997: 228-229). Al-Naisâbûrî is a Sufi who devotes his Sufism in tafsir (al-Dzahabî, 1997: 233).

Al-Naisâbûrî has several written works, including: Gharâ`ib Al-Qur'an wa Raghâ`ib al-Furqân, Awqâf Al-Qur'an, Lub al-Ta`wîl (This work is similar to Ta'wîlât al-Maulâ 'Abd al-Razzâq al-Kâshânî), Syarh al-Syâfîah fî al-Sharf better known as Syarh al-Nidzhâm, Tawdhîh al-Tadzkirah syarah of Tadkirah al-Khawâjah Nashîr al-Dîn al-Thûsî, and others (Iyâzî, 1386: 897).

Profile of the Book of Tafsir

In general, 'Alî Iyâzî in al-Mufasirûn Hayâtihim wa Manhajihim says Gharâ`ib Al-Qur'an wa Raghâ`ib Al-Furqân is an interpretation of al-Naisâbûrî's study of Fakhr al-Dîn al-Râzî's tafsir and al-Kasyâf's tafsir. However, he includes his personal interpretation as well as corrections or previous opinions. This tafseer contains the hadiths of the Prophet, the conclusions of the Shari'ah, the Shawâhid 'Arabiyyah, the wise sayings and proverbs of the trusted linguists, the opinions and arguments of the aqliyyah and naqliyyah sunnah experts. However, the opinions of other schools of thought, such as the Shi'ah, Mu'tazilah and Karamitah are included in the tafsir, and Sufi philosophical knowledge (Iyâzî, 1386: 897-898).

This tafsir refers to the two previous major tafsir books, is criticised, and includes its own interpretation supported by the Prophet's hadith and others. This is in accordance with the opinion of al-Dzahabî who said, al-Naisâbûrî summarised the interpretation of al-Kabîr, collecting it with part of the interpretation of al-Kasyâf and other interpretations. This interpretation contains the understanding of al-Naisâbûrî that Allah has opened to understand his book, as well as from the interpretation of the salaf, namely the companions and tabi'in (al-Dzahabî, 1997: 229).

Systematisation

The writing of this tafsir begins with a muqaddimah from the author of eleven kinds. Al-Naisâbûrî in his interpretation has the following systematics; explaining Makki and Madani, many verses, sentences and letters in it (Al-Naisâbûrî, 1996: 128), mentioning the verse being

interpreted, explaining the *qira'at*, explaining the place of halt, mentioning the ruling of the verse, mentioning tafsir and *ashâh al-nuzûl*, explaining *mufradat*, giving an explanation of meaning and meaning, and presenting the interpretation and meaning of the verse.

Method, Approach and Tendency of Al-Naisâbûrî's Interpretation

The method used by al-Naisâbûrî is the tahlîlî method. This method is an interpretation of the Qur'anic verse from beginning to end on every word and aspect. Mufasir explains the meaning of the argument and aspects of language, the meaning of the sentence and its structure, asbâb alnuzûl, the opinion of previous generations in interpreting the verse and several other things (Thanthâwî, 1442H: 28). The approach used in this tafsir itself is *bi al-Ra'y* or *bi al-Ma'qûl*(Al-Zarqanî, n.d.: 57). As for the tendency is *isyârî*, this tendency is motivated by the competence of the mufasir in takwil and the verse that is interpreted. Al-Dzahabî and al-Zarqâni are some of the *'ulûm Al-Qur'ân* experts who state this. In addition, there are many memorises and terms related to isyârî. Based on the above explanation, it is concluded that the method used by al-Naisâbûrî is the *tahlîlî* method, *bi al-Ra'y* or *bi al-Ma'qûl* approach with *isyârî*, *ilmî*, and *falsafî* tendencies.

Thematic Synthesis and Critical Analysis of the Meaning of Rûh in Tafsir al-Naisaburi

A study of twenty verses containing the word rûh reveals that al-Naisâbûrî's interpretation encompasses a variety of meanings, which can be organized into three main thematic categories. This thematic arrangement aims to provide a comprehensive picture of al-Naisâbûrî's interpretive tendencies as well as facilitate critical analysis of his methodology.

Metaphysical Dimension: Rûh as an Immaterial Entity

One tendency in al-Naisâbûrî's interpretations is to understand rûh as an immaterial substance and as something abstract, not part of the material element. This concept is explicitly stated in his interpretation of Q.S. al-Isrâ'/17:85, which asserts that the nature of the rûh is ghaib, or unreachable by humans(Al-Naisâbûrî, 1996: 381). The concept of amr (command) as the basis for the creation of rûh further emphasizes its position as a metaphysical entity. A similar understanding is expressed in the interpretation of Qur'an al-Hijr/15: 29 and Shad/38:72 which explains Adam's creation from soil to which rûh, the element of life, is then added(Al-Naisâbûrî, 1996: 220).

This metaphysical interpretation is indicative of al-Naisâbûrî's philosophical inclinations, a perspective that is corroborated by al-Dzahabî, who characterized al-Naisâbûrî as a mufassir who engaged in philosophical and kalam studies(al-Dzahabî, 1997: 228-229). This philosophical tendency also demonstrates the continuity between Qur'anic interpretation and Islamic rational thought that developed during that period.

The Prophetic Dimension: In the scriptural tradition, $R\hat{n}\underline{h}$ is depicted as Archangel Gabriel and Mediator of Revelation

The term rih is also identified as Archangel Gabriel in a number of verses, such as Q.S. al-Baqarah/2:87 and 253 (Al-Naisâbûrî, 1996: 3), Q.S. an-Nahl/16:2 (Al-Naisâbûrî, 1996: 241-242), and Q.S. Maryam/19:17 (Al-Naisâbûrî, 1996: 477). In this interpretation, Jibril serves as the intermediary between God and the prophets, facilitating the transmission of divine revelations. This interpretation aligns with the prevailing Sunni interpretations as elucidated in the works of al-Tabari (Al-Thabari, 2010: 282) and al- Qurthubi (Al-Qurthubi, 2006: 331).

However, al-Naisâbûrî's understanding of $r\hat{u}\underline{h}$ does not restrict its meaning to Jibril. In Q.S. al-Qadr/97:4, he presents a range of opinions suggesting that $r\hat{u}\underline{h}$ can denote angels, supernatural beings, grace, and even the Qur'ân (Al-Naisâbûrî, 1996: 359). Al-Naisâbûrî employs the term qîla (said) to denote this diversity of opinions, which characterizes his isyârî approach (al-Dzahabî, 1997: 233). The propensity for plurality of meanings exhibited by al-Naisâbûrî is intrinsically linked to the doctrine of isyârî interpretation in Sufism, which perceives Qur'anic verses as comprising multiple layers of meaning (bâthin). This approach diverges from the prevailing tendency of literal interpretation, a tendency that is more commonly observed in the works of al-Thabari or al-Qurthubi.

Epistemological Dimension: The concept of $R\hat{n}\underline{h}$ as Revelation and Source of Knowledge is a subject of significant interest in the study of Islamic thought

The concept of rûh is understood to encompass a variety of interpretations. In addition to its metaphysical nature, which is often associated with the angel Gabriel, it is also interpreted as a revelation or the Qur'ân itself. According to Q.S. al-Syûrâ/42:52 (Al-Naisâbûrî, 1996: 82-83) and Q.S. Ghâfir/40:15 (Al-Naisâbûrî, 1996: 27), *rûh* is understood as an element of spiritual and intellectual enlightenment. Al-Naisâbûrî posits that the rûh in question functions as the medium through which inner life is expressed, akin to the role of the rûh in the human body as the origin of its biological life.

This approach demonstrates that for al-Naisâbûrî, revelation is not merely an instrument of Divine communication to humans; it is also a means of inner transformation. This approach aligns with the doctrine of isyârî interpretation, which endeavors to amalgamate the external and internal dimensions of meaning, as elucidated by Thanthâwî (Thanthâwî,1442H: 35).

Social-Psychological Dimension: The concept of $R\hat{n}\underline{h}$ is characterized by its association with the notions of victory and mercy

In addition to the three primary categories delineated above, there are other meanings that are more contextual. For instance, $r\hat{u}\underline{h}$ can signify victory over the enemy (Q.S. al-Mujâdalah/58:22; Al-Naisâbûrî, 1996: 278) and as God's mercy (Q.S. Yûsuf/12:87; Al-Naisâbûrî, 1996:102). This interpretation serves to expand the scope of the concept of $r\hat{u}\underline{h}$, thereby demonstrating that al-Naisâbûrî's interpretation is not exclusively spiritually oriented but also pertinent to the practical life aspects of Muslims.

A Critical Analysis of Al-Naisâbûrî's Isyârî Methodology

Al-Naisâbûrî's propensity for isyârî interpretation is indicative of his Sufistic and philosophical background (al-Dzahabî, 1997: 233; Iyâzî, 1386: 896). Contrary to the prevalent approach in mainstream Sunni commentaries, which prioritize the literal interpretation of religious texts, al-Naisâbûrî's methodology aims to establish a meaningful connection between the spiritual and physical dimensions of existence. The author's approach of employing the term qîla to convey multiple meanings does not stem from any sense of uncertainty, but rather serves to recognize the extensive nature of the implications inherent in Divine revelation, which, as stated in Q.S. al-Isrâ'/17: 85 (Al-Naisâbûrî, 1996: 381), cannot be fully grasped by human rationality. This interpretation model positions al-Naisâbûrî as a mufasir who engages in dialogue with various Islamic intellectual traditions, while upholding the authority of classical interpretation methods grounded in naqli and linguistic arguments.

The Islamic Tradition of Interpretation and Its Implications

Al-Naisâbûrî's interpretive method exhibits a synthesis of the Sunni tradition with Sufistic and philosophical elements. His most significant contribution lies in his ability to combine the tahlîlî (analytical) approach with isyârî nuances that penetrate the literal boundaries of the text. By positioning the *rîl* as a symbol of human limitations in understanding Divine truth, al-Naisâbûrî emphasizes the position of tafsir not only as an explanatory science, but also as a path to deep spiritual experience.

Conclusion

This research demonstrates that the interpretation of $r\hat{n}\underline{h}$ in $Ghar\hat{a}'ib$ al-Qur'an wa Raghâ'ib al-Furqân by al-Naisâbûrî encompasses three primary themes: as an immaterial entity, as the angel Gabriel, and as revelation. The isyârî approach utilizes the $r\hat{n}\underline{h}$ not only as a metaphysical concept, but also as a symbol of spiritual and intellectual life. The primary contribution of this research is twofold: first, it strengthens the perspective of Sufistic interpretation in understanding $r\hat{n}\underline{h}$; and second, it opens up opportunities for further research to examine inter-mufasir isyârî comparisons and their relevance to the development of contemporary Islamic thought.

References

- Afandi, Z., & Shodiq, J. (2017). RELASI JINN DAN AL-INS DALAM AL-QUR'AN: Kajian Semantik Toshihiko Izutsu. *International Journal Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, 19(2). https://doi.org/10.21580/ihya.19.2.2159
- al-Azharî, M. bin A. (1967). Tahdzîb al-Lugah li Azharî. Dâr al-Mishriyyah li Ta'lîf wa al-Tarjamah.
- al-Baijuri, I. I. M. I. A. (2007). *Tuhfatu al-Murîd 'ala Jawharah at-Tauhîd: Vol. Jilid 2*. Lajnah Akidah dan Fîlsafat Al-Azhar.
- al-Baridî, A. bin M., & al-Dhâli', F. I. (2014). *Mausû'ah al-Wujûh wa al-Nazhâir fî al-Qur'an al-Karîm* (Vol. 1). Dâr al-Tadmuriyyah.
- al-Dzahabî, M. H. (1997). Al-Tafsîr wa al-Mufasirûn (Vol. 1). Maktabah Wahbah.
- Al Fikri Ys, I. (2021). Analisis Komparasi Tafsir Al-Muyassar dan Tafsir Al-Jîlânî Terhadap Konsep Rûh Dalam Al-Qur'an. *Al Furqan: Jurnal Ilmu Al Quran dan Tafsir*, 4(2), 273–286. https://doi.org/10.58518/alfurqon.v4i2.758
- al-Syaukani, M. I. A. I. M. (2006). Fath al-Qadîr: Al-Jâmi' Bayna fanî al-Riwâyah wa al-Dirâyah min Ilmi al-Tafsîr (Vol. 1). Dâr al-Ma'rifah.
- al-Zabîdî, M. M. I. M. H. (1999). Tâj al-'Arûs min Jawâhir al-Qâmûs (Vol. 2). Dâr al-Kitâb al-Ilmiah.
- Al-Munawwir, A. W. (1997). Kamus Arab Indonesia al-Munawwir. Pustaka Progresif.
- Al-Naisâbûrî, N. A.-D. A.-H. B. M. B. H. A.-Q. (1996a). Gharâ`ib Al-Qur'an Wa Raghâ`ib Al-Furqân (Vol. 1). Dâr Al-Kutub Al-'Ilmiah.
- Al-Naisâbûrî, N. A.-D. A.-H. B. M. B. H. A.-Q. (1996b). *Gharâ`ib Al-Qur'an Wa Raghâ`ib Al-Furqân* (Vol. 4). Dâr Al-Kutub Al-'Ilmiah.
- Al-Naisâbûrî, N. A.-D. A.-H. B. M. B. H. A.-Q. (1996c). Gharâ`ib Al-Qur'an Wa Raghâ`ib Al-Furqân (Vol. 6). Dâr Al-Kutub Al-'Ilmiah.
- Al-Qurthubi. (2006). Al-Jâmi` li Ahkâm Al-Qur'ân (Vol. 9). al-Risâlah.
- Al-Thabari. (2010). Jâmi' al-Bayân Ta'wîl al-Qur'an (Vol. 5). Dâr al-Hadîst.
- Al-Zarqanî, M. 'Abdul 'Adzim. (n.d.). *Manâhil Al-Irfân Fî Ulûm Al-Qur'an* (Vol. 2). Dâr Al-Kitâb Al-'Arabî.

Baidan, N., & Aziz, E. (2019). Metodologi Khusus Peneltian Tafsir. Pustaka Pelajar.

Bâqî, M. F. A. (1346). Al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras lî Alfâdz Al-Qur'an. Dâr al-Kutub al-Misriyyah.

Hakamah, Z. (2015). Ruh dalam Perspektif al-Qur'an dan Sains Moderen. UNIVERSUM, 9(2). https://doi.org/10.30762/universum.v9i2.90

Ibn 'Ajibah al-Hasani, A. I. M. (2000). Îqâzh al-Himam fî Syarh al-Hikam. al-Haramain,.

Ibn Bisyr at-Tirmidzi, M. I. A. I. H. (2008). *Nawâdhir al-Ushûl fî Ma'rifati Ahâdits al-Rasûl* (Vol. 1). Dâr al-Kutub al-Mishriyyah.

Ibn Mandzûr, J. al-D. M. bin M. (1990). Lisân al-'Arab (Vol. 2). Dâr Shâdir.

Iyâzî, M. 'Alî. (1386). *Al-Mufasirûn Hayâtihim wa Manhajihim* (Vol. 2). Wizârah al-Tsaqâfah wa al-Irsyâd al-Islâmi.

Purnomo, H., & Azhar, M. (2022). Psikologi Islam. K-Media.

Rahmadi, R. (2011). Pengantar Metodologi Penelitian. Antasari Press.

Shihab, M. Q. (2011). Tafsir al-Misbah: Pesan, Kesan, dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an (4th ed., Vol. 07). Lentera Hati.

Thanthâwî, 'Arafah bin. (1442). Al-Manhaj al-Ta`shîlî li Dirâsh al-Tafsîr al-Tahlîlî. Ta'shîl.