



## **CHARACTERISTICS AND PARADIGM OF SUFI TAFSĪR IN ‘ABID AL-JABIRI EPISTEMOLOGY PERSPECTIVE**

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### **Abstract**

*The results of Sufi's interaction and the Holy Qur'an elicits a distinctive style of Sufi's interpretation with the basic epistemology of Irfani. Although the validity of Sufi Qur'anic interpretation is still debated by scholars, but in fact this interpretation has a complete epistemological structure. This paper discusses the characteristics and paradigm of Sufi Tafsir in 'Abid al-Jabiri's epistemology approach. Amongst the characteristics of the Sufi's Tafsir is by the use of Ta'wil method, interpreting the Holy Qur'an based on the essence of Khafiyah in the practice of Riyadah. While the paradigm built by the Sufi's interpretation is the presence meaning of Zahir and Batin in the holy verses of the highest holy book of Qur'an. Everyone has the level of understanding in accordance with the Locus (Maqam) he was living. Thus, the Sufi is not recognizing the existence of absolutisms in interpretation or exegesis.*

### **Abstrak**

*Hasil interaksi sufi dan al-Qur'an memunculkan corak tafsir sufi yang khas dengan basic epistemologi irfani. Meskipun keabsahan tafsir sufi masih diperdebatkan oleh ulama, namun secara faktual tafsir ini memiliki bangunan epistemologi yang utuh. Makalah ini membahas karakteristik dan paradigma tafsir sufi dengan pendekatan epistemologi Abid al-Jabiri.*

*Di antara karakteristik tafsir sufi adalah menggunakan metode ta'wil, menafsirkan al-Qur'an dengan berlandaskan isyarat khafiyah di dapat dari proses riyadah. Sementara paradigma yang dibangun tafsir sufi adalah adanya makna zahir dan batin dalam ayat-ayat al-Qur'an. Setiap orang memiliki pemahaman yang bertingkat-tingkat sesuai dengan maqam yang sedang ia sandang. Dengan demikian kaum sufi tidak mengakui adanya obsolutisme dalam penafsiran.*

**Keyword:** *Characteristic, Paradigm, Sufi Tafsir, 'Abid al-Jabiri, Epistemology*

## A. Introduction

There is one period on the historical development of Tafsir in which the Qur'an is in contact with the traditions of Islamic Sufism. Interaction between the traditions of Sufism and the Qur'an, gave birth to Sufi-esoteric interpretation with an inner meaning. Tafseer sufistik-esoterik performed by Sufi that still debated among Scholars. Some scholars like al-Zarkasyī do not acknowledge that the result of the interpretation of the Sufi is a cleric product of the Qur'anic commentary.<sup>1</sup> Although this Sufistic style of exegesis is sufficient controversial and less-studied genre, but the style of Sufi's interpretation has been recognized as a completely independent style of interpretation. Meaning, Sufi's interpretation has a historical scheme and epistemology of interpretation which then makes it worth mentioning as a style of interpretation.<sup>2</sup>

Low attention to the study of mystical interpretation (little-studied genre), presumably influenced by classical scholar fatwa stating that the Sufi's interpretation is not included in the commentary category. Al-Suyuti (w 911 H), for example, when opening the discussion of *faṣl* Sufi's interpretation, it opens with a clarifying sentence *ammā kalām al-ṣufiyyah fī al-Qur'ān falaysa bi tafsīr* (the Sufi cleric's view of the Qur'an is not an exegesis).<sup>3</sup> The opinion expressed by al-Suyuti is basically only reinforces the opinions of previous scholars. As stated by Ibn Ṣalāḥ, in *Fatāwā* it. In his fatwa, Ibn Ṣalāḥ refers to a narrated history to Abū al-Ḥasān al-Waḥīdī who

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<sup>1</sup> Hasan Ayyūb, *al-Hadīth fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān wa al-Hadīth* (Kairo: Dār al-Salām, 2008), p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> Asep Nahrul Musadad, "Tafsir Sufistik Dalam Tradisi Penafsiran al-Qur'an (Sejarah Perkembangan dan Konstruksi Hermeneutis)," *Farabi*, Vol. 12, no. 1 (2015): p. 107.

<sup>3</sup> Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkashi, *al-Burhān fī Ulūm* (Bairut: Dār Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2015), p. 258.

heard that 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Sulamī has written a commentary under the name *Haqā'iq al-Tafsir*. Al-Wahīdi states if al-Sulamī believed what he wrote as an interpretation then he has kufr.<sup>4</sup>

The presence of Sufi's interpretation that put esoteric significance in the midst of exoteric interpretation as the work of the majority interpretation led to a dialectical pro-contra, from *outsider* (orientalis) and *insider* (Muslim). The source of the debate on Sufi's interpretation at least boils down to two things, first of all from where those esoteric meanings were derived and about what motives lay behind the Sufis writing the Sufi tafsir. For the pro-group with the epistemology of the Sufi's interpretation it states that the esoteric-esoteric interpretation comes from *Ilāhiyah*, through *riyāḍah al-nafs* or *sulūk* (the road to God). While the motive of the Sufis for interpreting the Qur'an using that peculiar epistemology is to explain the meaning that has not been exposed from its textual editorial.

As for the counter-group with a Sufi's commentary model such as Ignaz Goldziher states that the Sufi traditions that appear in Islam come from out side the teachings of Islam. Based on the assumption of the traditions of Sufism in Islam takes place gradually. First this movement appears as a total *zuhud* attitude and away from the life of the world. Further influenced by popular emanation thinking among neo-platonism and ultimately arrive at the feelings (emotions) that rise up and lead to feelings of longing for God. Goldziher also assumes that the teachings of Sufism do not originate from the Qur'an, the source of reference from Sufism is the notion of emanation of Neo-Platonism.<sup>5</sup> The emergence of Sufi-style interpretations of the Qur'an is the attempt of Sufi practitioners to seek the legitimacy of truth over their Sufi beliefs. Although according to Ignaz the search for justification is not easy.<sup>6</sup>

From the above background, it is interesting to examine the characteristics of Sufi's interpretation and how its paradigm, with the approach of epistemology of 'Abid al-Jabiri.<sup>7</sup> While current theories suggest

<sup>4</sup> Taqy al-Dīn Ibn al-Ṣalāh, *Fātawā* (Kairo: Idarā Ṭabā'a al-Muniriyya, 1348), p. 29.

<sup>5</sup> Wahyudi Wahyudi, "Tafsir Sufi: Analisis Epistemologi Ta'wīl al-Ghazālī Dalam Kitab Jawāhir al-Qur'ān", *Jurnal Ushuluddin*, Vol. 26, no. 1 (4 Juni 2018): p. 45, <https://doi.org/10.24014/jush.v26i1.4243>.

<sup>6</sup> Ignaz Goldziher, *Mazāhib al-Tafsir al-Islāmy* (Kairo: Maktabah al-Khānja, 1955), p. 111.

<sup>7</sup> In Arab-Islamic culture, there are three growing epistemologies: *bayā ni*, *burhā ni* and *'irfā ni* which have different criteria from each other. *Bayā ni* using sacred texts, *ijma*

that the epistemology used in the esoteric-Sufic commentary is the epistemology of *'irfanī*.<sup>8</sup> Being in reality many Sufi figures are also concentrated in the field of philosophy, Jurisprudence and other fields of science. Surely this will affect the epistemology that the Sufis use. So in the original hypothesis of the author, there are some Sufi figures who do a mix between epistemology. This research attempts to answer and prove this hypothesis.

The significance of this study is to provide an explanation of the epistemology of the Sufi's interpretation, as an offer in the study of the Qur'an. And to recognize that the heterogeneity of interpretation is inevitable.<sup>9</sup> So as to deny the paradigm of obsolutism in the study of interpretation of the Qur'an. This research uses qualitative research methods and is a literature research with Arabic reasoning epistemology approach 'Abid al-Jabiri.

## B. Definition of Sufi Tafsir

Various editors are given scholars about the Sufi's interpretation, among them according to al-Zarqānī: "Altering the Qur'an aloud by relying on a vague sign that can only be captured by the mystic and tasawwuf experts then compromises the meaning between the two."<sup>10</sup> Average Husayn al-Dhahabi define it: "Altering the Qur'an with something behind the meaning of dzahir in accordance with the cryptic cues that were captured by the mystics then try to combine the two."<sup>11</sup>

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'and ijihad as the main authoritative source which aims to construct the conception of nature by using Islamic aqidah. The Burha uses the power of human natural knowledge of the senses, experiments and laws of pure reason to gain universal or particular knowledge to construct about nature. While 'irfā ni in general uses kashf and ilhām as a method of acquiring knowledge and aiming at one with God. See Wahyudi, "Ta'wil Sufi al-Ghazali dan Ibn 'Arabi Terhadap Ayat-ayat al-Qur'an (Studi Komparatif)" (Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel, 2017), p. 10–11.

<sup>8</sup> Moh Azwar Hairul, "Mengkaji Tafsir Sufi Karya Ibnu 'Ajjabah", p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Arif Chasbullah Chasbullah dan Wahyudi Wahyudi, "Deradikalisasi Terhadap Penafsiran Ayat-Ayat Qital," *FIKRI: Jurnal Kajian Agama, Sosial dan Budaya*, Vol. 2, no. 2 (Desember 2017): p. 415.

<sup>10</sup> Muhammad 'Abd 'Azim al-Zarqānī, *Manāḥil al-'Irfan fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, vol. II (Bairut: Dar al-Fikr, 1988), p. 78.

<sup>11</sup> Muhammad Husayn al-Zahabi, *al-Tafsir wa al-Munfassarūn*, vol. II (t.tp: Maktabah Muṣ'ab ibn 'Amr al-Islamiyah, 2004), p. 92. See also, Nur al-Dīn 'Itr, *Ulūm al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* (Damaskus: Maṭba'ah al-Ṣabāh, 1993), p. 97.

The more detailed definition of Sufi / Ishari commentary is given 'Ali al-Ṣabunī its perspective Sufi interpretation is:

Ta'wīl altering of the Qur'an is different from the *ẓahir* about hidden cues are only shown to people who have knowledge about *Laduni* or people who are wise *billah* as expert mysticism and *mujahadah* by subjecting desires so that they could obtain the light of God which shines and penetrates the secrets of the Qur'an al-Azim. Or those who have been corrupted in their minds by some deep meaning through divine inspiration or *futuh* (*rabbani*) which makes it possible for him to combine with the *ẓahir* being enforced from the noble verses.<sup>12</sup>

From the definition seem to be known that the Sufi believes that there is another meaning behind the text editorial. In Sufistic tafsir, a Sufi does not attempt to find meaning behind the textual editors only, but sometimes explains esoteric meanings in different languages from the exoteric interpretation in general. An explanation of the meaning of the Qur'an that is "weird" as the *Language of Truth* by Maryam Musyarraf.<sup>13</sup> *Language of Truth* is obtained through *riyadah* and the process of purification of the heart and obtained directly from God.

### C. Characteristics of Tafsir Sufi

From the divisive definitions above described by the scholars, the esoteric Sufi interpretation has a peculiarity compared to exoteric exegesis in general. Characteristics that are typical of Sufi interpretations and distinguish by non-Sufi interpretations are as follows:

First, using the Ta'wīl method. *Ta'wīl* is etymologically a form of *masdar* from *awwala*<sup>14</sup> word which means *rujū' ila aṣl*<sup>15</sup> (back to

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<sup>12</sup> M. Ali al-Ṣabunī, *al-Tibyān fī Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Bairut: Alam al-Kutub, 1958), p. 171.

<sup>13</sup> Musharraf Maryam, "A Study on the Sufi Interpretation of Qur'an and The Theory of Hermeneutic," *AL-BAYAN JOURNAL*, Vol. 11, no. 1 (2013): p. 36, <https://doi.org/10.11136/jqh.1311.01.03>.

<sup>14</sup> Manna' al-Qaṭṭān, *Mabāhiṣ fī Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Kairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 2000), p. 317.

<sup>15</sup> This meaning is taken from the explanation of the Prophet Muhammad when asked about Surat al-An'am verse 65: *Qū l huwa al-Qā dir 'ala an yab'atha' alaikum 'adhaban min fawq arjulikum*. The Apostle explains the above verse with, *innahā kā 'inah wa lam ya'ti ta'wilahā ba'du* (Remember, it must be happening but still has not arrived its ta'wīl). Ta'wīl

origin).<sup>16</sup> *Ta'wīl* can also mean *al-tarji'* means to herd or bring back to its origin. Thus, the person who practices *ta'wīl* is the one who deflects what the *zahir* side (exoteric aspect) displays and returns it to its intrinsic truth. *Ta'wīl* in this definition is the same as the inner spiritual interpretation, a symbolic and esoteric interpretation.<sup>17</sup>

Some experts also stated that *takwil* comes from the word *ma'al* which means interminable.<sup>18</sup> It is mentioned on the dictionary *Lisān al-'Arāb*, *awwal al-kalām wa ta'awwalahu* which means to contemplate it, to estimate its meaning. *Awwalahu* and *ta'awalahu* are the same as *fassarahu*.<sup>19</sup>

There is also an expert who states that the origin of the word *ta'wīl* is *iyalah* which means *siyāsah*. That way the person who *loves* a word is the one who interprets the word and put it in the right position.<sup>20</sup> According to al-Zarqāni *ta'wīl* etymologically has the same meaning as *tafseer*.<sup>21</sup> Meaning *ta'wīl* similar to this commentary has been known and used since the time of the Prophet,<sup>22</sup> as the words of the Prophet when praying for Ibn 'Abbas: "O Allah understand him of the science of religion and teach him *ta'wīl*."<sup>23</sup>

While terminologically crossed opinion among *ulama mutaqqaddimīn* (*salaf*) and *ulama muta'akhirīn* (*khalaf*). According to the scholar *mutaqqaddimīn ta'wīl* has two meaning; First, explain the *kalam* and explain the meaning whether the explanation is appropriate or not with *zahir*.<sup>24</sup> Thus in the perspectives of the *ulama mutaqqaddimīn ta'wīl* and *tafseer* has the same proximity of meaning and essence.<sup>25</sup> Second, *ta'wīl* is

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in the word here means *al-marji'* and *al-maṣir* See, Muhammad bin Abd Allah ibn al-Arabi, *Qānūn al-Ta'wīl* (Bairut: Muassasah 'Ulūm al-Qur'an, 1986), p. 232.

<sup>16</sup>See Ibn Kathir's interpretation of this verse, Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-Azīm*, vol. II (Bairut: Dār al-Kutūb al-Ilmiyah, 1994), p. 128.

<sup>17</sup>Henry Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy* (London: The Institute of Ismaili Studies, t.th), p. 12.

<sup>18</sup>M. Quraish Shihab, *Kaidah Tafsir* (Tangerang: Lentara Hati, 2013), p. 12.

<sup>19</sup>Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-Arāb*, XXI (Bairut: Dār Ṣādr, t.th), p. 33.

<sup>20</sup>Ali Ahmad al-Salus, *Ensiklopedi Sunnah-Syiah: Studi Perbandingan Aqidah & Tafsir* (Jakarta: Pustaka al-Kautsar, 2001), p. 346.

<sup>21</sup>al-Zarqāni, *Manāḥil al-'Irfān fi 'Ulūm al-Qur'an*, II: p. 4.

<sup>22</sup>al-Arabi, *Qānūn al-Ta'wīl...*, p. 232.

<sup>23</sup>Ahmad bin Hambal, *Musnad Ahmad* (Riyad: Bait al-Afkar al-Dauliyah, 1998), p. 271.

<sup>24</sup>Abū Hamd al-Ghazālī, *Qānūn al-ta'wīl* (t.tp: t.p, 1992), p. 5.

<sup>25</sup>Taqiyuddin Ahmad bin Taimiyah, *al-Iklīl fi al-Mutāshabih wa al-Ta'wīl* (Iskandariyah: Dar al-Iman, t.th), p. 28.

the meaning or substance referred to in a word. If the word *sounds talab* (request) then *ta'wil* - his job is requested. If the words are in the form of news then what is meant is the substance of an informed.<sup>26</sup>

According to the *mutaakhirin* scholar of the jurists, the Qalam expert, the hadith and the Sufis, *ta'wil* is turning the meaning from the *rajih tomarjuh* because there is an indication for it. In this definition it seems clear that the *mutaakhirin* scholars give more role of mind reasoning than the salaf scholars, because the word turned to the definition involves the role of the ratio.<sup>27</sup> Al-Said al-Jurjany defines *ta'wil* in harmony with the definition *ta'wil* expressed by the *mutaakhirin* scholar but al-Jurjany limits, he defines *ta'wil* by: "Diverting lafaz from its meaning *zahir* to another meaning (*ba'in*) contained therein, if the other meaning is in accordance with the Qur'an and al-Sunnah."<sup>28</sup>

From the above *ta'wil* terminology, it can be concluded that the meaning of *ta'wil* is to turn away the lafaz from the meaning of *zahir* from other meaning *muhtamil*, whose meaning is not contrary to the Qur'an and as-Sunah. Thus, *ta'wil* is an attempt to take meaning from the context of lafaz which is contained by many meanings contained in the text of the verses of the Qur'an. *Ta'wil* in the context of esoteric-esoteric interpretations is an attempt to uncover the meaning of *mutashabih* verses, contextual or esoteric interpretations, (*ba'inayah/isyary*), whether derived from *ra'y* or intuitive (*kasyf ratios*).<sup>29</sup>

The second characteristic of the Sufi's interpretation, is the interpretation of the Qur'an based on the *isyarah khafiah*. Sufis acknowledge that their interpretation of the Qur'an is illuminated, not originally derived from their souls. Their knowledge is not based on the text but on the *isharat kahfiyat*, *kashf* or intuition that Allah (SWT) grants to a person and put it into his *qalb* (heart) so that it is exposed by him as a part of a secret and a part of reality. The methodology that underlies their approach as al-Dhahabi says is the method of the direct gift of God (*given/mauhibah*).<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> al-Zahabi, *al-Tafsir wa al-Munfassirun*, II: p. 15.

<sup>27</sup> Nasarudin baidan, *Wawasan Baru Ilmu Tafsir* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2011), p. 69.

<sup>28</sup> M. Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, *Sejarah Dan Pengantar Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* (Semarang: Pustaka Rizki Putra, 2000), p. 171.

<sup>29</sup> Baidan, *Wawasan Baru Ilmu Tafsir...*, p. 67.

<sup>30</sup> al-Zahabi, *al-Tafsir wa al-Munfassirun...*, p. 96.

In the academic world of the West actually also recognize this kind of intuitive knowledge. Henry Bergson (1859-1941) a French philosopher homage to intuitionism divide knowledge into two kinds, namely, "knowledge" (knowledge about) and "knowledge" (knowledge of). First knowledge is called discursive or symbolic knowledge, and second knowledge is called direct or intuitive knowledge because it is obtained directly. On the basis of this division, Bergson explains that discursive science is acquired through symbols that try to tell us "about" something by acting as a translation for something. Therefore, it depends on the thinking from a particular point of view or reference frame used and as a result, the result is greatly determined by the point of view or the reference frame used. Instead intuitive knowledge is absolute direct knowledge rather than relative knowledge or through intermediaries.<sup>31</sup>

The knowledge of the Sufis will be *ta'wil* al-Qur'an based on the overflow of knowledge directly from God, when *qalb* or heart as a means of knowledge of the Sufis ready to receive it. For that it takes certain preparations before a Sufi is able to receive the overflow of knowledge directly. The preparation in question is that the Sufi should travel a spiritual journey through certain stages (*maqam*) and experience certain inner conditions (*ḥal*).<sup>32</sup>

There are at least seven levels (*maqāmat*) that must be passed by a person who want to get spleen han directly from God, namely: First, repent of abandoning all bad deeds with deep regret, then replacing them with new, praiseworthy acts.<sup>33</sup> Second, *wara'ie* distancing themselves from everything that is not clear status (*subhat*). Third, *zuhud*ie not greedy and unselfish world life.<sup>34</sup> Fourth, the *fāqir* empties all thoughts and hopes of present and future life and does not want anything except God. Fifth, *patience* is to accept all trials and disasters willingly, without showing any resentment or anger.<sup>35</sup> Sixth, *trust* is to believe what kind of things God has set. Seven, *riḍa*

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<sup>31</sup> Lois O Katsoff, *Pengantar Filsafat, terj. Sujono Soemargono* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1992), p. 145–46.

<sup>32</sup>In Suhrawardi's view, this knowledge is through four stages, namely, preparation, acceptance, the formation of concepts in mind and casting in the form of writing. Parvis Morewedge, *Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism* (New York: Caravan Books, 1981), p. 177.

<sup>33</sup> Abū al-Qāsim al-Qusyairy, *al-Risālah al-Qusyairiyah* (Kairo: Dār al-Sha'b, 1989), p. 178.

<sup>34</sup> Abu Bakr Muhammad bin Ishāq al-Kalābāzi, *Kitāb al-Ta'arruf li al-Madhab Ahl al-Taṣawwuf* (Kairo: Maktabah al-Khānja, 1994), p. 65.

<sup>35</sup> al-Qushairy, *al-Risālah al-Qusyairiyah...*, p. 328.



that is the loss of the feeling of unfavorability in the heart so that it would only receive the joy and joy of what God gives and determined to him.<sup>36</sup>

Having reached a certain level in the spiritual exercise of a Sufi will get an overflow of knowledge directly from God in an illuminative or commonly called *kasyf*. In the study of philosophy Mehdi Yazdi, at this stage one will get the reality of absolute self-consciousness (*kashf*), so that with that consciousness he is able to see his own reality (*mushāhadah*) as a known object.<sup>37</sup>

The third characteristic of Sufi's interpretation is that, the interpretation is done by *Arbāb sulūk* / Sufi. The scholars have their different principles on the origin or the root of Sufism. There are many opinions about the word of Sufism. First, *tasawwuf* is derived from *ṣuf* (wool), so called because the people who were experts in worship and *zahid* in the past used a simple outfit made of fleece.<sup>38</sup> This simple dress tradition is intended for worshippers to not arise sense of *riya'*, *ujub* or arrogant.

Second, the word *tasawuf* is attributed to *ahl al-shuffah*, the name given to the poor people among Muslims in the early days of Islam. There are portions of people who do not have a house, which is a residence for them is a hut that has been built by Rasulullah outside the mosque of Medina.<sup>39</sup> The three mysticisms were derived from the word *al-Ṣafa'* which means the person who purifies himself of the mundane. They have special features in their activities and worship. This is their endeavor to draw closer to God. They always abstain from sinning and malice. The argument goes on to say that Sufism is derived from the word *ṣaf*, which describes those who are always at the forefront in worshipping God and in performing virtue.<sup>40</sup>

The history of the development of Qur'anic interpretation of *tasawuf* cannot be separated from the development of this school. The emergence of Sufism in the background by a group of Muslims who feel unsatisfied to get closer to God through ritual *lahiriyah* such as fasting, prayer and pilgrimage. They feel closer to God in a way of life towards God

<sup>36</sup> al-Kalābāzi, *Kitāb al-Ta'arruf li al-Madhab Ahl al-Taṣawwuf...*, p. 72.

<sup>37</sup> A. Khudori Soleh, "Mencermati Epistemologi Sufi (Isrfan)," t.t., p. 9.

<sup>38</sup> al-Zahabi, *al-Tafsir wa al-Munfassirūn...*, II: p. 81.

<sup>39</sup> Abū al-'Ulā al-'Afīfī, *fi Taṣawwuf al-Islām wa Tārīkhih* (Iskandariyah: : Lajnah al-Ta'lif wa al-Tarjamah wa al-Nashr, t.th), p. 66.

<sup>40</sup> Yasir Nasution, *Cakrawala Tasawuf* (Jakarta: Putra Grafika, 2007), p. 3.

and free themselves from absolute attachment to worldly life, so as not to be enslaved by worldly pleasures.<sup>41</sup>

This simple life practice has been practiced since the early generations of Islam, the Messenger of Allah SWT was the man who first exemplified the simple practice of life. From among the friends of many who practice the pattern of life *zuhud* away from the worldly bustle. Although the behavior of Sufism has existed since the early days of Islam, but the term *tasawuf* is not known at that time. Explicitly the term *tasawuf* appears in the Islamic world in the range of the second century H.<sup>42</sup> Where in this Generation, gradually shifting in values so that the orientation of life of Muslims increasingly heavy. It was during this time that the first generation of Muslims who maintained a simple pattern of life was called the Sufis.<sup>43</sup> The first person in "*Ṣarḥ*" is called a Sufi in this period based on data obtained by al-Zahabi is Abū Hāsyim al-Ṣūfī. (w 150 H). According to the data obtained by Henry Corbin, the Sufi word was first attributed to Abdak al-Ṣufī (d 210 H / 825 AD). He is a member of the mysticism of *syi'ah* in Kufah.<sup>44</sup>

*Zuhud's* behavior carried out by Islamic clerics of class I and II continued until the time of the Imperial Government of Abbasiyyah (4th century H), when Muslims experienced prosperity and glory that led to the behavior of luxury living in the upper and middle class. At this time the development of Sufism is not only on practical aspects but has begun to be marked with the development of theoretical explanations that will become the discipline of Sufism. At this time also, began an intersection between Sufism with philosophy and *kalam*, so emerging stream of *tasawuf nazari* and *tasawuf amaliy*.

The Sect of *tasawuf nazari/tasawuf* theoretical is the Sect of Sufism that seeks to build its Sufism ideology based on the theory and doctrine of philosophy. This pattern of building also used the flow of *tasawuf nazari* in understanding the Qur'an. They study the Qur'an with a study that is in line with their theory and in accordance with their doctrine. The sect of *tasawuf amaliy* is the sect of *tasawuf* practicing *zuhud* life and not underlying this behavior with scientific theories as *tasawuf nazari*. This sect of Sufism

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<sup>41</sup> Lenni Lestari, "Epistemologi Corak Tafsir Sufistik," *SYAHADAH: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an & Keislaman*, Vol 2, no. 1 (2016): p. 9.

<sup>42</sup> al-Zahabi, *al-Tafsir wa al-Munfassirun ...*, p. 82.

<sup>43</sup> Lestari, "Epistemologi ...", p. 9.

<sup>44</sup> Henry Corbin, *History of ...*, p. 189.

interprets the Qur'an differently from the meaning of zahir based on the isharat or guidance received by Sufi scholars.<sup>45</sup> These two passages will later give color in the Qur'anic interpretation of Sufi's perspectives.

#### D. History of the Development of Sufi Tafsir

Sufistic interpretation -autoteric should be divided into two meanings, interpretation as a freelance comment and interpretation as a book of interpretation in a regular format.<sup>46</sup> According to the earliest scholarly commentaries of tafsir- theoretic interpretation which till today is *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim* by Sahl al-Tustari (283 H).<sup>47</sup> There is also a Sufistic commentary as a freelance commentary, in the form of a history contained in an unformatted form of commentary formation beginning in the 2nd century H. The popular prefigurations of Sufic commentaries among them are mapped by Gerhard Bowering, he divided the phases of Sufistic interpretation into five periods<sup>48</sup> :

First, the formative phase (the second century to VH / IV-X M). This phase is divided into two stages, first starting from the three main characters of Hasan al-Basri (110 H / 728 AD), Ja'far al-Şadiq (w 148 H / 765) and Sufyan al-Saury (w 161 H / 778). And the second begins at the time of al-Sulami the author of the book of *Haqaiq al-Tafsir* (w. 412 H/1021 CE) and seven main sources of reference, namely Żun Nun al-Mişry (246 H/ 841 AD), Sahl al-Tustary (283 AH / 896 CE), Abu Sa'ïd al-Kharraj (286 AH/899 AD), al-Junayd (298 H/910 AD), Ibn 'Aţal 'Adami (d 311 H / 923 AD), Abu Bakr al-Wäsity (w 320 H/932 AD) and al-Şibli (w 334.H/946 CE).

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<sup>45</sup> From this stream then known the term tafsir fayḍ y or tafsir ishari, see al-Żahabi, *al-Tafsir ...*, p. 82–92.

<sup>46</sup>In this case, "interpretation" is positioned as a term unencumbered by a boundary, certain rules/formula, explanation of theme or problem, karan it is a rule or something born from the application of rules. Thus, to explain the interpretation simply by saying". Explain when Mullāh. In this case, the interpretation is not merely a book of exegesis with a special format as the book of exegesis in general. see Amīn al-Khūly, *Manāhij al-Tajdid* (Kairo: Dār al-Ma'rifat, t.th), p. 271.

<sup>47</sup> Cristin Zahra Sand, *Sufi Commentaries on The Qur'an in Classical Islam* (Canada: Routledge, 2006), p. 68.

<sup>48</sup> Andrew Rippin, ed., *The Blackwell Companion to the Qur'an*, Blackwell Companions to Religion (Malden, Mass: Blackwell Pub, 2006), p. 351.

The second phase (V-VII century H / XI-XIII M), this phase captures three different variants of Sufistic interpretation, first, moderate Sufi interpretation, Sufistic commentary which includes the Prophet's traditions, the roots of Companions and the words of previous Jurists, Grammatical and background verses. Examples of this type of commentary are the works of Abu Ishaq al-Tha'labi (427 H / 1035 AD), *Laṭā'if al-Isyārat* al-Qusyairy (465 H / 1074 AD) and so on. Secondly, the Sufi's Tafsir which accentuated the exegesis of al-Sulamy such as *Futūḥ al-Rahmān fī al-Qur'ān* citation by Abu Ṭabit al-Daylami (598 AH / 1183 CE) and similar interpretations. Third, Sufi-speaking Sufi interpretations such as *Kasyaf al-Asrar wa 'Uddar al-Abrar* by al-Maybudi (d 530 AH / 1135 CE).

Third, the phase of the Sufi tafsir (VII-VIII H / XIII-XIV M), at this time two famous Sufi names are Najm al-Din Kubra (w 618 H / 1221 AD) author of *al-Ta'wīlat an-Najmiyyah* and Ibn 'Araby (w.638 H / 1240 AD) author of *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah* and *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*. Both form their respective tribal madrassas, the schools of Ibn 'Araby and Ibn' Araby schools. Among the exponents of the *Kubrawiyyu* school of thought are Nizam al-Din Hasan al-Naysaburi (d 728 AH / 1327 AD) author *Gharā'ib al-Qur'ān wa Raghā'ib al-Furqān*. The representative of the Ibn 'Arabi school is Ibn Barrajan al-Andalusy (d. 536 AH / 1141 CE).

Fourthly, the Turkish Ustmani Phase (IX-XII century H / XV-XVIII M), this phase features several books of commentary written in India during the Turkish and Ottoman Turks. Among the commentaries written at the time were *Tafsiri Multaqa't* works of Khwājah Bandah Nawāz (w. 825 H/1422 AD), *Mawāhibi 'Aliya* by Kamaludin Hussein al-Kāsyifi (w. 910 H/ 1504 M) and *Rūḥ al-Bayān* by Ismail Haqqi Bursevi (w.1137 H / 1725 AD).

Fifth (XXIII-present/XIX-present century), some of the most famous works of Sufistic commentaries of this era are *al-Bahr al-Madid* by Ahmad Ibn Ajiba (d. 1224H / 1809 CE), *Rūḥ al-Ma'āni fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm wa Sab'al-Maṣāni* by Shihab al-Din al-Alusi (1854 AD) and *Bayān al-Ma'ani' 'ala Ḥasb Tartīb al-Nuzūl* by Mulla Huwaysh.

## **E. The Sufic-esoteric Tafsīr Paradigm**

In the perspective of Sufi interpretation, there are four cycles of Sufistic commentary network known as *Qānūn al-Tarbī 'lī Ta'wīl al-Ṣūfī*, which includes aspects of *ẓahir* (objective) or practical, *bāṭin* (subjective) or metaphorical, *had* (intersubjective) or legal and *maṭla'* (interobjective) or

testimonials.<sup>49</sup> Practical category (*zahir*) is a meaning understood by the laity, while legal (*had*) is a meaning related to the legal aspect. Then metaphorical (*inner*), is the allegorical meaning (temporal) while the testimonial (*maṭla'*) is the dimension of the essence. *Qānūn al-Tarbī 'lī ta'wīl al-ṣūfi* is based on the hadīṣ of the Prophet:

لكل آية ظهر وبطن ولكل حرف حد ولكل حد مطلع

The above hadīṣ is a very popular tradition in the Sufism, Shiite and Isma'iliyah traditions. He then became the inspiration for the esoteric movement in the tradition of Islamic thought, including in the context of the Qur'anic commentary. Some of the Sufi'tafseer books such as *Ḥaḡā'iq al-Tafsīr*,<sup>50</sup> *Rūḡ al-Ma'āni*<sup>51</sup> and *Rūḡ al-Bayān*<sup>52</sup> directly quotes the hadīṣ as the basis of its author in interpreting a verse. In this case, Saḡ l al-Tustari also often uses the editor " *hāzā bātin al-'āyat* " when identifying the esoteric meaning of a verse.<sup>53</sup>

There are various explanations among scholars regarding *zahir*, *inner*, *had* and *maṭla'*. Among these are quoted by al-Zarqani in *Manāḡil al-'Irfān* that *zahir* is the text of the verse, while the mind is *ta'wīl*. While *had* is any law that ranged about the reward and the punishment while the *maṭla'* is a dimension of gnosis.<sup>54</sup>

Haris al-Muḡasibi (243 H) gives an explanation that what is meant by the meaning of *zāḡīr* (*literal meaning*) is the recitation of the Qur'an (*recitations*) and what is meant by the meaning of *bāṡīn* (*the hidden meaning*) is a deep understanding of the Qur'an (*ta'wīl*). Both the meaning on the plain of *literal meaning* and *the hidden meaning* cannot arrive at the level of *ḡ add* (*the limit of intpretation*). One who can reach or penetrate the limits of interpretation to the level of *ḡad* is only *al-Siddiqūn*, the intelligent Sufi people and earnestly able to enter the meaning of the Qur'an

<sup>49</sup> M. Anwar Syarifudin, "Menimbang Otoritas Sufi Dalam Menafsirkan al-Qur'an," *Studi Agama dan Masyarakat*, Vol. I, no. 2 (Desember 2004): p. 14.

<sup>50</sup> Abū Abd al-Rahman al-Sulamy, *Ḥaḡā'iq al-Tafsīr*, Vol. I (Bairut: Dār al-kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 2001), p. 21.

<sup>51</sup> Mahmud al-Alusy, *Rūḡ al-Ma'āni*, vol. I (Bairut: Dar Ihya' al-Turaṡ al-'Araby, t.th), p. 7.

<sup>52</sup> Ismāīl Haḡy al-Istambūly, *Rūḡ al-Bayān* (Bairut: Dar Ihya' al-Turaṡ al-'Araby, t.th), p. 62.

<sup>53</sup> Saḡ l al-Tustari, *Tafsīr al-Qur'an al-Azīm* (Kairo: Dār al-Hir lī al-Turaṡ, t.th), p. 131.

<sup>54</sup> al-Zarqāni, *Manāḡil al-'Irfān...* , p. 80.

in depth. They understand the whole verse of the Qur'an in such a way as the understanding that God gave them. Some Sufis underlie this transition from human interpretation to the understanding of God. In the Sufi's view, this step is taken when one has reached the point of transcendence (*maṭla'*).<sup>55</sup>

The concept of the categorization of the meaning of the Qur'an into exoterics (*ẓāhir*) and esoterics (*bāṭin*) is a fundamental concept in the Sufi's tafsir. The tradition of Sufi's commentary, both nazari and isyari Sufi, originated from the understanding that the Qur'an has several levels of meaning. Humans have the potential to uncover that meaning and the task of interpretation is infinite.<sup>56</sup>

In the Sufi's interpretation of the dualism the meaning of the Qur'anic verse (esoteric and exoteric) is of the utmost important. Thus the main source of the activities of the interpretation of Sufism is intuition (*kasyf/ isyarat khāfiyah*) obtained through certain spiritual behavior. In Sufism there is a level at which ratios do not function normally as the Sufis are experiencing *jaḥab* (*divine attraction*) that will not be able to express their experience in words. Yet this intuitive experience is ultimately in contact with other cognitive experiences, especially with the philosophical tradition. This then gave birth to a kind of Sufi *naẓari / falsafi*. It is not surprising that Henry Corbin an orientalist who concentrates on Islamic philosophy and mysticism includes Sufism, theosophy (wisdom), the teachings of Shi'i Imam and kalam as the family of Islamic philosophy.

The dualism of meaning contained in the Qur'an is also known among the Batin groups. However, duality concepts of meanings in batiniyah is different with the Sufis. Followers of baṭiniyah tend to negate the literal meaning of religious texts. In the view of the baṭiniyah which is believed by Allah is the meaning of baṭ in of the verse, not the textual sense. In other words, the baṭ iniyah ignore the textual meaning of the religious text and belief in what God wants and is the meaning of baṭin which they find through ta'wīl. This may make the baṭiniyah tend to ignore the behavior ẓāhir from Islamic Syari'ah.<sup>57</sup> While in the perspective of sufism, one cannot attain inner texts without going through zahir texts. Zahir text is

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<sup>55</sup> Kurdi, *Hermeneutika al-Qur'an dan Hadis* (Yogyakarta: el-Saq, 2011), p. 49.

<sup>56</sup> Sand, *Sufi Commentaries...*, p. 7.

<sup>57</sup> al-Zahabi, *al-Tafsir wa...*, p. 9.

a ladder to the inner, so it is impossible for a person to know the mind while he is ignorant of the *zahir* text.<sup>58</sup>

## F. Sufic Tafseer in the Perspective of Epidemiology Abid al-Jabiri

In the diachronic history of Arab culture, at first there are three great epistema that collide with each other, *bayāni*, 'irfani and *burhāni*. Collisions are debate antagonistic, as the jurists' vis a vis the Sufis (*bayāni* vis a vis 'Irfani), the jurists' vis a vis the philosopher (*bayāni* vis a vis *burhāni*), philosopher vis a vis the Sufi (*burhāni* vis a vis 'irfani). These epistemic clashes were regarded as an expression of the epistemological basis in the 5th century H.<sup>59</sup>

*Bayāni* is a method of thinking based on textual authority, directly or indirectly. Directly means to understand the text as a finished knowledge and can be applied immediately without the need for deeper inquiry and study, indirectly means to understand the text as raw knowledge so that it needs interpretation and reasoning. However, that does not mean the ratio can be free to determine the meaning and purpose. The determination of meaning must still rely on the text. Thus, the source of knowledge *bayāni* is the text (*naṣ*), ie al-Qur'an and *hadīṣ*.<sup>60</sup> Hence the epistemology of the *nunspaid* great attention to the process of text transmission from generation to generation.

This is important for the *bayani*, because as a source of knowledge whether or not transmission of the text determines the incorrectness of the legal provisions taken. If transmission of the text can be accounted for, it means that the text is true and can be used as the legal basis. Conversely, if the transmission is doubtful then the correctness of the text cannot be accounted for and that means the text cannot be used as a legal basis.

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<sup>58</sup>In the view of al-Ghazālī and Ibn 'Arabī, *ẓahir* and *baṭin* of the religious text are not two contradictory things. *Ẓahir* is the means to *baṭin*. It is the body of the spirit, the bodyless spirit is inanimate. As said by Nasiruddin Khasru as the most intense figure with the aspect of Sufism thought: "The interpretation of the text literally is the body of creed. Meanwhile, a deeper interpretation occupies the position of the spirit. Which body can live without a spirit? Goldziher, *Madhāhib al-Tafsīr...*, p. 203.

<sup>59</sup>Waryani Fajar Riyanto, "Antisionimitas Tafsir Sufi Kontemporer," *Epistemé: Jurnal Pengembangan Ilmu Keislaman*, Vol. 9, no. 1 (2014): p. 143.

<sup>60</sup>Muhammad 'Abid al-Jābirī, *Bunyah al-'Aql al-'Araby* (Bairut: Markaz Dirāsāt al-Wahdah al-'Arabiyyah, 2009), p. 38.

Therefore, scientists are very strict in selecting a received text especially regarding *tadwīn* (codification) *hadiš*.

Knowledge *bayani* obtained by the method *Qiyās* (analogy) that are based on sacred texts and empirical fact. But unlike the western empiricism that deny non-physical nature, epistemology *bayani* actually see the empirical reality as a basis to uncover and prove the non-empirical issues (*unseen*).

The *burhāni* is a method of thinking that bases itself on ratios. This method is not much different from Western rationalism, that is, ratios that provide judgments and decisions on information that pass through the senses. However, unlike Western rationalism which really only rely on the power of reason, in Islamic rationalism it cannot be separated from the role of revelation. Therefore, in the history of Islamic thought no one denies the sacred text as one of the grip of thinking even though he assumes any kind of seration. Thus, in the aspect of epistemology there is a fundamental difference between Islam and the West, between religious traditions and science. Islam uses rationality without losing the guidance of revelation as the West honors the rationality by removing revelation.

While *'irfāni* is a method of thinking that is not based on text but on *kasyf*. This *'irfāni* knowledge is not obtained through text analysis but by spiritual *practice* and the sanctity of the heart in the hope that God will bestow knowledge directly upon him, entering his mind, conceptualized and then expressed to others logically. In general, the knowledge of *'irfāni* is obtained through three stages, preparation, acceptance and disclosure by oral or written (*takhalli*, *taḥalli* and *tajjali*).

Since the focus target this interpretation is *batin* and *maṭla'* then when examined with the approach of epistemology reason Arab ie *bayani* (empiricism), *burhāni* (logisme) and *'Irfāni* (intuitisme), it appears that the interpretation of Sufi range in epistemology *'irfāni*. Reason *'Irfāni* is a method of thinking based on *kasyf*, the disclosure of secrets by God. Therefore, knowledge *'Irfāni* is not based on the analysis of the text, but with spiritual cultivation and purity of heart the hope that God will give him direct knowledge. Knowledge received from God directly later drafted and then put forward to others logically.

But in its development, there is a shift in Sufi epistemology. In the 6th century and 7th Hijri happen harmonization between epistemologi *'Irfāni* which is the basic of Sufi philosophy epistemology *Burhāni*. As was done by al-Suhrawardi, he tried synthesize between



epistemology 'Irfani and *Burhāni* with *hikmah al-isyrāqiyyah* of his. Then known as philosophical tasawwuf. Shile al-Muhasibi seeks to harmonize as eclectic between epistemology 'Irfani and *bayani* which is known as Sunni tasawuf.<sup>61</sup> Thus there are two categories of epistemological models used by Sufis. That is to use 'pure *irfani* and clerics who attempt to synthesize between epistemology 'irfani and others epistemology.

## G. Conclusion

The methodology of Sufi interpretation is still validated by the experts of both *outsider* and *insider* circles. One of the counter-scholars with the esoteric Sufic-tafsir is Ibn Ṣalāh. But as a factual way, the Sufi has given a distinctive color/lawn in interacting with the scriptures. The view that the Qur'an has two dimensions of *zahir* and inner is the basis of epistemology developed by Sufis. In the history of its development there are indeed some scholars who are more attentive to the essence, but ignorant with *zahir* side which is the "road" to the essence. This group is commonly referred to as the cleric. Although both recognize the existence of *zahir* and inner side in the Qur'an, between *batiniyah* and Sufi there is a fundamental difference. *Batiniyah* groups ignore the *zahir* side, while the Sufi is not, the Sufi still recognize the inner side as a way of reaching the inner side of the Qur'an. The process of disseminations of enacting the inner side to do the Sufi through *riyaḍah* or by people with nutrient pan acquire knowledge *mawhub* directly to God. Sufi epistemology in the perspective of Abid al-Jabiri belongs to the epistemology of *irfani*. This is because the knowledge that Sufis obtain is not the result of the ratio, but the direct gift of God. But in its development, there is a harmonization effort between epistemology 'irfani which is *basic* from sufi with philosophy tending *burhanī*, and also between 'irfanī and *bayānī*. []

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<sup>61</sup> Riyanto, "Antisoinonimitas Tafsir Sufi ...," p. 143.

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