

Sufi Interpretive Patterns in Indonesian Quranic Exegesis

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Abstract

This research is motivated by the many patterns of interpretation. Viewed from a historical perspective, Sufi interpretation is a manifestation of the spiritual seriousness of people who are clean, sincere and clear-hearted to interpret and reflect on the intentions of Allah SWT. in His word. Sufi interpretation is defined as a method or form of interpreting the verses of the Quran that is different from its apparent meaning because of the implied instructions. This study aims to discuss the patterns of Sufi interpretation in Indonesia by explaining several sub-chapters, namely; the meaning of Sufism and Sufism, the history of the development of Sufism and Sufism in Indonesia, Sufism in the Quran, the pattern of Sufism in the study of interpretation (Sufi interpretation), and Sufi interpretation figures. The method used is qualitative with a library research approach. After conducting research, the results were obtained that the pioneer of Sufism was Hamzah Fansuri. Holistically, the characteristic forms of Sufistic interpretation are divided into two, namely Isyari and Nazhari interpretations. However, among Indonesian tafsir scholars who are also experts in the field of Sufism, none of them wrote their tafsir books using Sufistic styles in the form of Isyari or Nadzari. This is because they separate the science of Sufism from the science of interpretation. So that in writing their interpretations, they still adhere to the meaning of zahir and the rules of interpretation that apply in general.

INTRODUCTION

The Quran is an eternal miracle of Islam and serves as the primary source of Islamic teachings, providing guidance for human life. The Quran is not merely a sacred text to be read, but also a guide that must be understood and put into practice in daily life. Allah SWT affirms His guarantee to preserve the authenticity of the Quran in Surah Al-Hijr, verse 9, which indicates that the Quran will remain relevant throughout the ages. Therefore, various interpretive approaches continue to evolve to explore the meanings and messages contained within it, one of which is Sufi exegesis, which seeks to understand the inner (esoteric) dimensions of the Quranic verses.

The growing field of Sufi exegesis studies in Indonesia reflects an increasing academic interest in the relationship between Sufism and Quranic interpretation. The Sufi tradition has been an important part of the history of Islam in the Indonesian

Sufi tradition has been an important part of the history of Islam in the Indonesian archipelago since the 17th century through figures such as Hamzah Fansuri, Syamsuddin al-Sumatrani, Abdurrauf al-Singkili, and Nuruddin al-Raniri. The presence of these figures demonstrates that the development of Islam in Indonesia has not only been oriented toward aspects of Sharia but has also emphasized a profound spiritual dimension. Research Yahya et al., (2022) indicates that Sufi exegesis in Indonesia has developed through two main approaches: *isyari* exegesis and *nazari* exegesis, which allow for an understanding of the inner meanings of the Quran without neglecting its outward meanings. Furthermore, Wahyudi & Wahyudin, (2021) explain that the main characteristics of Sufi exegesis lie in the use of spiritual intuition, mystical experience, and the process of *mukasyafah* in understanding the divine messages contained in the Quran.

Nevertheless, the trends of modernization, the rationalization of science, and the dominance of textual approaches in Quranic studies have led to Sufi exegesis receiving relatively less attention compared to thematic, social, and contemporary exegesis. This phenomenon has led to a decline in the public's understanding of the spiritual dimension of the Quran, which actually plays a crucial role in shaping religious character, strengthening moral values, and fostering a sense of the divine. On the other hand, the increasing social problems, moral crises, and spiritual drought in modern society actually highlight the need for studies capable of integrating intellectual and spiritual dimensions in understanding the Quran. Therefore, research on Sufi exegesis has become increasingly urgent in order to revive the spiritual values of the Quran that are relevant to the challenges of contemporary life.

The urgency of this study is also supported by a number of previous studies that highlight the importance of examining Sufi exegesis in the context of modern Islam. A study Wahyudi & Wahyudin, (2021) examined the history and characteristics of Sufi exegesis in Indonesia and concluded that Sufi exegesis developed through an esoteric approach focused on the purification of the soul and closeness to Allah. A study Yahya et al., (2022) confirms that Indonesian scholars have made significant contributions to the development of exegetical thought influenced by the Sufi tradition, although most continue to maintain a textual approach in their interpretations. Furthermore, a study Syarif et al., (2022) demonstrates that the Sufi exegetical approach can foster a more moderate understanding in building social relationships and interfaith tolerance. A study by Ali Akbar & Mujiburrohmah., (2023) on Jalaluddin Rakhmat's Sufi Exegesis of Al-Fatihah also demonstrates that Sufi exegesis remains relevant in addressing the spiritual needs of modern society.

However, based on a review of previous studies, a research gap still exists. Most studies focus only on the historical development of Sufi exegesis, its general characteristics, or analyses of specific figures. Research that specifically examines the contributions of Indonesian Sufi exegetes in developing a paradigm of Quranic interpretation relevant to the context of modern society remains relatively limited. Furthermore, few studies have comprehensively integrated the historical, epistemological, and social relevance aspects of Indonesian Sufi exegesis. Therefore, this research is important to provide a deeper understanding of the development of Sufi exegesis in Indonesia, the figures involved in it, and its contribution to the advancement of Quranic studies and contemporary Islamic spirituality.

Thus, this study is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of exegetical studies, particularly Sufi exegesis, while also enriching the scholarly heritage of Islam in the Indonesian archipelago. Furthermore, the findings of this study are expected to serve as a reference for academics, students, and the general public in understanding the spiritual dimensions of the Quran dimensions that are not limited to outward aspects but also encompass profound inner meanings that are applicable to modern life.

METHODS

The research method in this article employs a qualitative approach in the form of library research (Anidar et al., 2026; Armita, 2025; Efendi et al., 2026; Engkizar et al., 2025, 2026; Muhammad et al., 2022; Muttaqin, 2019; Rouf & Mohd Yusoff, 2013; Wahyudi & Wahyudin, 2021). This approach was used to trace, examine, and analyze various literary sources related to Sufi exegesis within the corpus of Islamic thought, including exegetical texts, books, scholarly journal articles, and historical documents relevant to the research focus. The data in this study are documentary in nature, consisting of written data obtained from various credible bibliographic sources that possess historical and academic value regarding the development of Sufi exegesis in Indonesia. Data collection was conducted through documentary research by tracing various relevant literature, including both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources consist of works by Sufi exegetes and exegetical texts with a Sufi orientation, while secondary sources consist of books, scholarly journals, and previous research discussing similar themes. The data analysis technique used is content analysis, which involves an in-depth examination of the content, ideas, and concepts found in books, texts, and scholarly articles related to Sufi exegesis. Through this technique, the researcher seeks to identify patterns of thought, characteristics of interpretation, and the development of Sufi exegesis concepts in Indonesia, thereby gaining a comprehensive and systematic understanding of the research subject (Zubairin, 2020).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Meaning of Sufism and the Sufi Order

There are various opinions regarding the meaning of Sufism. The word *al-Tasawwuf* is the Arabic form of the word *Suf* (صوف), meaning “sheep’s wool.” Sufis typically wear woolen garments as a symbol of simplicity and purity. Historical records indicate that the first person to use the term “Sufi” was an ascetic named Abu Hasyim al-Kufi in Iraq (d. 150 AH). Al-Zahabi defined Sufism as the act of surrendering oneself to Allah (and submitting) in accordance with Allah’s will (Ariyadri, 2022). As for the word “as-Sufi,” which is associated with Sufi terminology, from a linguistic or etymological perspective, it is often linked to five (5) things. According to Harun Nasution, these five aspects are: *as-Suffah* or *ahl as-Suffah* those who migrated with the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina; *saf*, meaning a row in congregational prayer; *sufi*, meaning pure or holy; *saf*, referring to coarse woolen cloth; and *sophos*, meaning wisdom (Ulya, 2015).

According to Mustafa Hilmi, the word “sufi” is derived from the word “shafa” (clear, pure) or “shuf” (sheep’s wool). While this makes sense in terms of the meaning embodied by Sufism, it is not entirely accurate from the perspective of the word’s etymology. Although the word “sufi” is semantically close to “shafa” a quality embodied by a Sufi according to linguistic rules, attributing the word “sufi” to “shafa” is not correct. The derivational suffix for “shafa” is “shafa’i,” not “sufi.” Meanwhile, the derivational suffix for “shuf” is “shafawi,” not “sufi” (Sahin, 2020).

According to Imam al-Qusyairi, the term “sufi” is a laqab, or epithet. He explains that the term “sufi” is applied to the group that practices the teachings of Sufism, while the Sufi community itself is referred to as “sufiyah.” On the other hand, there is another term, “mutashawwif,” which is applied to those who are new to the study of Sufism. As for “mutashawwifah,” it is the name given to a group that is just beginning to study Sufism (Sahin, 2020). Meanwhile, regarding the terminological definition of Sufism, there are several differing opinions that have been expressed by various scholars. The opinions of existing Sufi scholars are as follows: First, Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani argued that Sufism is the purification of the heart and the eradication of desires at their root through seclusion (*khalwat*), spiritual exercises

(*riyadboh*), repentance (*taubah*), and sincerity (*ikhlas*). Second, Al-Junaidi held that Sufism is the practice of purifying the heart from whatever disturbs human emotions, extinguishing weaknesses, shunning carnal desires, drawing near to that which is pleasing to Allah, relying on the sciences of reality, offering counsel to all people, firmly upholding one's covenant with Allah regarding reality, and following the example of the Messenger of Allah in matters of Sharia.

Third, Sheikh Ibn Ajibah explains Sufism as a science that brings a person closer to the One and Only God through spiritual purification and sweetening the soul with righteous deeds; the path of Sufism begins with knowledge, followed by deeds, and culminates in divine grace. Fourth, H. M. Amin Syukur argues that Sufism is a practice of earnest devotion (*riyadboh*, *mujahadah*) to purify the heart, strengthen faith, and deepen spirituality in order to bring humans closer to Allah so that all their attention is directed solely toward Allah.

Thus, in essence, Sufism is an effort to discipline the soul through various practices that can free a person from worldly influences, purify the soul of unpraiseworthy traits so that only praiseworthy and noble traits radiate from it, thereby enabling one to concentrate and focus one's attention solely on Allah and always feel a sense of closeness to Him. Furthermore, regarding the term "*tarekat*," it is derived from the Arabic word "*tariqah*," which means a small path specifically, a path, passageway, or alley. "*Tarekat*" or "*tariqah*," meaning a path, is not the same as "*syariat*" or "*shari'ah*," which also means a path, but the latter refers to the main path. According to Annimarie Schimmel, the tarekat is a side path, whereas the *syariat* is the main road. In relation to the tarekat within the Sufi tradition, Schimmel connects these two terms by stating that the tarekat is the path taken by Sufis and is described as a path that originates from the *syariat* since the main road is called *syara'*, while the side path is called *tariq*. To reinforce this statement, Schimmel quotes the following hadith of the Prophet: "Sharia is my words, *tariqah* is my actions, and *haqiqah* or *ma'rifah* is my inner experience."

Terminologically speaking, a tarekat is a Sufi path that has proclaimed itself as a path capable of guiding people toward a Sufi experience or tasawwuf and a sense of closeness to and/or union with God. As many people have quoted, "Sharia without a tarekat is empty, while a tarekat without Sharia is a lie." In this regard, Abu Bakar Atjeh emphasizes that the tarekat is the most important part of the practice of Sufism. Studying Sufism without knowing and practicing the tarekat is a futile endeavor.

The History of the Development of Sufism and Sufi Orders in Indonesia

Based on historical textual evidence, Sufism entered Indonesia in the 17th century CE, spearheaded by Hamzah Fansuri from Aceh and carried on by his student Syamsuddin Sumatrani. Although it is also believed that earlier, the Wali Songo and Syekh Siti Jenar had already spread Sufism throughout the Indonesian archipelago in the 15th century CE, leading Alwi Shihab to conclude that the era of the Wali Songo and Syekh Siti Jenar is considered the introductory period and the first stage of the emergence of Sufi teachings in Indonesia.

In practical terms, Sufism is divided into two categories: ethical Sufism and philosophical Sufism. Ethical Sufism is the application of Sufism to the moral conduct of believers, which emanates from their inner selves and influences all their behavior, whereas philosophical Sufism is the practice of Sufism that employs philosophical terminology to understand and practice Sufism. A prominent figure in ethical Sufism is Imam al-Ghazali, who successfully integrated fiqh with Sufism in his seminal work *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*. Meanwhile, Ibn Arabi is a leading figure in philosophical Sufism, known for his doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud* and works such as *al-Futuh al-Makkiyah* and *Fushush al-Hikam*. In short, *wahdat al-wujud* is the belief that the Only Existent is the One Being, and that the entire universe is a manifestation of that One. Ibn Arabi believed that the various forms of reality or existence are nothing more than reflections

of the One.

Furthermore, regarding the arrival of Sufi orders in Indonesia, one reference can be found in the literary works of the Banten Sultanate, specifically the *Serat Banten Rante-rante*, or the history of ancient Banten. It contains a story recounting how Sunan Gunung Djati traveled to the Holy Land and met with Sheikh Najmuddin Kubra and Sheikh Abu Hasan Asyadzili. From these two figures from different eras, the Sunan so the story goes ultimately received spiritual guidance from the Kubrawiyyah and Syadziliyyah Sufi orders. Historically, there have been many branches and figures within these orders themselves. Among the most famous is Syekh Abdul Qodir Jailani, whose Sufi teachings formed the basis of the Qodiriyyah Order and were later introduced to Indonesia by Hamzah Fansuri. Next is Syekh Najmudin Kubro, the founder of the Kubrawiyyah Order, which was subsequently introduced to Indonesia by the Wali Songo. In 1979 in Indonesia, NU scholars established a Sufi order organization called Jam'iyyah Ahl Tarekat Al Mu'tabarah Al-Nahdiah, or Jatman for short, which comprises 45 branches of recognized Sufi orders.

Sufism in the Quran

Islamic teachings generally govern both the outward and inward aspects of life. The understanding of these inward aspects, in turn, gave rise to Sufism. The book Ilmu Tasawuf states that the Qur'an and the Sunnah actually place significant emphasis on elements of Sufism that are consistent with the life of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and his companions. This is evident from the connections between the text of the Quran and Sufism, which are explained both explicitly referring to information and implicitly referring to emotions. Explicitly, the Quran describes Sufism in Surah Al-Maidah/5:54:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ أَذِلَّةٌ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٌ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٥٤

Meaning: *O you who have believed, whoever of you should revert from his religion - Allah will bring forth [in place of them] a people He will love and who will love Him [who are] humble toward the believers, powerful against the disbelievers; they strive in the cause of Allah and do not fear the blame of a critic. That is the favor of Allah; He bestows it upon whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.*

The verse above explicitly discusses the characteristics of the Sufi tradition, namely: Allah loves them and they love Him in return; they are gentle toward believers and firm toward disbelievers; they also strive in the way of Allah and do not fear the reproach of their detractors. In the al-Mishbah commentary, Quraish Shihab explains that Allah's love and His grace are boundless, whereas human love for Him exists on various levels. However, love for Him is the foundation and principle of the journey toward Allah; thus, all levels or stations (*maqam*) are subject to destruction except for love. For love cannot be destroyed under any circumstances as long as the path toward Allah continues to be pursued.

Implicitly, in an emotive, connotative, or figurative sense, the Quranic verse describes the characteristics of Sufism in Surah Al-Baqarah/2:155:

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ ١٥٥

Meaning: *And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient*

Q.S. Ibrahim/14:7:

وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ ٧

Meaning: *And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe.'*

Each of the two verses above describes a level of patience and gratitude that Sufis believe to be a means of drawing closer to Allah. These verses are deeply

emotional, as they convey joy for the patient and the anguish of punishment for those who deny His blessings. Nevertheless, not a single word mentioning “tasawwuf” can be found in the Quran or the hadith. This is because the term “tasawwuf” did not emerge until about 50 years after the passing of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. Consequently, many people still consider Sufism to be a *bid’ah*. However, one Orientalist, Louis Massignon, argued that Sufism is a manifestation of the Quran itself as it is read, reflected upon, and put into practice. Thus, in his view, the doctrine of Sufism is none other than the Noble Quran.

Sufi Approaches to Quranic Exegesis (Sufi Exegesis)

In turn, when adherents of Sufism engaged with the Quran, this ultimately gave rise to a new approach known as Sufi exegesis. According to Hasan Basri and Talhas, Sufi exegesis is the interpretation of the Quran that draws upon a Sufi’s capacity to understand the Quranic text by revealing the meanings or implications behind the text’s apparent meaning. Sufi exegetes fundamentally never deny the literal meaning of Quranic verses based on the rules of the Arabic language; in fact, that literal meaning must take precedence. However, beyond the literal meaning, they focus on the implied inner meaning of the Quranic verses, then reconcile both the textual and contextual meanings in their interpretation.

According to Asep Musadad, Sufi exegesis must be distinguished into two categories: exegesis as a standalone commentary and exegesis as a formal exegetical text. Exegesis as a standalone commentary is understood as a text or body of terminology that is not bound by the usual limitations or rules of exegesis. Jalaluddin Rakhmat’s Tafsir Sufi Al-Fatihah is a prime example of this type of exegesis. Another example is a full 30-juz exegesis titled Tafsir Al-Qur’an Al-‘Azim by Imam al-Tustari, written in the third century AH; this is the oldest Sufi exegetical work still accessible to Muslims today.

In interpreting the verses of the Quran, Sufis adopt a distinctive perspective. In their interpretations, Sufi exegesis draws heavily on the esoteric dimensions hidden behind the literal meaning of the verses. Sufi exegesis is fundamentally divided into two categories: *isyari* Sufi exegesis and *nadzari* Sufi exegesis (Wahyudi & Wahyudin, 2021).

First, *Isyari* Sufi Exegesis. Linguistically, the word “isyari” derives from the word “*isyarah*,” which means to point to something with one’s hand, eyes, or eyebrows. As for the technical term, Al-Zarqani defines *Isyari* exegesis as an explanation of Quranic verses by interpreting them beyond their apparent meaning as understood by Sufi practitioners through the hints contained within the structure of the verses. *Isyari* exegesis is based on the search for hidden, esoteric signs embedded within the sacred text of the Quran. It also draws upon the hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him), which states, “The Quran has an outer meaning and an inner meaning.” One of the leading figures in Sufi *isyari* exegesis is Imam al-Tustari.

From this, it can be concluded that *isyari* Sufi exegesis involves interpreting verses of the Quran in a way that differs from their literal meaning based on specific guidance received; however, a compromise can be reached between these two meanings. The characteristics of *isyari* exegesis summarized by Titus Burchardt are as follows: *isyari* interpretation must not negate the intended literal meaning; there must be other scriptural texts to support it; it must not contradict Islamic law or reason; and it must begin with an interpretation of the literal meaning that opens the possibility of discovering the inner meaning.

Second, Sufi *Nadzari* Exegesis. Unlike *isyari*, Sufi *nadzari* exegesis is an interpretive approach to the Quran that does not rely on linguistic aspects or what is implied by symbolic hints. Furthermore, Sufi *nadzari* exegesis reinforces mystical theories by shifting the purpose of the Quran toward the exegete’s own mystical objectives. This *nadzari* interpretation is heavily influenced by the concept of *wahdah al-wujud*. Among the leading figures in Sufi *nadzari* exegesis is Muhyi al-Din Ibn ‘Arabi.

An example of this is his interpretation of Quranic Surah al-Fajr (89): 27–30:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ۖ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً ۚ فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي ۚ ۲٨ فَادْخُلِي فِي جَنَّاتِي ۚ ۳٠

Meaning: *[To the righteous it will be said], "O reassured soul, Return to your Lord, well-pleased and pleasing [to Him], And enter among My [righteous] servants, And enter My Paradise."*

“(And every tranquil soul: ‘Return to your Lord.’) They will return only to the Lord who called them, so that they may come to know Him fully, (‘Return to your Lord in contentment and well-pleased,’) ‘then enter among My servants’ in the place that is rightfully theirs. By ‘My servants’ I mean those who recognize their Lord, who worship none but Him, and who see no god other than Him in the Oneness of His Essence. ‘(Enter My Paradise)’ with which I am concealed. Indeed, My Paradise is you; it is merely veiled by you. I will not be known by anyone other than you, just as you would not exist were it not for My creation of you. Whoever knows you will indeed know Me, and if I am not known, then you will not be known.”

It can be concluded that among the characteristics of theoretical exegesis are the following: The interpretation of Quranic verses in theoretical exegesis is greatly influenced by philosophy. In theoretical exegesis, the unseen is brought into the realm of the tangible or visible in other words, the unseen is analogized to reality. Sometimes it disregards the rules of Arabic grammar (*nahwu*) and interprets only what aligns with the spirit and soul of the exegete.

Figures in Sufi Exegesis

First are the Walisongo. The Walisongo played a dominant role in the spread of Islam in Indonesia, particularly the teachings of Sufism on the island of Java. The same is true of other Sufi scholars. This was influenced by the Islamic thought of al-Ghazali (d. 111 CE), who integrated Sufi teachings into the thought of the Sunni and Jama'ah school of thought. Consequently, the form of Sufism that developed in Indonesia tended to follow the Sufi teachings brought by al-Ghazali. The content of Sufi texts in Indonesia is also heavily influenced by Ibn 'Arabi's Wujudiyyah philosophy and al-Hallaj's teachings on mystical union (*fana*). An example is Abdullah Arif's book titled *Bahar al-Lahut* (The Ocean of Divinity). The Sufi philosophy of the Walisongo is Ibn 'Arabi's Wujudiyyah. The exegesis used is the Nadzhari commentary (Wahyudi & Wahyudin, 2021).

First, Hamzah Fansuri (1589–1604 CE / 997–1011 AH). He was a scholar during the reign of Sultan Alaidin of the Kingdom of Aceh Darussalam. He was renowned as a literary figure, philosopher, logician, Sufi, and scholar of Islamic jurisprudence. He was fluent in Arabic, Urdu, Persian, and Javanese. Hamzah Fansuri's Sufi order was the Qadiriyyah, founded by Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jilani, who followed the Hanbali school of jurisprudence. Hamzah Fansuri (died around 1590) was one of those who received the chain of transmission (*sanad*) for the Qadiriyyah order during his visit to Baghdad. This indicates that Hamzah Fansuri was the first known Indonesian to adhere to the Qadiriyya Order. He also shared the views of al-Hallaj, specifically the doctrine of *hulul* (the belief that God chooses specific parts of the human body where human characteristics have been lost). Hamzah Fansuri's Sufi philosophy was that of the Qadiriya Order, which aligns with al-Hallaj's teachings namely, *hulul*, *itihad*, and *mahabbah*. The Qadiriya Order flourished in Baghdad, the capital of Iraq, and was founded by Abdul Qadir al-Jailani. The most widely used exegesis is the Nadzhari exegesis.

Second, Sheikh Syamsudin Sumatrani. Sheikh Syamsudin Sumatrani was a great scholar who lived in the 16th century CE. Sheikh Syamsudin was a descendant of a scholar named Abdullah as-Sumatri. He studied Sufism under Sheikh Hamzah Fansuri and Sunan Bonang in Java. His works include: *Tanbihuth Thullaab Fi-Ma'arifati Malikil Wahhaab*, *Kitab Ushul al-Tahqiq*, *Syarah Mir'at al-Qulub*, etc. One example of Syamsuddin Sumatrani's teachings is his assertion that Allah is One, Qadim (without beginning or end), and *Baq* (eternal) in relation to Creation. As stated in Surah Al-

Ikhlas 1–4:

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ١ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ٢ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ٣ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ ٤

Meaning: Say, "He is Allah, [who is] One, Allah, the Eternal Refuge., He neither begets nor is born, Nor is there to Him any equivalent."

He argued that human beings are a kind of object through which God manifests His attributes. All the attributes possessed by human beings reflect God's attributes, and God's attributes differ from those possessed by human beings. The interpretive approach used in this exegesis is not much different from that of his teacher.

Second, Sheikh Yusuf Makassari. Sheikh Yusuf Makassari was a Sufi figure from the Sulawesi region. The term "Makassari" is derived from the region where he was born. In addition to being a memorizer of the Quran, he also studied grammar (*nahwu*), morphology (*sharaf*), rhetoric (*bayan*), figures of speech (*mani'* and *badi'*), eloquence (*balaghah*), logic (*manthiq*), and so on, including Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), the principles of religion (*ushul al-din*), and Sufism (*tasawwuf*). He also studied other disciplines such as "the science of the causes of revelation" (*"ilmu asbaabun nuzul"*), "the science of exegesis" (*"ilmu tafsir"*), and others. One of his works is Ar-Risalatun Naqshabandiyyah. The Naqshabandi order is a school of thought that prioritizes spiritual intuition or *dzauq*. The method of exegesis employed is the symbolic interpretation (*tafsir isyari*).

Third, Sheikh Abdul Rauf as-Singkili. Abdul Rauf Singkel hereinafter referred to as Abdurrauf was a Malay exegete from Fansur, Singkil (Singkel), located on the northwestern coast of Aceh. The name "Singkili" is derived from the name of his hometown. Abdurrauf's works span various fields, such as *fiqh*, *hadith*, Sufism, Quranic exegesis, and other religious sciences. Examples of his works related to Sufism include: *Kifayah al-Muhtajin Ila Masyrab al-Muwahhidin al-Qa'ilin bi Wahdah al-Wujud* (Provisions for Those in Need of the Way of the Monotheists Who Adhere to Wahdat al-Wujud, in Malay) and *Umdah al-Muhtajin Ila Suluk Maslak al-Mufarridin* (A Guide for Those Embarking on the Path of Sufism, in Malay). Abdul Rauf Singkel's Sufi philosophy is based on the doctrine of Wahdat al-Wujud. The exegetical method he employed was the *nadzhari* approach.

Third, Nuruddin Ar-Raniri. Nuruddin Ar-Raniri was an Islamic figure from Aceh. He was born in Gujarat, India. Ar-Raniri was a student of Abu Nafs Sayyid Imam bin 'Abdullah bin Syaiban, who adhered to the Rifa'iyah Order. As a figure in Islamic reform, Ar-Raniri sought to combat the Wujudiyah school of thought, which he considered heretical. One of his works is *Ash-Shirath Al-Mustaqim*. In interpreting the concept of divinity, Ar-Raniri sought to combine the Mutakallimin school of thought with the Sufi perspective represented by Ibn Arabi. In Quran 3:191:

رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ١٩١

Meaning: [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.

He spoke about "the existence of Allah and the One Universe." This universe is the outward aspect of the inner reality, which is Allah SWT. However, in truth, this universe does not exist; what exists is only the existence of the One Allah. He concluded that this universe cannot be said to be distinct from or united with Allah, but rather that it serves as a *tajalli* (reflection) of Allah SWT. Nuruddin Ar-Raniri's Sufi philosophy is that of the *mutakallimun*. The interpretation he frequently employed was a synthesis of the *isyari* and *nazhari* schools of exegesis.

Fourth, Hamka. Hamka was the son of Sheikh Abdul Karim bin Amrullah, a founding figure of the *Islah (Tajdid)* movement. He was a renowned scholar in Indonesia. He was born in Kampung Molek, Maninjau, West Sumatra, Indonesia, on February 17, 1908, and passed away on July 24, 1981. He was active in the Muhammadiyah movement and served as a member of Muhammadiyah's central

leadership. Hamka opposed superstition, *bid'ah*, and esoteric Sufi orders prevalent in Indonesia. This was particularly true regarding concepts of tawhid that took on distinct forms, such as *fana*, *baqo'*, *ittihad*, *ulul*, and *wihdatul wujud*. In his efforts to purify Sufi teachings, Hamka wrote several works on Sufism. One of his works is *Modern Sufism (Ethical)*, which discusses material possessions, wealth, *al-Qana'ah* (contentment), and *tawakkal* (trust in God). He employed an ethical approach through *riyadhoh* (spiritual exercises), *taballi* (purification), *istiqomah* (steadfastness), and *takholli* (self-emptying), ultimately leading to *tajalli* (divine manifestation).

Hamka's Sufi philosophy is Modern Sufism (ethical). He opposed superstition, innovation, and esoteric Sufi orders. The method of exegesis he employed was the *nadzhari* approach. From the explanation above, there are two forms of Sufi exegesis: *isyari* and *nadzari*, each with its own distinctive characteristics as outlined above. Most of the Sufi figures in Indonesia mentioned above employ the *nadzari* form of Sufi exegesis, as they are heavily influenced by the doctrine of *wihdah al-wujud*, which aligns with the teachings of al-Hallaj and Ibn 'Araby.

CONCLUSION

The history of Sufism in Indonesia began in the 17th century CE, pioneered by Hamzah Fansuri and Syamsudin Sumatrani. However, in the preceding centuries namely the 15th and 16th centuries CE many people believed that the era of the Wali Songo marked the earliest beginnings of Sufism in the Indonesian archipelago. Sufism and the tarekat form a single entity, as the tarekat is the path for the Sufi. Sufism is a discipline or religious tradition that focuses on the inner aspects, while the tarekat is the path or method for pursuing it. Holistic Sufi exegesis is divided into two distinct forms: *isyari* Sufi exegesis and *nadzari* Sufi exegesis. However, none of the Sufi exegetes mentioned above wrote exegetical works with either an *isyari* or *nadzari* orientation. This is because they distinguished between the science of exegesis and the science of Sufism; thus, in writing their exegeses, they adhered strictly to the literal meaning and the generally accepted rules of exegesis. Thus, the Indonesian Sufi exegetes mentioned above are scholars who have authored exegetical works while also mastering the science of Sufism as a separate discipline.

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