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Sufistic Hermeneutics: the Construction of Ibn Arabi's Esoteric Interpretation on the Process of Becoming *Insan Kamil*

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the style of interpretation of Ibn Arabi in interpreting the immanence of God in human form so that humans get the position of *insan kamil*. The method used in this research is the descriptive analytical method, which is an analytical description of the construction of esoteric interpretation from a hermeneutic perspective. Primary data refers directly to the thoughts and writings of Ibn Arabi. In contrast, secondary data comes from supporting reference sources in the form of books, books, and articles about Ibn Arabi, who interprets Ibn Arabi's interpretation related to his understanding of the texts of the Qur'an. The approach used is a hermeneutic philosophical approach, a Sufistic approach, and an interpretation approach. Researchers

use the hermeneutic philosophical approach to discover the fundamental structure of Ibn Arabi's thoughts and what influences their background. In comparison, the Sufistic approach is used because the reconstruction of Ibn Arabi's perspective cannot be separated from the Sufistic approach. The interpretive approach is used because this research study has relevance to the interpretation of which the nuances of the interpretation have an *isyari* pattern. The results of this study, through the approach of Ibn Arabi's esoteric interpretation, implicitly found that Ibn Arabi approached the texts of the Qur'an by using *ta'wil*, an interpretation model that goes beyond the outward meaning of the text of the Qur'an. This pattern of interpretation can be observed in his interpretation of the path to becoming *Insan Kamil*. Ibn Arabi describes the side humans possess, namely *tajalli*; God manifests His transcendent self in outward forms through His attributes and names. Human perfection in this aspect is only potential. According to Ibn Arabi, to become *Insan Kamil*, humans actualize that potential to the highest awareness until they realize their unity with God.

Keywords: Esoteric Interpretation; Perfect Human; Sufistic Hermeneutics.

Abstrak

Hermeneutika Sufistik: Konstruksi Tafsir Esoterik Ibnu Arabi Tentang Proses Menjadi Insan Kamil. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui corak penafsiran Ibn Arabi dalam menafsirkan imanensi Tuhan dalam wujud manusia, sehingga manusia mendapatkan posisi *Insan Kamil*. Adapun metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode deskriptif analitis yaitu penggambaran secara analitis konstruksi dari tafsir esoterik dalam perspektif hermenetik. Data primernya adalah data-data yang merujuk langsung pada pemikiran dan tulisan Ibn Arabi, sedangkan data sekundernya adalah data-data yang berasal dari sumber referensi pendukung baik dalam bentuk buku, *kitab* maupun artikel tentang Ibn Arabi yang menginterpretasikan tafsiran Ibn Arabi terkait dengan pemahamannya terhadap teks-teks al-Qur'an. Adapun pendekatan yang digunakan adalah pendekatan filosofis hermeneutik, pendekatan sufistik dan pendekatan tafsir. Pendekatan filosofis hermeneutik digunakan oleh peneliti untuk mencari tahu struktur fundamental pemikiran-pemikiran Ibn Arabi dan yang mempengaruhi latar belakangnya. Sedangkan Pendekatan sufistik digunakan sebab rekonstruksi cara pandang Ibn Arabi tidak bisa terlepas dari pendekatan sufistik. Adapun pendekatan tafsir digunakan sebab kajian penelitian ini memiliki relevansi dengan tafsir yang nuansa tafsirnya bercorak *isyari*. Hasil penelitian ini melalui pendekatan tafsir esoterik Ibn Arabi, secara implisit ditemukan bahwa Ibn Arabi mendekati teks-teks al-Qur'an dengan menggunakan *ta'wil*, yaitu model penafsiran yang melampaui makna lahiriah teks al-Qur'an. Corak penafsiran ini dapat dicermati dalam tafsirannya tentang jalan menjadi *Insan Kamil*. Ibn Arabi menggambarkan sisi yang dimiliki oleh manusia, yaitu *tajalli*; Tuhan memmanifestasikan diri-Nya yang transenden dalam wujud-wujud lahiriyah lewat sifat dan nama-Nya. Kesempurnaan manusia dalam sisi ini hanyalah bersifat potensial, sehingga menurut Ibn Arabi untuk menjadi *Insan Kamil* sejatinya manusia

mengaktualisasikan potensi tersebut sampai pada kesadaran tertinggi sampai menyadari kesatuannya dengan Tuhan.

Kata kunci: Hermeneutika Sufistik; Insan Kamil; Tafsir Esoteric.

Introduction

The intersection of hermeneutics with the suluk world occupies an honorable position in the discourse of Islamic thought that gave birth to scientific disciplines with Sufism. The study of Sufism is the product of interpreting a text on its esoteric pressure by coming into more contact with the region of taste (*dzauq*). As a science that cannot be separated from philosophy, especially the philosophy of language, the power of reason becomes the most critical part of interpreting texts. These two aspects contribute to discussing the discourse of Sufistic hermeneutics, a model of reading by utilizing the social sciences of the humanities to look at the text more philosophically on the esoteric aspect.

In the study of the Qur'an, the pattern of interpretation becomes three parts, namely *tafsir bi al-ma'stur*, *tafsir bi al-ra'yi*, and *tafsir isyari*. Regarding the three patterns of interpretation, Ibn Arabi preferred to take the third pattern, namely the *isyari* interpretation or Sufistic-esoteric interpretation. Perspectives of such esoteric interpretations represent a group that approaches the textuality of the Qur'an by transcending the meaning of the birth of the text while affirming the inclusiveness of the Qur'an as a text that can be studied in a multiperspective manner. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the orientation of such Sufistic interpretations becomes part of the scientific point of view of interpretation that inevitably fragments ideology according to the interests of its subjectivity.

Yunasir Ali, quoting al-Jilli, elaborates that the Qur'an has different levels and doctrines: At the first level, there is a level of knowledge and doctrine at the level of ordinary people. This level of knowledge is commonly referred to as Sharia knowledge; at the second level, that is, doctrine and knowledge that is only limited in its delivery because certain people can only capture it. This knowledge is called the science of essence, the substance of Sharia itself. The third level is the knowledge and doctrine of

various mysteries and secrets of the Godhead that can also be captured by certain people so that these knowledge and doctrines are secret (Yunasir Ali, 1997, p. 169). In other words, it should only be exposed to ready and spiritually mature people. In addition, it can drag on misunderstandings or consider heretical for the perpetrator in a thought-theoretical and practical way because it has not been able to reach the highest level of thought and practice through the highest *maqam* in the esoteric-philosophical dimension of knowledge.

The view of the three levels of knowledge proposed by al-Jili affirms that in the construct of Islamic studies, there are areas of knowledge that cannot be touched except for people, especially those who are given the sharpness of mind and mind by Allah. The depth of esoteric-spiritual knowledge will lead a person to be able to unravel the mystery of the savagery until he can enter the transcendent territory of the Godhead. Mulla Sadra, a well-known Shia philosopher, believes that the Qur'an and man both have exoteric and esoteric aspects. Man can only explore the text of the Qur'an through the power of his spirit, not in the aspect of reason alone. After a man has passed through the wordplay or sharia aspect, he tries to enter into the most profound aspect of the inner Qur'an (Saifuddin, 2010, p. 47).

Mulla Sadra reminded us that diving into the inner meaning of the Qur'an does not mean that the exoteric aspect (Shari'a) is ignored because there is no way we can directly enter the deepest aspect without starting from the outside aspect. But Mulla Sadra also invites us to dive into the esoteric meaning of the Quranic text, which is so deep. The way to dive into it is not just to use the method produced by the five senses of man, but to arrive at the inner meaning, it must be based on something that is most substantial in man, namely the spirit. It is this spirit that then wanders to the bottom of the esoteric of the Qur'an. Although it is implicit from Mulla Sadra's description that to arrive at the inner meaning of the Qur'an text, the text's exoteric dimension cannot be ignored either. In other words, understanding the inner meaning of the Qur'an must be preceded by understanding the birth meaning of the text. The most interesting thing about Mulla Sadra's view is that exploring the inner meaning is through *syuhud* and *mukasyafah*, both terms prevalent in Sufi terminology. This indicates that this interpretation of *isyari* is not just a constructed theory but how then the spirit of Sufism can be implemented in the form of revelation.

Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi became one of the most important names that were quite serious in exploring the texts of the Qur'an on the inner aspects of the text. His struggle with the texts of the Qur'an touches more on the esoteric aspects of the text so that in interpreting the text, it is very abstract-philosophical. In addition, Ibn Arabi's method of dialecticizing religious language is often contrary to understanding in general, giving birth to pros and cons. For the cons, they regard it as wild and deviant explanatory. Mahmud Basyuni, for example, stated that the interpretation carried out by Ibn Arabi belongs to forbidden interpretation because any interpretation not based on the rules of the Qur'an is heretical and misleading (Mahmud Basuni, p. 253). The dialectic requires an objective attitude in assessing it because anyone, including Ibn Arabi, in producing his thoughts is inseparable from the situations and conditions surrounding them to be very influential.

Despite all his controvesrations, Ibn Arabi has influenced the human mind so much in the East and the West that many have made him such an attractive figure in a study. His contact with the texts of the Qur'an was so deep and philosophical. However, formally positioning Ibn Arabi as a *mufassir* is not appropriate but more accurately regarded as a philosopher and a Sufi. The method of interpreting the texts of the Qur'an is very thick with the *takwil* method compared to the method of interpretation as widely applied by some *mufassir*. This is where Ibn Arabi becomes very interesting to study because he has his peculiarities as an interpreter of the texts of the Qur'an with a Sufistic-esoteric perspective. Ibn Arabi gave birth to many ideas about religious language, especially those related to the themes of Sufism, including the theme of *insan kamil* mentioned by many researchers. But what is to be questioned in this study is how to achieve the position of the *insan kamil* in the esoteric interpretation of Ibn Arabi.

Theoretical Review

Several studies have discussed the thought of Ibn Arabi with various variants. The following researchers will introduce some of the previous studies considered relevant to this study, including the research of Nashr Hamid Abu Zaid derived from a dissertation entitled *Falsafat al-Ta'wil: Dirasah Fi Ta'wil al-Qur'an' inda Muhyiddin 'Ibn Arabi*. Abu Zaid comprehensively describes the Sufistic hermeneutics of Ibn Arabi, who views the plurality of nature. In his Sufistic hermeneutics, it is worked that the text of

the Qur'an reflects the plurality of nature. Thus the text does not give birth to a single meaning (Nashr Hamid Abu Zaid, 1983, p. 260). However, in the construction of Abu Zaid's thought in exploring the ideas of Ibn Arabi was less able to touch the inner meaning of the Qur'an as understood by Sufis.

Saiful Anwar and Yudi Daryadi, who wrote on *the Concept of the Perfect Man According to Muhammad Taqi Misbah Yazdi*, explained the background that stimulated the mind of Muhammad Taqi Misbah Yazdi, namely the tendency of man to deviate from his fitrah, namely fitrah, which tends to arouse the essential godliness. This journal also implicitly elaborates on several stages of being able to become a perfect human being according to Mizbah Yazdi, including by knowing oneself (*ma'rifat dzat*) back to the self (Saiful Anwar & Yudi Daryadi, p. 22-31). This concept is almost as much a concept in the logic of *ma'rifat* science "Whoever knows himself, then he will know his God." While Shamsuri researched on *Multidimensional Humans according to Murthadha Muthahhari*. Shamsuri explained Murthadha Muthahhari's view that a perfect human being is a human being who can balance the development of the dimensions (qualities) of himself, including the intellectual dimension, the moral dimension, the aesthetic dimension, the rite dimension (worship) and the dimensions of creativity (Shamsuri, p. 7-11).

Ernita Dewi's Research on *the Concept of the Ideal Man in the Perspective of Suhrawardi al-Maqtul*. Ernita describes, through the theory of *isyraqi* or illumination, the ideal human being is a human being able to combine esoteric knowledge or *ladunni* science with knowledge based on ratios such as philosophy. In Surawardi's view, the power of ratio and taste plays a vital role in leading a person to become an ideal human being (Ernita Dewi, p. 51). Some of the studies above have all examined Ibn Arabi's thinking on his *ta'wil* method and his views on man. Nevertheless, researchers are trying to see the Sufistic hermeneutics of Ibn Arabi, which is mainstream on becoming a whole human being (*insan kamil*).

Methods.

The method applied in this study is the descriptive analytical method, a method that seeks to analytically describe the construction of the esoteric interpretation from

the point of view of hermeneutic studies constructed by Ibn Arabi. The study is purely library research, sourced from pure literature. The data to be studied consists of primary data and secondary data. The primary data refers directly to the thoughts and writings of Ibn Arabi. The secondary data come from supporting reference sources in the form of books and articles about Ibn Arabi that interpret Ibn Arabi's interpretation related to his understanding of the texts of the Qur'an.

The data is collected, processed, and analyzed using the following steps. First, the researcher determines the figure studied and the formal object that is the focus of the study, namely Ibn Arabi as, the formal object of his study of the path to becoming an ideal human being. Second, interpret the data and select, in particular, the works of Ibn Arabi and other references related to this study. Thirdly, the researcher calculates essential elements related to the ideal human being. Fourth, carefully, the data will be studied and abstracted through descriptive methods, how the actual construction of Ibn Arabi's Sufistic hermeneutics is related to being an ideal human being. Fifth, the researcher makes careful conclusions in response to the formulation of the problem being studied to facilitate the formulation of the understanding of Ibn Arabi's Sufistic hermeneutic theory holistically and systematically.

The approaches used are hermeneutic philosophical approaches, Sufistic approaches, and interpretation approaches. Researchers use the hermeneutic philosophical approach to discover the fundamental structure of Ibn Arabi's thoughts and those that influenced his background. Meanwhile, the Sufistic approach is used because the reconstruction of Ibn Arabi's perspective cannot be separated from the Sufistic approach. The interpretation approach is used because this research study has relevance to interpretations whose nuances of interpretation are in the style of *isyari*.

Result and Discussion

The Problem of the Meaning of Sufistic Hermeneutics in a Theoretical Perspective.

To make the meaning of the meaning of Sufistic hermeneutics clear. The term hermeneutics is often associated with the name Hermes known in Greek mythology. He

represents a god in interpreting and explaining the language that descends from the sky to be understood by humans whose linguistic system is with the language of the earth (Amin Abdullah, 2002, p.xx). In the Perennial philosophical tradition, Hermes is mentioned as the Prophet Idris mentioned in the Qur'an. Prophet Idris was the first to know how to write and others.

In this context, it is essential to consider the view of Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid, who describes that hermeneutics, is a discourse that has been going on since its inception and has regained its momentum in the contemporary era. The area of study is to discuss texts and interpreters of texts whose traditions are not only in the Western tradition of thought but have also become a tradition of Arabic thought both in the classical era and the contemporary era (Editor's Introduction, 2004, p. ix). Unfortunately, Abu Zaid adopted more Western scholarship theories, such as schools of objectivity such as Dilthey and E. Betti (Mukhtar, 2022, p. 146). Referring to the description of the Greek tradition, it can be understood that a text can be understood with its meaning by considering according to the knowledge or level of knowledge possessed by man. This is because a text born from a specific condition will be different when that text is present in another condition. The point is that the relationship between the interpreter and the reader and the text itself is always an inevitable part of the interpretation process.

While Sufism, from a linguistic point of view, contains some terminology attributed to the *drunkard* person with the Sufistic terminology of Harun Nasution, for example, he gives some terminology, namely: *ahl-al-suffah*, one who is loyal to the Prophet to emigrate from Mecca to Medina. There is also the term *s}af*, which is a group obtained in the implementation of congregational prayers. The term Sufi is a person who always maintains chastity, while the term *sophos* means wisdom expert, and finally, there is the term *suf* which means coarse woolen cloth (Harun Nasution, 1983, pp. 56-57). Some of these terminologies in substance reveal a typology of human beings who can control pseudo-desires, full of simplicity and commendable for an essential goal of always being close to God (Abuddin Nata, 2001, p.178).

The terms presented above, closer to the meaning of this study, are *sufi* terminology, a term for people familiar with the spiritual world who spend their time engrossed with the creator by giving up themselves drifting in the sea of divine wisdom

while keeping themselves away from the world's glitter. People who belong to this group have their perspectives on understanding religious texts. So it is not uncommon to find interpretations that have a sufistic style by emphasizing the inner aspects of the text.

The notion of sufistic hermeneutics can be drawn, which is a sufistic interpretation that interprets the meaning of the text by emphasizing its esoteric dimension. This already exists in the Islamic tradition, especially in embroidery. The rules in Sufism science, being a reasonably clear indicator, there is an attempt to interpret the texts of the Qur'an by not only interpreting the birth meaning of the text but, more importantly, how to explore the most profound meaning of a text. Thus was born one of the fields of interpretation studies with the dimension of Sufistic or esoteric interpretation.

This esoteric-oriented interpretation can be seen in several works written by Sufi figures, such as the book of Tafsir al-Jailani, written by Shaikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani, which consists of five volumes. This interpretation tries to parse the texts of the Qur'an with a sufistic approach. This interpretation is not only needed to understand theoretical Sufistic studies but also to capture the explanation. It requires a qualified spiritual experience, namely that people are accustomed to diving to the bottom of the sea of wisdom. Imam al-Gazali writes a book by *Ihya Ulumuddin*. Although it cannot be formally included in the category of tafsir books, the emphasis on deciphering the texts of the Qur'an also has sufistic nuances. However, it is still an emphasis on sufism. The most monumental book whose pattern is more about the philosophical aspect of sufism is the *Kitab al-Futuh al-Makkiyyah*, written by Akbar Muhyiddin ibn Arabi, which became the mainstream of this study. In the book, Ibn' Arabi reviews the Qur'an language beyond the text's birth meaning, so it requires profound reasoning because we may need clarification due to its abstract description.

Epistemology of Sufistic Hermeneutic

As a scientific source, the Qur'an has messages that can be understood in a multiperspective manner. The openness of the Qur'anic text becomes a fertile field to cultivate various thoughts from various aspects. Some of the textualities of the Qur'an are *mafhum* (dynamic), and some are *mantuq* (static). If the static text is attempted to be

reasoned and interpreted, then it will move to create meaning. As depicted at the beginning, the process of reasoning the textuality of the Qur'an will be significantly influenced by the fragmentation of ideology and the scientific background of an interpreter. When the interpreter has a legal background, then the interpretation he produces will be colored by legal nuances; when the interpreter has an educational background, then the interpretation product will be intensely colored by the nuances of education. Similarly, if an interpreter is a linguist, then the product of interpretation is very likely to give birth to interpretation with language games, as well as scientists, sufism experts, and others.

The Qur'an's textuality has many variants, including texts with sufism nuances. These esoteric texts then cater to the tastes of the interpreters to evoke the spiritual spirit. As a spiritual being, the spiritually oriented scientific dimension becomes essential to man's life in arranging and winning his relationship with God. So to serve God optimally, "the drunks of the godhead" (*jadzab*) seek to find epistemology by interpreting the language of religion, the Qur'an, and hadith from an esoteric perspective. The tendency of esoteric interpretation gave birth to a pattern called *isyari* interpretation. However, the proximity of this interpretation of *isyari* is less than that of the exoteric interpretation model.

The arguments offered by the sufistic interpreters consider that sufism has a strong foundation in the Qur'an. Regarding epistemology, the source of knowledge of sufistic interpretation is intuition and philosophical theories. Intuition is obtained through revelation or *kasyf* and *mujahadah*, who have achieved spiritual experience because of their earnestness in drawing closer to the creator and using philosophical theories. This theory is derived from the *ta'wil nazhari* method.

The argument was corroborated by Louis Massigno, who indicated his scholarly efforts to study sufism. In his studies, he concluded that there are four epistemologies of sufism; first, the Qur'an is the essential epistemology referred to by many Sufis. Second, Islamic studies such as *tafsir*, hadith, *fiqh*, *nahwu*, and others developed in the Islamic world. Third, the legacies of *kalam* masters are mainly from various terms of the first era. Fourth, the scientific language formed in the East until the first six centuries AD, namely Greek and Persian, became the language of knowledge and philosophy (UIN

Drafting Team Syarif Hidayatullah, 2008, p. 756). Until Massigno's assessment, he still received a positive assessment of Islamic studies, especially on the foundation of the epistemology of Sufism.

Ibn Arabi: an Ocean Encounter of Philosophical Reason and Sufistic Intuition

The method of understanding and approaching God can be pursued by two paths: the orientation of reasoning and the orientation of *zdauq* (taste). Reasoning orientation is the use of the mind in capturing and understanding the substance of something. It is this path that philosophers take in seeking truth. At the same time, the *zdauq* orientation uses the sense of spirituality in the heart. Sufistics more dominantly pursue this orientation. In the historical context of Islamic thought, Ibn Rusyd represents a philosopher who strongly promotes reason. At the same time, al-Gazali represents a more dominant sufistic figure with a spiritual orientation. However, that does not mean al-Gazali does not understand the logic of philosophical thinking; there is no way al-Gazali could even attack philosophers through his book *Tahafut al-Falasifah* if he did not know and master philosophy.

The two thinkers above are symbols of the struggle of Islamic thought between those that tend to use philosophical reasoning and place feelings in managing religious emotions. The two typologies of thought above were later merged by Ibn Arabi into one in himself in understanding religious texts so that Ibn Arabi was categorized as the one who had succeeded in initiating sufism falsafi. From this side, it is one of the advantages possessed by Ibn Arabi compared to the above two thinkers.

In some literature, Ibn Arabi is more often included in the category of sufi figures or the discipline of sufism. So, orientalist, such as Louis Massiqnoun, judged Ibn Arabi to be oriented only towards *zdauq* (taste), but there were also those who refuted it, such as Miguel Asin Palacios. It is true that Ibn Arabi strongly adheres to *zdauq* in the ritual of attainment of the essence, but reason also plays a role in expressing what is achieved by *zdauq*. This *zdauq* orientation wrapped in reason is sufficient to understand *wahdatul wujud* as one of Ibn Arabi's thoughts (M. Nova Burahnuddin, 2011, p. 34). A more objective view, such as E. Afifi in assessing Ibn

Arabi, broke the orientalist accusations against Ibn Arabi, who referred to him as a philosopher in his dissertation, *the Mystica Philosophy of Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi*.

Afifi's view is a defense of Ibn Arabi as a Sufistic figure capable of combining the power of reason and intuition. This is because of the pattern of his thought synthesizing between Sufism and philosophy. This is because of the pattern of his thought synthesizing between Sufism and philosophy. The combination of these elements, namely philosophy, and Sufism, has given birth to a transcendental rational thinking pattern. Its peculiarities can parse the language of religion in a rational way of logic and a philosophical, mystical language.

Thus, the thought of Ibn Arabi can be seen from two perspectives, namely the perspective of Sufism and philosophy, although not purely. If, in reading it, we use the glasses of Sufism, then his thinking can be categorized as philosophical Sufism. If using philosophical glasses, then the thinking is categorized as mystical philosophy. We can see this regarding Sufism because he lived a spiritual life like a typical Sufi with his great spiritual experiences. Meanwhile, from a philosophical point of view, Ibn Arabi can be called a philosopher because he understands the theories of philosophy very well, so his language is very philosophical. So Ibn Arabi is an interesting and confusing figure. Exploring his thinking can only sometimes be captured with a reason, but it also requires stability of taste in capturing the complexity of interpreting religious language.

Even Komaruddin Hidayat noted that enthusiasts of the study of Ibn Arabi's thought always faced a problematic situation because his ideas and language style were alluring and exciting but simultaneously confusing. It even demands that we be extra critical and careful. Komaruddin describes the main reasons for the bias; first, the books of Ibn Arabi entered into a very fundamental area of discussion in religious and philosophical thought, the metaphysics-ontological field. He conducts exploration in a contemplative and rationally demonstrative manner. Second, it relates to the characteristics of religious language, which is when cultural language expresses experiences, passions, commitments, and concepts of religion with metaphysical-transcendental dimensions. Third, the figures and traditions of Sufism-falsafi Ibn Arabi tend to be suspected and less popular among the Sunni people. Ibn Arabi's very liberal

reflective thinking caused concern among Sunni scholars (Komaruddin Hidayat, 1998, pp. 301-302).

The reasons described by Komaruddin Hidayat further confirm that Ibn Arabi was a thinker who succeeded in bringing together two currents of rationalistic thought and metaphysical-transcendental thinking. The most logical reason for this view is that what Ibn Arabi has pioneered in each of his works is difficult to digest for those who base his thinking on formal-textual rules without dives of a contemplative-rationalistic nature.

Ibn Arabi's Esoteric Interpretation of the Path of Becoming a Plenary Man (Insan Kamil).

As an Islamic philosopher and mystic with a reputation for studying Sufism, Ibn Arabi gave rise to many religious doctrines, especially in studying Sufism. His interpretations are important in the study of sufism and are often the subject of debate so that they are of great interest among reviewers and researchers, including:

a- The Doctrine of Wihdatul Wujud: The Process of Achieving Plenary Man (Insan Kamil).

After Ibn Mansur al-Hallaj, who co-founded the concept of *al-hulul*, which is based on the hadith of the Prophet Pbu. From this hadith, it can be understood that man is the appearance of being born of the absolute love of God. In addition, al-Hallaj believes that Allah has the nature of *lahut* and *nasut*. Similarly, human beings also have *lahut* and *nasut* traits. So that the two can meet when a man can reach the level of spiritual faith through his inner cleansing until His *nasut* nature sinks into His *lahut* nature. According to al-Hallaj, God takes his place or *al-hulul* in him (Anwar Fu'ad, p. 77).

The concept of *lahut* and *nasut* was constructed by al-Hallaj, while Ibn Arabi proposed the concept of *wihdat al-wujud*. If al-Hallaj used the terms *nasut* and *lahut*, then Ibn Arabi changed *nasut* to *khalq* (being) and *lahut* to *al-Haqq* (God) (Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi, 1980, p. 124). Then the two were combined so that the concept of *wihdat al-wujud* was born. Ibn Arabi views *haqq* and *khalq* as two forms of one essence. Not

stopping here, this concept was born from the conception of *Nur Muhammad, al-Haqiqat al-Muhammadiyah, or Insan Kamil*.

Through the concept of *wihdat al-wujud* Ibn Arabi views that this plurality empirical reality is essentially one reality (Muhyiddin Ibn "Arabi, 1980, p. 48). In the plurality of beings that appear in reality, there is essentially no form other than God Himself. Reality only manifests as part of the manifestation of God. Nature is the appearance of the locus of God (UIN Writing Team Syarif Hidayatullah, 2008, p. 527). This understanding of the unity of being is a view that emphasizes that there is no true being, no absolute being that includes all beings except an Absolute God alone. The absoluteness of God's Form "drowns" other forms (Komaruddin Hidayat, 1998, p. 304). It is therefore understood that Ibn Arabi wanted to assert that the only thing in the substance of the absolute existence of all things is God, while of his many creations is indifference, but the reality of this creation of his, God is a manifestation (*tajalli*) as a vessel for understanding God Himself. For if there were no vessel to appear of God, then He would not be known by anyone.

In the context of this thought, it can be attributed to a hadith qudsi quoted by Ibn Arabi at the moment when God wants to declare himself an invisible being, but it is only because of God's love and longing to be known that he created something. So with His creation, God became known. "I am a hidden treasure that is not yet known, I long to be known, so I created creatures, I introduced myself to them so that they knew Him" (Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi, t.th. p. 399). This hadith informs sophisticatedly that before God created reality, He was in His solitude, independent of the *sagala* of quantity and plurality. I.e., God at that time was not yet attached to Him, neither the nature nor the name which in Sufistic terminology of God was in the *tarap ahadiyah*. In the context of slightly liberal thinking, in this example, when God is in his solitude, "God has not been godhead by anyone, including man," because no one knows Him yet. It is foreseeable that God's purpose in introducing Himself to reality is to affirm His originally "cryptic and hidden" existence in human knowledge. Nevertheless, because God could not possibly be known through His One and Soul, He created reality as a manifestation of His One being.

However, Ibn Arabi wanted to assert that all beings have only one. The singular reality of what exists is God. As for the multi-layered universe, it is merely a container of his names and attributes in a finite form. The names and attributes themselves are identical to His absolute *dzat*. Therefore, according to Ibn Arabi, Allah is absolute in terms of His essence but appears to a finite universe, He is *ain* something, then limited with the limits of all that is finite. However, this does not mean that Ibn Arabi considers God to be the universe. For him, the basic form is only God in terms of His essence, not His attributes, while apart from Him is a fantasy (Yunasril Ali, 1997, p. 50).

Referring to the logic of *wihdat al-wujud* thought constructed by Ibn Arabi; it explicitly derives from the deep meaning of the creed. The meaning of the creed from the phrase *La Ilaha illa Allah* is a testimony that nothing has a true being except Allah. All that appears to be this being, even ourselves as human beings, have no being but rather the embodiment of the being of God. Since the one who has the form, only He is the Most Absolute, then if on the side of God, there is an equal being, which leads to *syirk*. All that appears to exist is just an illusion captured by the human senses. In explaining this relative form, Ibn' Arabi uses the analogy of a reflection in a mirror. Even though it exists and looks, an image in a mirror is merely an illusion or image of the actor in the mirror. Furthermore, when the actor will become many when the essence is still one (Komaruddin Hidayat, 1998, p. 305).

Besides Ibn Arabi using hadith to support the concept of *wihdat al-wujud*, He also legitimized the doctrine of *wihdat al-wujud* that he built based on al-Baqarah, 2:163 "And your God is the One God." In this verse, Allah speaks to Muslims that people who worship objects other than Allah to draw closer to Him are actually the same as worshipping Allah (Muhammad Husain Al-Zahabi, 1978, p. 79). Ibn Arabi's interpretation of this verse is seen as a Sufi who carries the understanding of religious pluralism, which is indeed a theme of controversy in religious studies. This interpretation is also strongly related to the doctrine of *wihdat al-wujud*.

Similarly, Ibn Arabi's interpretation is in al-Muzammil, 73: 8-9: "Take up the name of your Lord and worship Him with great diligence. He is the God of the people and the God of Magrib." Ibn Arabi understood the text by saying: "Remember your God, who is yourself; it means to know yourself, remember always, and do not forget Him so

that God does not forget you." Moreover, achieve perfection after knowing your essence (Muhammad Husain Al-Zahabi, 1979, p. 80). Understanding Ibn Arabi's interpretation is very thick with the doctrine of *wihdat al-wujud*. A man remains *nisbi*, and God remains absolute. So that what exists essentially is that the other God is only a relative image of God, including man.

Even more interesting than Ibn Arabi's interpretation when interpreting the beginning of surah al-Baqarah, 2:1, *Alif Lam Mim*. According to him, this is a gesture for all who want to bow down, located in the *alif*, as a gesture to the *dzat*, which is the initial form. While the letter *lam* cues to the *af'al* sense called Gabriel. It is a mid-form that is the beginning of emanation and emancipated to the end. The letter *mim* is a gesture to Muhammad, which is the end of the form as a refinement of the emanation process and relates to the original form. This is the concluding form (Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi, 2011, p. 65). The three letters of *muqata'ah*, according to Ibn Arabi, consist of three realities: Allah himself, Gabriel, and Muhammad, which are considered a gesture of all willing to bow down. The third reality, namely Muhammad, gave birth to terms directly related to Muhammad, such as *haqiqat al-Muhammadiyah*, *insan kamil*, or *nur Muhammad* which is considered the source of all existence. This is based on the hadith "The first created is my light, and from my light all things are created."

Some of Ibn Arabi's interpretations are very strange and wild because the esoteric interpretation approach that is so prominent causes the interpretation of the text to be very difficult to accept because it will lead one to the understanding of *syirk*. Therefore interpreting Ibn Arabi's thought is not enough to interpret it as it would assume Ibn Arabi deviates from what is meant by the text, even assuming Ibn Arabi justifies the practice of paganism. What can be captured from the teachings of *wihdat al-wujud* is that, in essence, only one has a being that is God, and the other is *nisbi* and falsehood. How, then, is all that false justified into offerings? How can an Ibn Arabi, who came up with the most authentic godliness contained in the doctrine of *wihdat al-wujud*, justify in essence the worship other than God even strongly opposed to the *uluhiyyah tawhid* in the sentence of *Lailaha Illa Allah*.

Exploring Ibn Arabi's interpretation in the context of the doctrine of *wihdat al-wujud* cannot be understood textually. Ibn Arabi, who has always used the esoteric-

philosophical model of thinking, we will not be able to grasp it if we understand it literally. His metaphorical-allegorical phrases in interpreting religious language stimulate our reason and sense to continue to hunt down what it intends. As from the hadith, he quotes about the method of remembering God, who is none other than the man himself. The researcher tries to explore from the complexity of this constituency of thought that perhaps what he meant was to understand and verify God cannot be separated in understanding and manifesting ourselves as human beings as in the logic of the science of *makrifat* "whoever understands himself, will surely understand his God." Ibn Arabi expressed the word in the form of *majazi*, and it does not mean that man is God as he expressed, "God is God, and servant is servant, God cannot be servant, and servant cannot be God."

Examining the works of Ibn Arabi, especially his two monumental works, *Fushush Hikam and al-Futuhah al-Makkiyyah*, it takes a long time and clarity of heart to interpret each of his words and sentences. Ibn Arabi is loaded with *takwil* that penetrates the boundaries of the interpretation of the birth of the text, and sometimes its interpretation gives rise to an understanding contrary to the meaning of the birth of the text. That is why reading Ibn Arabi without the basis of the power of reason and a qualified sense can drag the reader to the brink of misguidance. It can even be subjected to the venting of the fulcrum of anger.

Therefore, it is clear that Ibn Arabi's way of understanding the Qur'anic texts was by the *takwil* method as commonly known in the science of interpretation, but Ibn Arabi went further and entered the deepest meaning in a text. *Takwil*, as the inner spiritual interpretation underlying Ibn Arabi, still needs to rule out the meaning of the birth of the text as a way to enter the realm of metaphysics. In other words, Ibn Arabi retained the literal meaning of the texts of the Qur'an when delving into its allegorical meaning (*majazi*). He still maintains his outward meaning before entering his inner meaning. It was this method that Ibn Arabi applied when formulating the theory of *wihdat al-wujud*. It is not wrong to say that Ibn Arabi was a Sufi figure who was the main user of *takwil*, which began with the text's literal meaning as a door to enter the supernatural realm. For the layman, the allegorical languages of Ibn Arabi will be trapped in misunderstandings if not contemplated with reason and a solemn heart.

Ibn Arabi made a harsh and sharp criticism of the scholars who proclaimed sharia to attract the rulers, and thus they attained a high position. He denounced the worldly scholars who distorted his passions (Kautsar Azhari Noer, 2012, p. 316). Some scholars carry out the reality of reading the text by interpreting the text according to the tastes of the ruler. This is what is intended in his hermeneutic thought Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid in the book *Naqd al-Khitab al-Din*, which he calls *Qira'ah al-Muhgridhiyyah* (idiosyncratic-tendentious reading). Abu Zaid used a distinction between *takwil* and *talwin*. Furthermore, it is this *talwin* that Abu Zaid intended with idiosyncratic readings.

b- The Path of Becoming a Plenary Man (Insan al-Kami).

Plenary man is another name for Sufistic terminology *Insan Kamil*. In linguistic studies, *insan kamil* consists of two words: *insan* and *kamil*. People are human beings, while *kamil* means perfect, commonly called *tammun*. Nevertheless, Murthada Mutahhari says the word *kamil* is not synonymous with *tammun* (complete). According to him, the word *tammun* refers to something that is prepared according to the plan, such as a plan to make a building that if there are parts that have not been completed, and then the building cannot be considered *tammun*. Mutahhari believes that although something is considered complete, there is still another higher completeness, whether one level or several high. That is called *kamil*, which means perfect (Murtada Mutahhari, 199, p. 2-3).

In this context, the question that can be asked is whether being a *kamil* person is already inherent in man as the noblest creation in terms of physical and psychic, or is there a great effort made by the man himself to achieve the grade of *insan kamil*? Ibn Arabi looked at two aspects, namely the ontological aspect and the knowledge or *makrifah* aspect. For the first aspect, the theory known in sufistic studies was born with the term *tajalli*, while in the second aspect; it gave birth to *maqam ma'rifat*. The arguments on the theory offered by Ibn Arabi in the first aspect can be related to the postulates of the Qur'an and the hadith. As in at-Tin: 4 calls man the most perfect being both physically and psychically. At the same time, the postulate is sourced from the hadith that "Allah created man (Adam) according to the image (form) of God (Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi, p. 134). As for the second aspect, it can be seen in the usual

source of argumentation among sufis about the logic of *ma'rifat* "Whoever knows himself then he will know his God" (Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi, 2011, p. 69).

Therefore, these two aspects are part of seeing the predicate to achieve the degree of *insan kamil*. However, for the first aspect, it can be said to be the initial potential on the side of its being because man is the container of God's *tajalli* reflected through His nature and name. Perfection from this side is perfection from the side of its potential form. Nevertheless, man's perfection in this first aspect will not be able to reach the degree of human being if it does not reach the degree of knowledge at the level of *makrifah*, that is, knowledge that can lead man to a high spiritual consciousness so that man can feel and realize the unity of his essence with God. Thus, it can be understood that achieving *insan kamil* must be passed on these two aspects. The *insan kamil* is a miniature of the divine reality in His manifestation in the natural world. Ibn Arabi refers to *al-'alam al-shaghir* (the realm of the microcosm), which is reflected in parts of the universe (the macrocosm). On the other hand, the emergence of human spiritual consciousness in capturing the essence of divinity through *makrifat* knowledge.

For the first process, namely *tajalli*, Ibn Arabi describes it in more detail. According to Ibn Arabi, *tajalli* consists of two forms: *tajalli dzati*, which is potential. And *tajalli syuhudi*, in the form of the appearance of *zahir* evidence (Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi, 2011, p. 120). *Tajalli dzati* exists only in the essence of God Himself. In contrast, *tajalli syuhudi* reveals the potentials that exist in the essence of the realm of reality. Ibn Arabi further details that *tajalli dzati* consists of two dignities: the dignity of *ahadiyyah*, and the dignity of *wahidiyyah*. In the dignity of *ahadiyyah*, God is an absolute singular being, which has not been connected with the quality of appaun so that in this tarap God is not yet known. God's dignity manifests Himself in a birth-born and unique way, beyond the limits of time and space, and in the image of His attributes. These traits are incarnated in God's name (*asthma*). These properties and *asthma* are integral to the nature of the universe, referred to as *al-'ayan tsabitah*. When these qualities and names are viewed from a divine aspect, it is called *ilahiyyah asthma*. When viewed from the aspect of naturalness, it is called *kiyaniyyah asthma*.

Nevertheless, *tajalli* at this level is still a mere potential and only exists in the *qadim* knowledge of God. Those potentials only have their form when God appears, and

so came the dignity of the next *tajalli* known as *tajalli syuhudi*, through His great names. Some of the *tajalli* processes described by Ibn Arabi from the first *tajalli* and subsequent are the processes of transmitting the transition from something that is still potential to actual, as the essential purpose for God to be known by His nature and name.

The second process to achieve the degree of *insan kamil* is through knowledge. Ibn Arabi reminded people, especially Sufis and prospective Sufis, to take several *maqams* starting from doing various kinds of worship, *mujahadah*, and contemplation which is certainly in accordance with what is governed by religion so that one by one the *maqam* can be passed through. The *maqams* include: *taubah, mujahadah, khalwah, uzlah, taqwa, wara, zuhud, sahr, khauf, raja, huzn, ju', tark syahwat, tark al-hasad wal al-ghadhab wal-ghibah, qan'ah, tawakkal, syukr, yaqin, shabr, muraqabah, ridha, 'ubudiyah, isitqamah, ikhlash, shidq, haya', hurriyyah, zdikr wa fikr wa tafakkur, futuwah, firasah, khluq, ghirah, walayah, nubuwah, risalah, qurbah, faqr, tashawwuf, tahqiq, hikmah, sa'adah, adab, shuhbah, tawhid, safar, husn al-khatimah, ma'rifah, mahabbah, syawq, ihtiram al-syuyukh, sama', karomah, mu'jizah, and ru'ya* (Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi, p. 139-380). From some of these *maqam* processes, he will feel the *maqam makrifat* as the process of the highest human godly journey. *Makrifat* itself will give birth to *mahabbah* (love). Love is the peak *maqam* of the *maqamat* pursued by Sufis.

c- Maqam Hubb (Love): the Supreme Maqam Grabs Kamil People.

Muhammad Amin al-Kurdi, in the Book of *Tanwir al-Qulub*, defines love as the tendency of human character to something because it is very delicious for people with love (Muhammad Amin Al-Kurdi, p. 485). In this context, Haidar Baqir, one of the Scholars who concentrates on Sufistic philosophy and thought, explains that the most important narrative of Ibn Arabi's thinking is to present a message of love in understanding Islam. According to him, something can be called goodness and truth if, at the same time, it is beautiful, having a charming power that gives birth to a sense of love and longing to experience it. Then beauty is essentially an aspect of divinity. From Ibn Arabi's perspective, the life of man and His creatures on earth is full of love, and nothing in it can be understood precisely and correctly without using the perspective of love (Haidar Baqir, 2015, pp. 30-31).

The study of Ibn Arabi divided love into three forms; the first is *al-hubb al-Ilahi* (holy love), the essential love that comes from the only One. This love will boil down to all love. The source of this love begins with love for Himself at a time when God is in his infinite sentimentality of time and space. As in the qudsi hadith: The love that breeds the longing to be *tajalli* can be seen in the qudsi hadith, "I am a hidden *kanz*; therefore I long to be known. So I created creatures so that through me they knew me." The hidden mystery of *dzat* results in longing and loneliness. In this primordial longing and loneliness makes Him yearn to be known (Mustamin Arsyad, 2012, p. 83). This indicates that the love that breeds longing is why God created the creature so that God would be known and His *tajalli* container.

From the qudsi hadith, it can be a clue to understanding the result of the realization of this plurality nature is due to the existence of qudus love, which is also the cause of the emergence of *tabi'i* love, which is love based on the satisfaction of human passions. At this stage, the beloved becomes the victim who loves or, in terms of Ibn Arabi *al-hubb al-unsuri* (Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi, p. 333). Spiritual love is love for something (*al-mahbub*) due to the beloved and the lover (*muhib*) himself. Ibn Arabi considered love at this level to be part of holy love. Spiritual love and *tabi'i* love are two forms of love that dominate human beings that are essentially part of holy love.

As explained by Yunasril Ali that the highest maqams pursued by sufis are when reaching *maqam makrifat* and *mahabbah*. *Makrifat* begins with knowing and realizing one's identity. By knowing and realizing one's identity, Sufis will undoubtedly know and be aware of their God. Awareness of God's existence means knowing God as an absolute true being. Meanwhile, forms other than Him are shadowy forms and are *nisbi*. In addition, awareness of the existence of God also means man's awareness of himself as a vessel for God's *tajalli*, where the qualities (attributes) of God reflect the soul in the form of spiritual virtues (Yunasril Ali, 1997, p. 73).

Thus, taking *maqam makrifat* will give rise to *mahabbah* (love). Love is the culmination of the *maqams* pursued by Sufis. This is where God's will and man's will meets. God's will is His longing to be devoted to nature, while man's will is to return to its true essence, the Absolute Being. In the concept of love, Ibn Arabi views love as the cause of the creation of nature because it is based on the love that God is devoted to

nature. Similarly, love is also the cause of the return of all manifestations to their original and essential essence because, at the instigation of love, they want to return to their origin (Yunasril Ali, 1997, p. 74). From the *maqam* of love comes *syauq* (longing), which is the feeling of wanting to meet the beloved. Such feelings only subside and become a joy when the beloved is discovered. On it, there is also the same *maqam* which is to listen to everything that can usher in the feelings of the person who is intoxicated with longing for the one he longs for, namely Allah. So that at one time, he sank (mortally) in what he longed for.

Conclusion

In the context of the interpretation study, Ibn Arabi's pattern of interpretation falls into the category of *isyari* interpretation, whose orientation pressure is esoteric-inner. Some of the important themes that Ibn Arabi focused on were the path to becoming *insan kamil*. Ibn Arabi's interpretation of *insan kamil* cannot be separated from *wihdat al-wujud*. This concept was born from the inspiration of his predecessors, such as Ibn Mansur al-Hallaj, a concept of *lahut* and *nasut*, which Ibn Arabi later reconstructed into *khalq* and *haq*. From these two concepts was born the doctrine of *wihdat al-wujud*, a doctrine that teaches about the plurality of universes that have a single essence. All universe manifestations originate from *nur Muhammad* (the essence of Muhammad) as a perfect manifestation of Allah, so the doctrine *insan kamil* was born, especially for the prophet Muhammad SAW.

However, ordinary humans can also carry this *insan kamil* when viewed from two aspects. The first aspect is seen in the ontological creation of man as part of the image of God. Ibn Arabi calls it the vessel of God's *tajalli* that exists in man. Nevertheless, perfection is the only potential to be improved through knowledge to the spiritual peak (*makrifat*). The second aspect is seen in the *makrifat* region. *Makrifat* in the context of *wihdat al-wujud* initiated by Ibn Arabi, that the perfect man is a wise man who views everything in this universe as a manifestation of the All-Righteous. Ibn Arabi's view can be concluded that a perfect man, in the first aspect, can be seen as something universal so that the degree of man is still at a lower level. Its embodiment will come to perfection when a man has come to the tarap of consciousness of the union of his *tajalli* with the all-singular. Ibn Arabi also attributed it to the concept of

mahabbah and its relation to *makrifat*. Because logically, *mahabbah* would only be achievable with early recognition or *makrifat*. The higher a person's knowledge of God, the stronger his *mahabbah* impulse. Ibn Arabi, in his view that this *mahabbah* is the origin of all things into existence and even becomes the meeting between God's and man's will.

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