

The Isyārī Approach in Hadith Jurisprudence among Prominent Sufi Figures: The Transformation of the Method of Esoteric Interpretation from the Qur'anic Text to the Prophetic Hadith

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Abstrak: Pendekatan isyārī selama ini lebih banyak dikaji dalam konteks tafsir Al-Qur'an, sementara penerapannya dalam memahami hadis (fiqh al-ḥadīṣ) masih belum banyak mendapatkan perhatian, khususnya terkait validitas pemaknaan sufistik melalui kritik sanad, matan, dan parameter epistemologis yang terukur. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis penerapan pendekatan isyārī dalam pemahaman hadis oleh tokoh-tokoh sufi serta menguji kesesuaiannya berdasarkan parameter al-Syāṭibī. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kepustakaan (library research) dengan pendekatan kualitatif. Data dianalisis menggunakan content analysis yang dipadukan dengan kritik sanad dan matan hadis, serta diuji berdasarkan dua parameter penerimaan pemahaman isyārī menurut al-Syāṭibī. Sumber primer penelitian berasal dari karya-karya sufi seperti *Risālat al-Mustarsyidīn*, *Ḥālat Ahl al-Ḥaḥiqah ma'a Allāh*, dan *Jawāhir al-Ma'ānī*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa hadis-hadis yang digunakan dalam pemahaman isyārī umumnya berstatus maqbūl dengan kualitas ḥasan dan ṣaḥīḥ, kecuali satu hadis yang dinilai lemah. Pemaknaan simbolik ditemukan pada beberapa istilah seperti jasad dan iṣba', sedangkan istilah lainnya masih sesuai dengan makna bahasa maupun syariat. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan isyārī dalam hadis dapat diterima selama tidak bertentangan dengan validitas hadis, prinsip kebahasaan, dan tidak melahirkan ketentuan hukum baru.

Kata kunci: Pendekatan Isyārī, Fikih Hadis, Pembesar Sufi, Transformasi Metode

Abstract: *The isyārī approach has predominantly been studied within the context of Qur’anic exegesis, while its application in understanding Hadith (fiqh al-ḥadīth) has received relatively limited attention, particularly regarding the validity of Sufi interpretations through sanad criticism, matn analysis, and measurable epistemological parameters. This study aims to analyze the application of the isyārī approach in Hadith interpretation among Sufi figures and to examine its validity based on the parameters established by al-Shāṭibī. This research employs a qualitative library research method. The data were analyzed using content analysis combined with sanad and matn criticism of Hadith, and further examined according to the two parameters of accepting isyārī interpretation proposed by al-Shāṭibī. The primary sources of this study include Sufi works such as Risālat al-Mustarsyidīn, Ḥālat Ahl al-Ḥaqqīqah ma’a Allāh, and Jawāhir al-Ma’ānī. The findings reveal that the Hadiths employed in isyārī interpretation are generally classified as maqbūl, with ḥasan and ṣaḥīḥ quality, except for one Hadith considered weak. Symbolic interpretations are found in several terms, such as jasad and iṣba’, while other terms remain consistent with their linguistic meanings and Islamic legal usage. This study demonstrates that the isyārī approach in Hadith interpretation can be accepted as long as it does not contradict Hadith authenticity, linguistic principles, and does not generate new legal rulings.*

Keyword: Isyārī Approach, Fiqh al-Ḥadīth, Sufi Masters, Methodological Transformation.

Introduction

The Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is a primary source of Islamic teachings, holding a central position after the Qur'an. Understanding Hadith does not stop at the textual aspect (*ẓāhir al-naṣṣ*) but has also evolved through various interpretive approaches that seek to uncover the values, messages, and wisdom contained behind the wording of the Hadith. The history of the development of Hadith commentary (*syarḥ*) shows that scholars have employed diverse approaches in understanding the Prophet's sayings, one of which is the Sufi-esoteric (*ishārī*) approach.

The *ishārī* approach is a method of understanding that developed among the Sufis. In the field of Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsīr*), this approach is known through the works of figures such as Ibn ‘Ajībah, Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ālūsī, and Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī, who sought to uncover the spiritual meanings of the Qur'anic verses without negating their literal meanings. A similar approach is found in the tradition of Hadith commentary, namely an effort to understand the Prophet's Hadith through the spiritual dimensions related to the education of the soul, the purification of the heart, and the enhancement of the quality of faith.

However, the existence of the *ishārī* approach in understanding Hadith has not been free from debate among scholars. Some accept it as a form of reflection on the messages of the Hadith that have a basis in the principles of Islamic law (*sharī‘a*), while others criticize it out of concern that it resembles the method of the *Bāṭiniyyah* sect, which ignores the

literal meaning of the text and relies solely on claims of inner meaning. The difference between the Sufi *ishārī* approach and the *Bāṭiniyyah* understanding lies in their stance toward the literal meaning of the text. The proponents of *ishārah* (esoteric indications) do not invalidate the outward meaning of the Hadith; rather, they use it as a foundation to discover spiritual indications related to it.

In the context of Hadith jurisprudence (*fiqh al-ḥadīth*), the *ishārī* approach can be understood as an effort to extract the deepest message of the Hadith through reflection on the relationship between wording, context, and the educational values it contains. This approach does not intend to replace the original meaning of the Hadith but rather provides an additional dimension of understanding related to the inner aspect of human beings. Thus, a Hadith can have an outward meaning related to law or outward behavior, while simultaneously carrying an inner indication related to the cultivation of the heart and character.

The explanation of the *ishārī* method in Hadith commentary is an attempt to understand the content and purpose of the Hadith more profoundly, not only limited to the literal meaning of each word but more toward the core message or the values intended by the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). In this approach, a commentator focuses on the inner or essential meaning of the Hadith, so that the understanding of the Hadith becomes more holistic and contextual.¹

One example of the application of this approach can be found in the thought of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī when explaining the Hadith about angels not entering a house, as follows:

لَا تَدْخُلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ بَيْتًا فِيهِ كَلْبٌ وَلَا صُورَةٌ تَمَائِيلٌ.²

“The angels do not enter a house in which there is a dog or an image (statue).”

And also in the Hadith of ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Umar that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was promised a visit by Jibrīl, and Jibrīl said:

إِنَّا لَا نَدْخُلُ بَيْتًا فِيهِ صُورَةٌ وَلَا كَلْبٌ.³

“Verily, we do not enter a house in which there is an image or a dog.”

Al-Ghazālī said: "The heart is a house; it is the dwelling place of the angels, the place where their influences descend, and where they reside. While evil traits such as anger, lust, envy, malice, self-admiration, and the like are barking dogs. How can the angels enter it while it is filled with dogs? The light of knowledge will not be cast by Allah the Exalted into the heart except through the mediation of the angels... I do not say that the meaning of

¹ Muhammad Darul, “Metode Syarh Hadis: Metode Fiqh, Teknik Interpretasi dan Pendekatan Dalam Memahami Hadis,” *IMTIYAZ: Jurnal Ilmu Keislaman* 9 (July 18, 2025): 551–569.

² Aḥmad bin Syu‘aib Al-Nasā‘ī, *Al-Mujtabā Min Al-Sunan*, ed. ‘Abd al-Fattāh Abū Ghuddah (Aleppo: Maktab al-Maṭbū‘āt al-Islāmiyyah, 1986), no : 5348, 8 juz, juz 8, h.212.

³ Muhammad ibn Ismail Abu Abdillah Al-Bukhari, *Al-Jami’ as-Shahih*, ed. Mushthafa Daib al-Bugha (Beirut: Dar Ibn Katsir, 2020). 6 juz, juz 3, h. 1179.

'house' is the heart and the meaning of 'dog' is anger and blameworthy traits. Rather, I say that the Hadith is an indication and a warning. There is a difference between transferring the literal meaning to the inner meaning and giving a warning about the inner meaning through the mention of the outward meaning."⁴

Al-Ghazālī did not understand the Hadith only in its literal sense but also made it an indication of the condition of the human heart. According to him, the heart is the abode of the light of knowledge and nearness to Allah, while blameworthy traits such as arrogance, envy, anger, and lust are inner "dogs" that prevent the entry of that light. Nevertheless, he emphasized that this inner meaning is not a replacement for the outward meaning of the Hadith but rather an indication and warning that can be drawn from the content of the Hadith.

Similar to al-Ghazālī's interpretation above, Ibn al-Qayyim in *Madārij al-Sālikīn* also cites a similar interpretation from Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah: that the angels, who are created beings, are prevented by dogs and images from entering a house, so how can *ma'rifah* (knowledge) of Allah 'Azza wa Jalla, love for Him, the sweetness of His remembrance, and the pleasure of intimacy with His nearness enter a heart filled with the dogs of lust and the images (desires) of the self? This, he says, is part of valid *ishārāt* (indications) based on sound wording.⁵

According to Ibn Taymiyyah, the indications of the Sufis can be accepted if they have a sound basis and do not contradict the meaning of the text. According to him, a valid indication is one built through a proper process of analogy (*i'tibār*) and correct reasoning (*qiyās*), whereas distorting the wording from its proper meaning constitutes a deviation as practiced by the *Bāṭiniyyah* sect. This shows that the *ishārī* approach has methodological boundaries that distinguish it from esoteric interpretations that reject the literal meaning of the text.⁶

Besides al-Ghazālī, another figure who demonstrates the use of the *ishārī* approach in Hadith commentary is Abū Muḥammad 'Abdullāh bin Sa'd Ibn Abī Jamrah, through his work *Bahjat al-Nufūs wa Taḥliyyatuhā bi Ma'rifat Mā Lahā wa Mā 'Alayhā*. In explaining the Hadith about the prohibition of approaching a leper, Ibn Abī Jamrah does not understand the Hadith only from the perspective of preventing physical illness but also draws a spiritual lesson that heart disease and religious deviation are more dangerous because they can affect a person's inner condition. This understanding shows that the Hadith can

⁴ Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm Al-Dīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1982). Juz 1, h. 49.

⁵ Ibn Qayyim Al-Jauziyyah, *Madārij Al-Sālikīn Bayna Manāzil Iyyāka Na'budu Wa Iyyāka Nasta'īn*, ed. Muḥammad al-Mu'taṣim Billāh al-Baghdādī, Cet. ke-3. (Beirut: Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 2021).Jil. 2, hlm. 418.

⁶ Aḥmad bin Taimiyah, *Majmū' Al-Fatāwā* (Madinah al-Munawwarah: Mujamma' al-Malik Fahd li-Ṭibā'at al-Muṣṣhaf asy-Syarīf, 2022). Juz 10, h. 560.

serve as a means of moral and spiritual education through the analogy between physical and spiritual ailments.⁷

Studies on the *ishārī* approach have largely developed in the field of Qur'anic exegesis. Researchers generally discuss the legitimacy of Sufi exegesis, the relationship between outward and inner meanings, and the boundary between *ishārī* exegesis and *Bāṭiniyyah* exegesis. There has not been much research examining whether the validation principles of *ishārī* exegesis also apply to understanding Hadith, which have different characteristics because they relate to the words, actions, and approvals of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Based on the above explanation, it can be seen that the *ishārī* approach in Hadith jurisprudence is an important phenomenon in the Islamic intellectual tradition that demonstrates the relationship between textual understanding and spiritual dimensions. This approach raises academic questions regarding its characteristics, principles, and boundaries of use among Sufi scholars. Is this approach truly a method of extracting meaning that remains within the framework of Islamic law, or does it tend toward an esoteric understanding that detaches itself from the outward meaning of the Hadith? On the other hand, the Hadith texts that are the objects of reflection must have a reliable chain of transmission or not. Therefore, research on the *ishārī* approach in Hadith jurisprudence among the prominent figures of Sufi orders (*ṭarīqah*) is important to understand its methodological construction and its contribution to the development of Hadith studies.

Research Method

This research is a library research (*library research*) with a qualitative approach. The research data were analyzed using the content analysis method combined with criticism of the chain of transmission (*sanad*) and text (*matn*) of the Hadith to measure the validity and level of acceptance of *ishārī* interpretations of the Prophet's Hadith. The research object focuses on the understanding of Hadith put forward by several Sufi figures who have strong authority in the Sufi tradition and are primary references for the development of the recognized (*mu'tabar*) orders, namely al-Muḥāsibī, al-Rifā'ī, al-Mursī, al-Jilānī, al-Tijānī, and Ibn 'Ajībāh.

The selection of these figures is based on several criteria. First, they are central figures in the development of classical Sufism and have had a broad influence on the formation of Islamic spiritual traditions. Second, they have works that contain an understanding of Hadith with an *ishārī* or esoteric interpretative style, either through works they wrote directly or through the notes and transmissions of their disciples. Third, their thought

⁷ Abu Muhammad 'Abdullah bin Sa'd Ibn Abi Jamrah, *Bahjat Al-Nufūs Wa Tahliyyatuhā Bi Ma'rifat Mā Lahā Wa Mā 'Alayhā* (Beirut: Dār al-Jil, 2021). 5 Juz, juz 4, h.134

serves as an important reference in various Sufi orders that continue to develop today, making them representative for studying the relationship between the Sufi approach and the understanding of Hadith. Fourth, they hold an epistemological position that integrates outward knowledge (*‘ilm zāhir*—juridical-scriptural sciences) and inner knowledge (*‘ilm bāṭin*—spiritual realization), thus aligning with the research focus on the legitimacy of inner interpretations of Hadith.

The primary data of the research are sourced from Sufi works related to the understanding of Hadith, such as *Risālat al-Mustarsyidīn* by al-Muḥāsibī, *Ḥālat Ahl al-Ḥaqīqah ma’a Allāh*, *Jawāhir al-Ma’ānī wa Bulūgh al-Amānī fi Fayḍ Sayyidī Abī al-‘Abbās al-Tijānī*, as well as other relevant works by the figures under study. The selection of these works is based on their position as primary references in the Sufi tradition and as sources legitimizing spiritual teachings among followers of the orders. Secondary sources are obtained from major Hadith collections and their commentaries, Hadith methodology books, academic literature, journal articles, and relevant digital sources.

The Hadith analyzed were selected based on several criteria: (1) Hadith explicitly used by Sufi figures as the basis for spiritual or *ishārī* understanding; (2) Hadith that underwent a process of inner or symbolic interpretation beyond its literal meaning; and (3) Hadith related to major Sufi themes such as the purification of the soul, nearness to Allah, character, and the virtues of deeds. Once the Hadith are determined, a process of *takhrīj* (verification and sourcing) is carried out by tracing the original sources of the Hadith in primary Hadith collections, identifying transmission paths, compiling related narrations, and assessing the quality of the Hadith based on the comments of Hadith scholars.

Data analysis is conducted through several stages. First, inventorying the Hadith used by Sufi figures in their works. Second, performing *takhrīj* to determine the source, chain of transmission (*sanad*), and quality of transmission. Third, conducting *sanad* criticism by assessing the continuity of the chain (*ittiṣāl al-sanad*), the credibility of the narrators (*‘adālah*), and the accuracy of the narrators (*ḍabṭ*). Fourth, conducting *matn* criticism by examining the conformity of the Hadith text with Arabic linguistic rules, the principles of Islamic law, other stronger Hadith, and the fundamental principles of religion. Fifth, analyzing the form of *ishārī* interpretation given by the Sufi figures through a content analysis approach, identifying patterns, themes, symbols, and the construction of inner meaning found in their explanations.

To measure the acceptability of the *ishārī* approach, this research uses an analytical framework formulated by al-Shāṭibī and reinforced by al-Zarqānī. First: The interpretation must be valid according to the demands of the literal meaning established in Arabic and proceed in accordance with the linguistic purposes of Arabic. Second: It must have a witness in the form of an explicit text or an apparent meaning elsewhere that testifies to

its truth without opposition. If it has no witness elsewhere, or indeed has opposition, then it falls among the claims made upon the Qur'an; while a claim that stands alone (without evidence) is unacceptable by scholarly consensus.

With these two conditions, the truth of what has been previously mentioned as inner meaning becomes clear, because both conditions are met therein. This differs from the interpretation of the *Bāṭiniyyah* sect, as it is neither inner knowledge nor outward knowledge.

Imam al-Zarqānī adds another condition: that the interpretation is not a far-fetched and unreasonable allegorical interpretation (*ta'wīl*), such as the interpretation of some people of Allah's statement:

..... وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ٦٩

“Dan sesungguhnya Allah benar-benar beserta orang-orang yang berbuat baik.” (QS. al-‘Ankabūt: 69) dengan menjadikan kata “*lam‘a*” sebagai fi‘il māḍī dan “*al-muḥsinin*” sebagai maf‘ūlnya.⁸

Discussion

1. Scholars' Views on the Possibility of Understanding Hadith Ishārī

The Sufi scholars hold that the *ishārī* approach is not only applicable to understanding the Qur'an but can also be applied to the Hadith of the Prophet. This view is based on the assumption that religious texts have outward (*ẓāhir*) and inner (*bāṭin*) dimensions that are interrelated. Understanding the inner aspect does not mean ignoring the literal meaning of the text but rather attempting to uncover the spiritual message contained behind it.

Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj explains that the science of Islamic law has two dimensions: transmission (*riwāyah*) and understanding (*dirāyah*). The first dimension relates to the aspect of transmission and outward legal rulings, while the second relates to deep understanding of the meaning and reality of deeds, both outward and inward. According to him, just as human deeds have an outward aspect—the activity of the limbs—and an inner aspect—the condition of the heart such as faith, sincerity, trust, love, contentment, and knowledge (*ma‘rifah*)—so too does the knowledge that discusses them have an outward and inner side. Thus, the separation between the two dimensions is not absolute because the outward aspect requires inner realization, while the inner aspect still requires an outward foundation.⁹

This view is also affirmed by Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh al-Sakandarī in *Laṭā’if al-Minan*. He explains that the deep interpretations made by the Sufis of the Qur'anic verses and Prophetic

⁸ Muḥammad ‘Abd al-‘Azīm Al-Zurqānī, *Manāhil Al-‘Irfān Fī ‘Ulūm Al-Qur’Ān*, 3rd ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-‘Arabiyy, 1995), juz 2, h. 81

⁹ Abū Naṣr Al-Sarrāj, *Al-Luma‘ Fī Al-Taṣawwuf* (Kairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadīthiyyah, 2020). h. 44

Hadith are not a form of deviation from the literal meaning (*tahrīf* or distortion of meaning). The literal meaning remains preserved according to the linguistic context and the original purpose of the text, while the inner meaning is an additional understanding that Allah opens up to certain people. According to him, *ishārī* interpretation is only deemed erroneous when someone rejects the literal meaning and claims that only the inner meaning is intended by the text.¹⁰

A similar point is made by al-Ghazālī in *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, stating that inner understanding of religious texts is a form of uncovering meaning given according to one's level of knowledge, clarity of heart, and sincerity in reflecting on revelation. The difference in levels of human understanding of religious texts shows that the literal meaning does not always encompass the entire content of the divine message. However, this breadth of meaning still has limits, as inner understanding cannot be detached from the fundamental principles of Islamic law and linguistic rules.¹¹

Based on the views of these figures, it can be understood that the legitimacy of the *ishārī* approach in Hadith does not lie in replacing the outward meaning with the inner meaning but in the effort to discover a spiritual dimension that remains connected to the structure of the Hadith's meaning. Therefore, the study of *ishārī* understanding of Hadith needs to be tested through specific methodological parameters to distinguish between acceptable inner interpretations and subjective interpretations that lack foundation. On the basis of this framework, this research subsequently analyzes examples of the application of the *ishārī* approach by Sufi figures in understanding the Prophet's Hadith.

a. Al-Ḥārith bin Asad al-Muḥāsibī in *Risālat al-Mustarsyidīn*

He was a scholar of intelligence and profound understanding. He authored several works on the fundamentals of religion and wrote works on asceticism (*zuhd*).

Al-Khaṭīb said: al-Ḥārith has many books on asceticism and refutations against opponents from the Mu'tazilah and Rāfiḍah, and his books are full of benefit. Abū 'Alī bin Shādhān once mentioned al-Ḥārith's book on bloodshed (*al-dimā'*) and said: "This is the book relied upon by our companions in the matter of bloodshed that occurred among the companions (of the Prophet)." It is said that he died in the year 243 AH.

Shaykh Abū Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī said in *Risālat al-Mustarsyidīn*: I have found that the corruption of the heart means the corruption of religion. Have you not considered the saying of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him):

أَلَا إِنَّ فِي الْجَسَدِ مُضْغَةً إِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ، وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ؛ أَلَا وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ.¹²

¹⁰ Ibn 'Athāillah As-Sakandari, *Lathaif Al-Minan*, ed. Abdul Halim Mahmud, 3rd ed. (Kairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 2020). h. 136-137.

¹¹ Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm Al-Dīn*. juz 1, h. 293.

¹² Al-Bukhari, *Al-Jami' as-Shahih*, no : 52, h. 28.

“Verily, in the body there is a piece of flesh; if it is sound, the whole body is sound, and if it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt. Verily, it is the heart.”

What is meant by the body (*al-jasad*) here is religion, because it is through religion that the limbs become sound, and through the corruption of religion that the limbs become corrupt.

Muḥammad ‘Alī bin Muḥammad bin ‘Allān al-Bakrī al-Ṣiddīqī al-Shāfi‘ī mentions that this Hadith has many chains of transmission and is narrated by the leading Hadith scholars in their major collections. He explains that al-Bukhārī narrated it in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* in the *Kitāb al-Īmān* via the chain of Abū Nu‘aym from Zakariyyā bin Abī Zā’idah from al-Sha‘bī from al-Nu‘mān bin Bashīr with the same wording as mentioned by the author. The Hadith is also narrated by al-Bukhārī in *Kitāb al-Buyū‘* through several other chains, including through Sufyān bin ‘Uyaynah, Sufyān al-Thawrī, and Ibn ‘Awn, all originating from al-Sha‘bī from al-Nu‘mān bin Bashīr.

Furthermore, Ibn ‘Allān explains that Imam Muslim also narrated this Hadith in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* through several chains, including through Ibn Numayr from his father, Abū Bakr bin Abī Shaybah from Wakī‘, Ishāq bin Ibrāhīm from Jarīr, and other chains, all returning to the narration of al-Sha‘bī from al-Nu‘mān bin Bashīr. According to him, some of Muslim's narrations have a more complete wording, especially in explaining that leaving doubtful matters is a form of caution to avoid falling into clearly prohibited matters.

Ibn ‘Allān also mentions that this Hadith is narrated by Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, and al-Nasā‘ī in *Kitāb al-Buyū‘*, and by Ibn Mājah in *Kitāb al-Fitan*. Al-Tirmidhī assessed the Hadith as *ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ*. All chains of transmission of this Hadith revolve around the narration of al-Sha‘bī from al-Nu‘mān bin Bashīr. Therefore, the numerous chains of transmission and its presence in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* indicate that this Hadith has a strong position and is acceptable as one of the foundations for understanding the principle of caution in practicing religion.¹³

Commenting on the above interpretation, Muḥammad ‘Awwāmah, a contemporary Hadith scholar, affirms in his commentary on the book *Jāmi‘ al-‘Ulūm wa al-Ḥikam* that: the meaning of "soundness of the body" is the soundness of outward deeds, and the corruption of the body is the corruption of outward deeds, and that means corruption of religion (*fasād al-dīn*). He does not reject the explanation "al-jasad is religion" as long as it is understood as a conceptual meaning, not a literal linguistic meaning.¹⁴

Meanwhile, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghuddah, in his verification (*taḥqīq*) of *Risālat al-Mustarsyidīn*, comments on the above interpretation that this interpretation is strange

¹³ Muhammad ‘Alī bin Muhammad bin ‘Allān al-Bakrī al-Ṣiddīqī al-Syāfi‘ī, *Dalīl Al-Fāliḥīn Li Turuq Riyāḍ Al-Ṣāliḥīn*, ed. Khalīl Ma‘mūn Syīḥā, 4th ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifah li al-Ṭibā‘ah wa al-Nasyr wa al-Tawzī‘, 2004). Juz, 5, h. 22.

¹⁴ Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī, *Jāmi‘ Al-‘Ulūm Wa Al-Ḥikam*. (Beirut: Dār al-Bashā‘ir al-Islāmiyya, n.d.). Jil. 1, hlm. 72–73

and very far-fetched, because this Hadith clearly indicates that what is meant is the actual physical body.¹⁵

Al-Muḥāsibī's interpretation of the word *al-jasad* shows an expansion from the literal meaning (*ma'nā zāhir*) to a conceptual meaning (*ma'nā isyārī*). He does not understand *al-jasad* only as a physical body but as a representation of religion that serves as the basis for the soundness or corruption of human deeds. This interpretation is not intended to reject the outward meaning of the Hadith but rather to explain the spiritual dimension of the relationship between the heart, limbs, and the quality of religiosity. This is reinforced by Muḥammad 'Awwāmah, who explains that the soundness of the body means the soundness of outward deeds, while the corruption of the body indicates the corruption of religion. Therefore, the interpretation of *al-jasad* as religion can be accepted as long as it is understood as a conceptual meaning, not as a literal change of linguistic meaning.

Al-Muḥāsibī's interpretation of the word *al-jasad* as a representation of religion and the human system of religiosity is also related to another Hadith that uses the same term, namely the Prophet's saying:

مَثَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي تَوَادِهِمْ وَتَرَاحُمِهِمْ وَتَعَاطُفِهِمْ كَمَثَلِ الْجَسَدِ، إِذَا اشْتَكَى مِنْهُ عُضْوٌ تَدَاعَى لَهُ سَائِرُ الْجَسَدِ بِالسَّهَرِ وَالْحُمَّى.¹⁶

“The example of the believers in their mutual love, mercy, and compassion is like one body. If one part of the body aches, the whole body responds with sleeplessness and fever.”

Hadis ini menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan kata *al-jasad* dalam hadis Nabi tidak selalu berhenti pada makna biologis, tetapi dapat berfungsi sebagai perumpamaan (*tamtsīl*) untuk menggambarkan suatu kesatuan makna yang bersifat abstrak, yaitu hubungan sosial dan spiritual di antara orang-orang beriman. Sebagaimana anggota tubuh memiliki keterkaitan satu sama lain, demikian pula kaum mukmin memiliki hubungan yang saling memengaruhi dalam aspek kasih sayang dan kepedulian.

Dengan demikian, pemaknaan al-Muḥāsibī terhadap *al-jasad* dalam hadis sebagai agama (*al-dīn*) memiliki landasan analogis dalam penggunaan bahasa hadis. Kata *al-jasad* memang memiliki makna asal berupa tubuh fisik, tetapi dalam konteks tertentu Nabi sendiri menggunakan istilah tersebut sebagai simbol untuk menjelaskan makna yang lebih luas.

This Hadith shows that the use of the word *al-jasad* in the Prophetic Hadith does not always stop at the biological meaning but can function as a metaphor (*tamthīl*) to describe

¹⁵ Al-Muḥāsibī, *Risālat Al-Mustarsyidīn*. h. 110

¹⁶ Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, *Musnad Al-Imām Aḥmad* (Beirut: Mu'assasah ar-Risalah, 2001). Juz 30, h. 323.

an abstract unity of meaning, namely the social and spiritual relationship among believers. Just as the limbs are interconnected, so too are the believers mutually influential in aspects of love and care.

Thus, al-Muḥāsibī's interpretation of *al-jasad* in the Hadith as religion (*al-dīn*) has an analogical basis in the linguistic usage of the Hadith. The word *al-jasad* indeed has the original meaning of a physical body, but in certain contexts the Prophet himself used the term as a symbol to explain a broader meaning.

Based on the parameters of *ishārī* acceptability according to al-Shāṭibī and al-Zarqānī, this interpretation has a basis for acceptance because it does not contradict the main message of the Hadith, has a connection to the Islamic principle of the relationship between the heart and deeds, and does not produce a new legal ruling. However, the criticism of 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghuddah, who considered the interpretation too far-fetched, shows the importance of maintaining a closeness between the *ishārī* meaning and the literal meaning of the text.

Thus, al-Muḥāsibī's interpretation of *al-jasad* can be categorized as an acceptable *ishārī* understanding as long as it is placed as an additional meaning that enriches the understanding of the Hadith, not as a replacement for its literal meaning. Conversely, the interpretation becomes problematic if it is considered the sole intended meaning of the Hadith and ignores the linguistic guidance and context of the text.

b. Shaykh Aḥmad al-Rifā'ī in *Ḥālat Ahl al-Ḥaqīqah ma'a Allāh*

He is the Imam, exemplar, devotee, ascetic, and master of the gnostics (*'arifīn*), Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad bin Abī al-Ḥasan 'Alī bin Aḥmad bin Yaḥyā bin Ḥāzim bin 'Alī bin Rifā'ah al-Rifā'ī, originally from the Maghrib, then residing in the region of al-Baṭā'ih. His father came from the Maghrib and settled in al-Baṭā'ih, in the village of Umm 'Ubaydah. He married the sister of Maṣṣūr al-Zāhid, and from this marriage Shaykh Aḥmad and his siblings were born.

His father, Abū al-Ḥasan, was a Qur'an reciter (*qārī*) who led the prayers for Shaykh Maṣṣūr. He died while his son Aḥmad was still in the womb.

Aḥmad was then raised by his maternal uncle. It is said that his birth occurred in the early 500s AH.

He died in the year 578 AH, in the month of Jumādā al-Ūlā. May Allah have mercy on him.¹⁷

Among the examples of the *ishārī* approach he employed in explaining Hadith can be found in his work titled *Ḥālat Ahl al-Ḥaqīqah ma'a Allāh*. Below is one of the examples Hadith: "When one of you goes out for Friday prayer, let him bathe."¹⁸

¹⁷ Shams al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad bin Aḥmad bin 'Uthmān bin Qāyīmāz Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A'Lām Al-Nubalā*, ed. Syu'aib al-Arna'ūt dkk, 3rd ed. (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Risālah, 2017). jilid 21, h. 77-80

¹⁸ Aḥmad Al-Rifā'ī, *Ḥālat Ahl Al-Ḥaqīqah Ma'a Allāh* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2016), h. 131

From Ibn ‘Umar – may Allah be pleased with them both – who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said:

إِذَا رَاحَ أَحَدُكُمْ الْجُمُعَةَ فَلْيَغْتَسِلْ.¹⁹

“When one of you goes out for Friday prayer, let him bathe.”

Shaykh Aḥmad al-Rifā‘ī said: This noble Hadith contains the meaning of glorifying the intimate prayer (*munājāt*) to Allah at its peak. Indeed, when a servant prays, he is engaged in intimate conversation with his Lord, especially on Friday and in its congregation, because it is among the greatest gatherings of the Divine Presence.

Bathing (*ghusl*) here is an expression of purifying the heart and body from all existence other than Allah, in addition to the virtue of ritual purification. This is one of the secrets of the secrets of bathing, and no legal ruling is established except that it contains outward and inward secrets that amaze the human intellect.

This Hadith is narrated by al-Bukhārī in *Kitāb al-Ṣalāh* via the chain of Abū Nu‘aym from Shaybān bin ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, and also by Muslim in *Kitāb al-Ṣalāh* via the chain of Ishāq bin Ibrāhīm from al-Walīd bin Muslim from al-Awzā‘ī. Additionally, Abū Dāwūd narrated it in *Kitāb al-Ṭahārah* via the chain of Abū Tawbah al-Rabī‘ bin Nāfi‘ from Mu‘āwiyah bin Salām. These three chains meet at Yaḥyā bin Abī Kathīr, who narrated it from Abū Salamah bin ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, from the Companion Abū Hurayrah. Thus, this Hadith has several chains of transmission that differ at the level of Yaḥyā bin Abī Kathīr's teachers, but all ultimately trace back to Abū Salamah and Abū Hurayrah as the highest narrators in the chain. Al-Albānī assessed this Hadith as authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*) as mentioned in *Silsilat al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah wa Shay‘un min Fiqihā wa Fawā‘idihā*.²⁰

According to ‘Alī Jum‘ah, the law of purification is not only intended to cleanse the body outwardly but also contains a spiritual dimension of purifying the heart from everything other than Allah as preparation for intimate prayer to Him. This is included in the meaning of bathing before Friday prayer in the Hadith, which aims to honor the worship gathering.²¹

The Hadith about the command to bathe before Friday prayer outwardly shows the recommendation of purification as preparation for attending the Friday worship. Bathing in this Hadith relates to physical cleanliness and respect for the worship gathering that has special merit. This Hadith has a strong position because it is narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim and is deemed authentic by Hadith scholars.

Aḥmad al-Rifā‘ī provides an *ishārī* interpretation that bathing (*al-ghusl*) does not only mean cleansing the body but also symbolizes the purification of the heart from everything

¹⁹ Al-Bukhari, *Al-Jami’ as-Shahih*. no : 842, juz 1, h. 301.

²⁰ Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn Al-Albānī, *Silsilat Al-Aḥādīs Al-Ṣaḥīḥah Wa Syay‘un Min Fiqihā Wa Fawā‘idihā*, 1st ed. (Riyadh: al-Ma‘ārif li al-Nasyr wa al-Tawzī‘, n.d.). Juz 7, h. 1698.

²¹ Ali Jum‘ah, *Al-Ṭarīq Ilā Allāh* (Kairo: Dār al-Wābil al-Ṣayyib, 2018). h. 100–101

other than Allah. According to him, just as a servant cleanses his body before facing Allah in Friday prayer, he also needs to purify his heart to be ready for intimate prayer to Him.

This interpretation has a basis in the use of the concept of purification in Islamic law. This can be seen from the Hadith about the Prophet's command to a person entering Islam to bathe after pronouncing the two testimonies of faith. In some narrations, it is mentioned that the Prophet commanded Qays bin 'Āṣim when he entered Islam to bathe.

عَنْ خَلِيفَةَ بْنِ حُصَيْنٍ عَنْ جَدِّهِ قَيْسِ بْنِ عَاصِمٍ أَنَّهُ أَسْلَمَ فَأَمَرَهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنْ يَغْتَسِلَ بِمَاءٍ وَسِدْرٍ.²²

From Khalīfah bin Ḥuṣayn from his grandfather Qays bin 'Āṣim that he embraced Islam, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded him to bathe with water and lotus leaves.

This shows that bathing is not only related to physical cleanliness but also symbolizes the transition of a servant from a previous state to a new condition in faith and obedience.

Based on the parameters of *ishārī* acceptability according to al-Shāṭibī and al-Zarqānī, al-Rifā'ī's interpretation of the Friday bath can be accepted because it does not reject the outward meaning of the Hadith. Bathing remains understood as a form of outward purification, while purification of the heart is an additional meaning related to the spiritual purpose of the law. This interpretation also does not produce a new legal ruling but only explains the wisdom and inner dimension contained in an act of worship.

Thus, the *ishārī* interpretation of *al-ghusl* in the Hadith of the Friday bath is an acceptable understanding because it maintains the relationship between linguistic meaning, the purpose of Islamic law, and the spiritual dimension of worship.

c. Shaykh Abū al-'Abbās al-Mursī as in *Laṭā'if al-Minan*

Shaykh, Sayyid, Imam Aḥmad Abū al-'Abbās al-Mursī is among the great gnostics. It is said that no one inherited the knowledge of Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī except him. He was the most prominent among the disciples who took the path (*ṭarīqah*) from him. He did not leave behind any written works. He used to say: "The sciences of this group are sciences of verification (*taḥqīq*), and the science of verification cannot be carried by the intellects of most people." Likewise, his teacher, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī, did not write anything and used to say: "My books are my companions." Shaykh Abū al-'Abbās al-Mursī died in the year 686 AH.²³

Among the examples of Hadith that he understood with the *ishārī* approach is the saying of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him):

²² Ḥanbal, *Musnad Al-Imām Aḥmad*. Juz 4, h. 220. Hadis No : 20611.

²³ 'Abd al-Wahhāb Al-Sya'rānī, *Al-Ṭabaqāt Al-Kubrā*, ed. Muhammad Adib Al-Jadir (Damaskus: Dār al-Diyā', 2022). 2 jilid, jilid 2, h. 11.

سَبْعَةٌ يُظِلُّهُمُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِي ظِلِّهِ، يَوْمَ لَا ظِلَّ إِلَّا ظِلُّهُ: إِمَامٌ عَادِلٌ، وَشَابٌّ نَشَأَ فِي عِبَادَةِ اللَّهِ، وَرَجُلٌ ذَكَرَ اللَّهَ فِي خَلَاءٍ فَفَاضَتْ عَيْنَاهُ، وَرَجُلٌ قَلْبُهُ مُعَلَّقٌ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ، وَرَجُلَانِ تَحَابَّا فِي اللَّهِ، وَرَجُلٌ دَعَتْهُ امْرَأَةٌ ذَاتُ مَنْصِبٍ وَجَمَالٍ إِلَى نَفْسِهَا، قَالَ: إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ، وَرَجُلٌ تَصَدَّقَ بِصَدَقَةٍ فَأَخْفَاهَا حَتَّى لَا تَعْلَمَ شِمَالُهُ مَا صَنَعَتْ يَمِينُهُ.²⁴

“There are seven whom Allah will shade with His shade on the Day when there is no shade but His: a just ruler; a youth who grew up in the worship of Allah; a man whose heart is attached to the mosque; two men who love each other for Allah's sake, meeting and parting for that reason; a man who is invited by a woman of status and beauty but says, 'I fear Allah'; a man who gives charity so secretly that his left hand does not know what his right hand gives.”

Shaykh Abū al-‘Abbās (may Allah be pleased with him) explained that the just ruler is the heart. The person whose heart is attached to the mosque until he returns to it is the one whose heart is attached to the Throne (‘Arsh). For the Throne is the mosque of the believers. The person who remembers Allah in solitude until his eyes overflow with tears out of fear of Allah is the one who has emptied himself of desires. The person who gives charity secretly is the one who conceals it from his own desires. This is in accordance with Allah's saying: “When he called upon his Lord with a quiet voice” – meaning, concealing it from desire. Allah rewards these seven according to their relationship with Him.²⁵

Shaykh Abū al-‘Abbās's statement that the just ruler is the heart is still in line with the *mawqūf* narration from Abū Hurayrah :

الْقَلْبُ مَلِكٌ، وَلَهُ جُنُودٌ، فَإِذَا صَلَحَ الْمَلِكُ صَلَحَتْ جُنُودُهُ، وَإِذَا فَسَدَ الْمَلِكُ فَسَدَتْ جُنُودُهُ.²⁶

“The heart is a king, and it has armies. If the king is sound, his armies are sound, and if the king is corrupt, his armies are corrupt.”

This Hadith indicates a conceptual relationship between the heart and the limbs. Therefore, al-Mursī's interpretation does not entirely depart from the content of the text but is an expansion of meaning that emphasizes the dimension of inner cultivation.

If tested against the parameters of *ishārī* acceptability according to al-Shāṭibī and al-Zarqānī, this interpretation can be accepted because it does not reject the outward meaning of the Hadith. He does not say that the meaning of "the just ruler" is only the heart and eliminates the meaning of social leadership, but rather makes it an indication of spiritual leadership within the human being. Additionally, this interpretation has a basis in another Hadith that explains the position of the heart as the center of goodness and evil

²⁴ Al-Bukhari, *Al-Jami' as-Shahih*. juz 6, h. 2496.

²⁵ As-Sakandari, *Lathaiif Al-Minan*. h. 139.

²⁶ Abu Bakr Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn Al-Bayhaqī, *Syu'ab Al-Īmān*, ed. Muḥammad al-Sa'īd Basyūnī Zaghlūl, I. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, n.d.). 7 jilid, jil 1, hlm. 133.

of deeds. However, this interpretation remains in the realm of *ishārī*, not the original meaning intended by the Hadith. The outward meaning of the Hadith remains related to the virtue of a just ruler in carrying out the trust of authority. As for the interpretation of the heart as a ruler, it is an additional dimension explaining that before a person is able to act justly toward others, he must be able to control himself through the improvement of the heart.

Thus, Shaykh Abū al-‘Abbās al-Mursī’s interpretation of "the just ruler" as the heart can be accepted as an *ishārī* understanding because it meets the criteria of relevance to the text, has support from other Hadith, does not contradict the outward meaning, and does not produce a change in legal ruling. This interpretation expands the understanding of the Hadith from the social aspect toward the spiritual dimension without eliminating its original meaning.

d. Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī in *Sirr al-Asrār*

He is the son of Mūsā bin ‘Abd Allāh bin Yaḥyā al-Zāhid bin Muḥammad bin Dāwūd bin Mūsā bin ‘Abd Allāh bin Mūsā al-Jawn bin ‘Abd Allāh al-Maḥḍ bin al-Ḥasan al-Muthannā bin al-Ḥasan bin ‘Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (may Allah be pleased with them all).

He (may Allah be pleased with him) was born in the year 470 AH, died in the year 561 AH, and was buried in Baghdad (may Allah be pleased with him). Scholars and authors have dedicated written works specifically to him.²⁷

Among the Hadith that he understood *ishārī* is the Hadith narrated by Abū Dāwūd :

حَدَّثَنَا الرَّبِيعُ بْنُ سُلَيْمَانَ الْمُؤَدِّنُ حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ وَهْبٍ عَنْ سُلَيْمَانَ - يَعْنِي ابْنَ بِلَالٍ - عَنْ كَثِيرِ بْنِ زَيْدٍ عَنِ الْوَلِيدِ بْنِ رَبَاحٍ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - قَالَ «الْمُؤْمِنُ مِرْآةُ الْمُؤْمِنِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُ أَخُو الْمُؤْمِنِ يَكْفُ عَلَيْهِ ضَيْعَتَهُ وَيَحُوطُهُ مِنْ وَرَائِهِ».²⁸

Narrated to us by al-Rabī‘ bin Sulaymān al-Mu’adhhdhin, narrated to us by Ibn Wahb, from Sulaymān—meaning Ibn Bilāl—from Kathīr bin Zayd, from al-Walīd bin Rabāḥ, from Abū Hurayrah, from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). He said: “*The believer is a mirror to the believer. The believer is the brother of the believer; he protects his needs and guards him from behind.*”

This Hadith is narrated through the chain of Ibn Wahb, and is also recorded by Abū Dāwūd and al-Bukhārī in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, with a chain through Kathīr bin Zayd from al-Walīd bin Rabāḥ from Abū Hurayrah from the Prophet (peace be upon him). The chain of this Hadith is at the level of *ḥasan*, according to the assessment of al-Ḥāfiẓ al-‘Irāqī and the agreement of al-Munāwī. It is not raised to the level of *ṣaḥīḥ* because of differing assessments of the credibility of Kathīr bin Zayd, whom Ibn Ḥajar assessed as

²⁷ Al-Sya‘rānī, *Al-Ṭabaqāt Al-Kubrā*. jilid 1, h. 108.

²⁸ Sulaymān bin al-Asy‘ats Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, Cet. 1. (Beirut: Dār al-Risālah al-‘Ālamiyyah, 1430). no. 4918, ilid. 7, h. 297,

a *ṣadūq* (truthful) narrator but with some errors. Furthermore, the text has a *shāhid* (supporting narration) for the first part of the Hadith through the chain of Anas bin Mālik narrated by al-Ṭabarānī, then quoted by al-Ḍiyā' al-Maqdisī and al-Quḍā'ī. However, this chain has limitations because it is only narrated singly by 'Uthmān bin Muḥammad bin 'Uthmān as stated by al-Ṭabarānī. Thus, this discussion focuses on verifying the chain, the credibility of the narrators, and supporting narrations in determining the grade of the Hadith.²⁹

Commenting on this Hadith, Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī in *Sirr al-Asrār* said that what is meant by the first believer is the heart of a believing servant, while what is meant by the second believer is Allah.³⁰

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيْمِنُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ٢٣

He is Allah, besides whom there is no deity, the Sovereign, the Pure, the Perfection, the Bestower of Faith, the Overseer, the Exalted in Might, the Compeller, the Superior. (QS. al-Ḥasyr [59]: 23).

The majority of scholars understand the Hadith "al-mu'min mir'āt al-mu'min" in its outward meaning as an obligation of advice and protection of the honor of fellow believers. Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī's interpretation, which interprets the first believer as the servant's heart and the second believer as Allah, is an *ishārī* allegorical interpretation (*ta'wīl*) that does not negate the outward meaning of the Hadith. In the doctrine of Ahl al-Sunnah, *ishārī* allegorical interpretation is permissible as long as it does not contradict the outward meaning of the text and is not made the sole meaning.³¹

Al-Jīlānī's interpretation shows a shift from interpersonal meaning to spiritual meaning. The mirror (*mir'āt*) is no longer only a symbol of mutual relationships between humans but becomes a symbol of the heart capable of receiving the reflection of the light of faith and recognizing the attributes of Allah. In the Sufi perspective, the heart that has been purified from the barriers of desires can become a medium for receiving guidance and nearness to Allah.

If tested against the parameters of *ishārī* acceptability according to al-Shāṭibī and al-Zarqānī, this interpretation can be accepted with several notes. First, this interpretation does not reject the outward meaning of the Hadith. The obligation to advise and protect fellow believers remains the main meaning of the Hadith. Second, this interpretation has a basis in the Sufi principle that places the heart as the center of knowledge of Allah and is

²⁹ Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn Al-Albānī, *Silsilat Al-Aḥādīth Al-Ḍa'īfah Wa Al-Mawḍū'ah Wa Atharuhā Al-Sayyi' Fī Al-Ummah* (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Ma'ārif, al-Ṭabā'ah al-Ūlā li-al-Ṭabā'ah al-Jadīdah, n.d.). ilid. 2, h. 500

³⁰ 'Abd al-Qādir Al-Jīlānī, *Sirr Al-Asrār Wa Maḥzar Al-Anwār* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1428). h. 18

³¹ Badr al-Dīn Al-Zarkasyī, *Al-Burhān Fī 'Ulūm Al-Qur'ān*, ed. Muhammad Ibrahim Al-Syami (Mesir: Dār al-Taqwā, 2024). jilid. 2, h. 170

supported by the use of the name *al-Mu'min* as one of Allah's names in the Qur'an. Third, this interpretation does not produce a new legal ruling but only provides a spiritual dimension to the relationship between a servant and his Lord.

Nevertheless, this interpretation cannot be placed as the sole meaning of the Hadith because, linguistically, the Hadith is closer to a relationship between one believer and another. Therefore, al-Jīlānī's interpretation is better understood as an additional *ishārī* meaning, not as a replacement for the outward meaning.

Thus, al-Jīlānī's *ishārī* allegorical interpretation of the Hadith "al-mu'min mir'āt al-mu'min" can be categorized as an acceptable understanding because it maintains a connection to the original meaning of the text, has a normative basis, and does not contradict the principles of Islamic law. This interpretation expands the scope of the Hadith from the social dimension to the spiritual dimension, namely the relationship between the heart of a believer and Allah as the source of the perfection of faith.

e. Shaykh Aḥmad al-Tijānī in *Jawāhir al-Ma'ānī wa Bulūgh al-Amānī fī Fayḍ Sayyidī Abī al-'Abbās al-Tijānī*

Shaykh Aḥmad al-Tijānī was born in the year 898 AH in Raqībah (Tuwādī region – Algeria). He memorized the Noble Qur'an under the guidance of Sīdī al-Qamārī Aḥmad bin al-Sā'. He studied the basics of Arabic, jurisprudence, and Sufism under scholars of the *zāwiyah*, including: Shaykh Mubārak al-Māziq, Shaykh 'Abd al-Ra'ūf al-Mahrī, Shaykh al-Laqqānī, and Shaykh Muḥammad bin Jadīd al-Ṣūfī. He also studied French with Ustādh 'Abd al-Qādir bin al-Bashīr bin al-Hādī.

He taught the book *al-Jawāhir* in the *zāwiyah* of Qamṭār, as well as Ibn 'Āshir, *al-Risālah*, and some parts of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* in the *zāwiyah* of Tamāsīn.

He held the leadership of the Tijāniyyah order from the year 927 AH until his death in 978 AH. He received authorization (*ijāzah*) from the Muftī of al-Qayrawān, Muḥammad bin al-'Allānī, in the year 932 AH, as well as from the Muḥaddith 'Abd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī al-Maghribī, and Muḥammad al-Tāhir bin 'Āshūr al-Tūnisī on the 7th of Shawwāl 1391 AH, corresponding to February 5, 1971 CE.

He also received authorization from 'Umar Muḥammad 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-'Aqūrī from the 'Awāqīr tribe, in the Buḥayrah Province (Egypt) and Libya in the year 968 AH.³²

It is mentioned in the Hadith that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said:

مَا مِنْ قَلْبٍ إِلَّا وَهُوَ بَيْنَ إصْبَعَيْنِ مِنْ أَصَابِعِ الرَّحْمَنِ، يُقَلِّبُهُ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ.³³

“There is no heart except that it is between two fingers of the fingers of the Most Merciful (ar-Raḥmān); He turns it however He wills.”

³² Ghriisi Ahmed, *الشيخ أحمد التجاني التماسيني (1898-1978) ... مسيرته من خلال المصادر والوثائق الأرشيفية*, 2021.

³³ Muslim bin al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1955).265, jilid. 4, h. 2045. Ḥanbal, *Musnad Al-Imām Aḥmad*. no. 23421, jilid. 6, h. 302.

The discussion here concerns "finger" (*al-iṣbaʿ*) and the Name of Allah "ar-Raḥmān."

The Name *ar-Raḥmān* is among the names indicating divine degrees (*asmāʾ al-martabah*), not among the names indicating the essence (*asmāʾ al-dhāt*), such as *al-ʿAzīm* (The Magnificent), *al-Kabīr* (The Great), and *al-Jalīl* (The Majestic). For the names of essence have no direct connection to creatures, whereas the names of degrees all relate to creatures. This is because the attribute of divinity (*ulūhiyyah*) necessitates the existence of creatures, not because Allah needs them, but because the perfection of divinity demands the existence of creatures who constantly worship, prostrate, and glorify Him.

As for the meaning of "finger" (*iṣbaʿ*) linguistically, it is a part of the hand. We believe that Allah has "fingers," but not in a physical sense, rather in the sense of action and will. The Divine Will (*mashīʾah*) is likened to a "hand," while its various effects and branches are likened to "fingers."

Similarly, with power (*qudrah*); the fingers are branches of power and will.³⁴

The interpretation of the word *iṣbaʿ* (finger) as the Divine Will (*mashīʾah*) and Divine Power (*qudrah*) has indeed entered the realm of allegorical interpretation (*taʾwīl*), which is commonly employed by the Ashʿarī school in their effort to purify (*tanzīh*) Allah the Exalted from any resemblance to His creatures and to preserve the Prophet's status from any deficiency that might be understood from his words. This is similar to understanding his saying :

«إِنَّهُ لِيَغَانِ عَلَى قَلْبِي فَأَسْتَغْفِرُ رَبِّي فِي الْيَوْمِ وَاللَّيْلَةِ أَكْثَرَ مِنْ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً»³⁵

"Indeed, there is a covering (*ghayn*) over my heart, so I seek forgiveness from my Lord more than seventy times a day," That the meaning is: the Prophet (peace be upon him) is constantly in a state of spiritual ascent (*taraqqī*) of his spiritual states. When he ascends from one state to another higher than the previous one, it is possible that attention (*murāqabah/iltifāt*) to the state he has left may arise in him. That attention, compared to the new state he has reached, becomes a "ghayn" (covering).³⁶

Shaykh Mutawallī al-Shaʿrāwī states that this Hadith means: the human heart is entirely in the grasp of Allah's will and power; none of us is independent of his Creator; each of us is in the grasp of the Creator. Glory be to Him, He did not create creatures and then leave the laws of nature to operate without His will; rather, all those laws are under His power.³⁷

³⁴ ʿAlī Ḥarāzīm ibn al-ʿArabī Barrādah, *Jawāhir Al-Maʿānī Wa Bulūgh Al-Amānī Fī Fayḍ Sayyidī Abī Al-Abbās Al-Tijānī*, ed. Abdul Laṭīf ʿAbd Al-Raḥmān (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 2017), h. 246

³⁵ Muslim bin al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. 5 juz, juz 4, no hadis : 2702, h. 2075.

³⁶ ʿAbd al-Karīm bin Hawāzin bin ʿAbd al-Malik al-Qusyairī, *al-Risālah al-Qusyairiyyah*, taḥqīq ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd dan Maḥmūd bin al-Syarīf (Kairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1994), 2 Juz, juz 1, h. 155.

³⁷ Muhammad Mutawallī Al-Syaʿrāwī, *Tafsīr Al-Syaʿrāwī Ḥawl Al-Qurʾān Al-Karīm*, ed. Ahmad ʿUmar Hāsīm (Kairo: Akhbār al-Yaum, 1991). jilid. 8, h. 4653.

In addressing this Hadith and other verses or Hadith related to the attributes of Allah, the approach is to believe in them, accept them as they are, and consign the reality and modality (*kayfiyyah*) of these attributes to Allah. They do not interpret these texts based on personal desires or private opinions. They understand the text according to its outward meaning but without likening Allah to creation, without depicting His form, without rejecting the attribute, and without engaging in baseless allegorical interpretation. This is based on Allah's saying:

لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ.

“There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing.” (QS. al-Syūrā: 11)

Therefore, the attributes of Allah are understood as truly existing as mentioned in the Qur'an and Hadith, but they are not like the attributes of creatures. Similarity in name does not mean similarity in reality. For example, humans have existence (*wujūd*), but human existence is different from Allah's existence. Similarly, when affirming an attribute like "finger" for Allah based on the Prophet's (peace be upon him) Hadith, it does not mean that this attribute is like the fingers of creatures. Allah is Most High and does not resemble anything of His creation.

If reviewed based on the parameters of *ishārī* acceptability, this interpretation has aspects that can be accepted and aspects that need consideration. On the side of acceptance, this interpretation is not intended to reject the Hadith but seeks to uphold the principle of *tanzīh* (purifying Allah from resemblance to creation). The conceptual meaning of Allah's will and power also has a basis in Islamic teachings that affirm that all human states are under His decree and power. However, this interpretation differs from the *ishārī* form that merely provides an additional spiritual dimension to the outward meaning. The interpretation of *iṣba'* as *mashī'ah* and *qudrah* is closer to the method of theological allegorical interpretation (*ta'wīl*) because it directly relates to determining the meaning of Allah's attributes. Therefore, its acceptance depends on the methodological principle used. For scholars who accept allegorical interpretation of Allah's attributes, this interpretation can be accepted as long as it has a linguistic basis and aims to preserve the purity of monotheism. As for scholars who affirm the attributes without allegorical interpretation, this interpretation is considered a diversion from the meaning indicated by the text.

f. Aḥmad Ibn 'Ajībah in *Īqāz al-Himam fī Sharḥ al-Ḥikam*

He is the Imam, the great scholar (*'allāmah*), the exegete (*mufassir*), namely Aḥmad bin Muḥammad bin al-Mahdī bin al-Ḥusayn bin Muḥammad, known as Ibn 'Ajībah, with the kunya Abū al-'Abbās. He is of Ḥasanī lineage, Tetouani by residence, Fasi by education, Mālikī in jurisprudence, and Shādhilī in the Sufi order. Imam Ibn 'Ajībah was born in the village of 'Ajībīsh, from the Anjarah tribe, residing in the mountains around the city of

Tetouan, located at the northernmost tip of Morocco, about ten kilometers from the Mediterranean coast. He (may Allah have mercy on him) was born, as mentioned in his *Fahrasah* (catalog of works/biography), in the year 1160 AH or 1161 AH. There is no disagreement among other sources that mention his birth year, although some only mention one of the two years.

His great-grandfather, ‘Abd Allāh bin ‘Ajībah, was a well-known saint (*walī*), and his tomb became a pilgrimage site in the Anjarah tribe. Likewise, his paternal grandfather, al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥajjūjī, was known for many miracles and praiseworthy virtues. As for his grandfather, al-Mahdī, as our teacher said, was: "A righteous man, quiet, solitary—meaning he loved seclusion—unconcerned with worldly matters; he was almost never seen except alone, reciting the Qur'an, praying, or occupying himself with what was beneficial to him."³⁸

Among the Hadith of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) that he understood is the following text :

عَمَلٌ قَلِيلٌ فِي سُنَّةٍ خَيْرٌ مِنْ عَمَلٍ كَثِيرٍ فِي بَدْعَةٍ.³⁹

“A small deed in accordance with the Sunnah is better than a great deed in innovation (*bid‘ah*).”

What innovation is greater and worse than love of the world and immersion in it with heart and body, something that did not exist in his time (peace be upon him), nor in the time of the Companions, until there appeared people who behaved like Pharaoh—building, erecting magnificent structures, and adorning them.

This is the true innovation. Their deeds are of little value in terms of meaning, even if they appear numerous outwardly, because there is no value in mere physical movement; rather, the true value lies in the submission of the spirit.⁴⁰

This Hadith is narrated by al-Qaḍā‘ī in *Musnad al-Shihāb* via the chain of Ḥazm bin Abī Ḥazm from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī in a *mursal* form. It is also narrated by Ibn Baṭṭah in *al-Ibānah* via the chain of Yūnus bin ‘Ubayd from al-Ḥasan. In this chain, there is Mūsā bin Sahl al-Washshā’, a narrator deemed weak. However, Ibn Baṭṭah also narrates it via the chain of al-Mubārak bin Faḍālah from al-Ḥasan with a sound (*ṣaḥīḥ*) chain. Additionally, al-Harawī

³⁸ Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad bin Muḥammad bin al-Mahdī Ibn ‘Ajībah, *Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur’ān Al-Majīd*, ed. Aḥmad ‘Abd Allāh al-Qurashī Raslān (Kairo: Zakī, Ḥasan ‘Abbās, 1419). juz 1, h. 19.

³⁹ Hibatullāh bin al-Ḥasan Al-Lālikā‘ī, *Syarḥ Uṣūl I’tiqād Ahl as-Sunah Wa Al-Jamā‘ah*, 1st ed. (Riyadh: Dār Ṭayyibah, 1982)., jilid. 1, hlm. 134. ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Alī bin Ḥisām al-Dīn al-Muttaqī Al-Hindī, *Kanz Al-‘Ummāl Fī Sunan Al-Aqwāl Wa Al-Af’āl*, 5th ed. (Beirut: Mu’assasah ar-Risalah, 1981). jilid. 1, h. 91, no. 166. Abū Nu‘aym Al-Aṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat Al-Awliyā’ Wa Ṭabaqāt Al-Aṣfiyā’*, ed. Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah (Beirut, 1988)., jilid. 6, h. 143. Syihābuddīn al-Quḍā‘ī, *Musnad Al-Syihāb*, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Mu’assasah ar-Risalah, 1996). jilid. 1, h. 234. Banyak yang menyebut ini bukan Hadis Nabi, tapi ungkapan generasi salaf (*aṣar*), lebih tepatnya sandaran kepada sahabat nabi.

⁴⁰ Īqāz al-Himam fī Sharḥ al-Ḥikam, *Ibn ‘Ajībah*, ed. Ashim Ibrahim Al-Kayyali (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2016).h. 115.

and Ibn Baṭṭah narrate it via the chain of ‘Awf from al-Ḥasan in a *marfū’* (raised to the Prophet) form, and this chain is deemed authentic.

The Hadith is also narrated via the chain of Qatādah from Ibn Mas‘ūd in a *mawqūf* (stopping at the Companion) form, but the chain is broken (*munqaṭi’*). As for the narration raised to the Prophet by al-Daylamī via the chain of ‘Alī bin Muḥammad al-Manjūrī from Abān bin Yazīd from Qatādah from Ibn Mas‘ūd, it has weakness because al-Manjūrī was deemed weak by al-Dāruquṭnī, although al-Khalīlī considered him trustworthy but with some errors in transmission.

Al-Albānī concluded that this Hadith is authentic as a *mawqūf* statement from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and has a supporting narration from the saying of Ibn Mas‘ūd:

الإِقْتِصَادُ فِي السُّنَّةِ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ الإِجْتِهَادِ فِي الْبِدْعَةِ.

“Moderation in following the Sunnah is better than striving hard in innovation.”

This narration is reported by al-Dārimī, al-Ḥākim, and al-Bayhaqī, and is deemed authentic by al-Ḥākim with agreement from al-Dhahabī. Thus, this Hadith does not have strong evidence as a raised (*marfū’*) saying of the Prophet, but its meaning has a strong foundation as a saying of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Ibn Mas‘ūd. Therefore, the meaning of the Hadith still has legitimacy in the general principles of religion even though its *marfū’* status is disputed.

According to Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd, the most dangerous deviation in religious life is not limited to innovation in formal worship practices but rather lies in the shift in life orientation, when the world is made the primary goal rather than a means to the Hereafter.⁴¹

In understanding this Hadith, the Sufis do not limit the meaning of innovation (*bid‘ah*) only to new forms of religious practice but broaden it to everything that hinders a servant's orientation toward Allah. This interpretation is evident in the explanation that love of the world and attachment of the heart to it is a greater form of innovation because it shifts the purpose of human life from servitude to Allah toward the fulfillment of desires. Deeds that outwardly appear abundant, such as building worldly grandeur while forgetting the purpose of the Hereafter, are deemed to have no true value because they are not accompanied by the submission of the spirit to Allah.

This interpretation is a form of *ishārī* development of the concept of deeds and innovation. Deeds are understood not only as physical movements but also as activities that have an inner dimension of intention, sincerity, and orientation of the heart. Similarly,

⁴¹ Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn Al-Albānī, *Silsilah Al-Aḥādīs Al-Ḍa‘īfah Wa Al-Mawḍū‘ah Wa Atharuhā Al-Sayyī’ Fī Al-Ummah*, ed. 1 (Riyāḍ: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1412). Juz 8, h. 393-394. Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd, *Qaḍīyyat Al-Taṣawwuf*, 2nd ed. (Kairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1974), h. 427-428 dalam bab “Ḥaqīqat al-Zuhd fī al-Islām”.

innovation is understood not only in the context of ritual forms but also as a deviation of spiritual orientation when something other than Allah becomes the primary goal of life.

If tested against the parameters of *ishārī* acceptability according to al-Shāṭibī and al-Zarqānī, this interpretation has a basis for acceptance. First, it does not contradict the outward meaning of the Hadith, because the Hadith indeed emphasizes the virtue of deeds in accordance with the Sunnah over deeds that lack a foundation in Islamic law. Second, this interpretation has a connection to the Islamic principle of the importance of sincerity and orientation toward the Hereafter in every deed. Third, this interpretation does not produce a new legal ruling but rather explains the inner dimension of the concept of Sunnah and innovation.

However, it should be noted that the expansion of the meaning of innovation (*bid'ah*) to love of the world is an additional spiritual meaning, not the terminological definition of *bid'ah* in the science of Islamic law. Therefore, this interpretation cannot be used to replace the jurisprudential definition of *bid'ah* but is understood as a moral warning that the greatest deviation can occur when the human heart is attached to other than Allah.

Thus, the *ishārī* interpretation of this Hadith can be accepted because it preserves the outward meaning while also uncovering the spiritual message contained within. This approach shows that the measure of the value of deeds in the Sufi perspective lies not only in the quantity of actions but also in their conformity with the Sunnah and the purity of a servant's inner orientation.

Based on the rules established above, when examining the overall quality of the Hadith interpreted *ishārī* by the above-mentioned major Sufi figures, it is found that nearly all of the Hadith are acceptable (*maqbul*), with qualities ranging from *ḥasan* and especially *ṣaḥīḥ*, particularly those narrated in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* (al-Bukhārī and Muslim). Only the Hadith '*Amalun qalilun fī sunnatin khayrun min 'amalin kathirin fī bid'atin*' is deemed weak. From the linguistic perspective, some words were interpreted quite far from their literal linguistic usage, such as Imam al-Ḥārith bin Asad al-Muḥāsibī's interpretation of the word '*jasad*' (body) as religion.

As for other words such as *al-ghusl* (bathing), *al-taṣfiq*, *al-tasbīḥ*, *al-bid'ah* (innovation), *al-mudārah*, *al-mu'min* (believer), and others, they can still be understood in their literal meanings or their definitions in Islamic law.

Regarding the existence of a witness (*shāhid*) in Islamic law, nearly all of the *ishārī* interpretations above are supported by other evidence, whether from the Qur'an—such as *al-mu'minu mir'ātu al-mu'mini, wa al-mu'minu akhū al-mu'min* (the believer is a mirror to the believer, and the believer is the brother of the believer), which is reinforced by QS. al-Ḥashr: 23—or from the Sunnah, such as Shaykh Abū al-'Abbās's statement that the just ruler is the heart. This interpretation is still in line with the *mawqūf* narration from Abū Hurayrah mentioned earlier.

Conclusion

Based on the study of the *ishārī* approach in Hadith jurisprudence among the major Sufi figures, it can be concluded that the *ishārī* approach in Hadith jurisprudence among the major Sufi figures is a way of understanding Hadith that adds an inner meaning without removing its outward meaning. This approach is based on the view that Hadith has outward and inward dimensions that complement each other, so that the *ishārī* meaning functions as an explanation of the spiritual values behind the text. The figures studied—al-Muḥāsibī, al-Rifā‘ī, al-Mursī, al-Jīlānī, al-Tijānī, and Ibn ‘Ajībah—share a similar pattern in connecting the Hadith to the spiritual meaning of human beings. The differences lie only in the type of symbols used, such as the heart, bathing, the relationship between believers, the attributes of Allah, and the meaning of innovation (*bid‘ah*).

Most of the Hadith they used are of *ṣaḥīḥ* or *ḥasan* status, so their *ishārī* interpretations are not detached from a reliable (*mu‘tabar*) basis of transmission. The disputed narrations still have support from the sayings of the Companions (*āthār*) and the early scholars (*salaf*).

Based on the criteria of al-Shāḥibī and al-Zarqānī, the majority of these *ishārī* interpretations are acceptable because they do not reject the outward meaning, are in accordance with linguistic and legal rules, and do not produce new legal rulings. Therefore, the *ishārī* meaning is positioned as an additional meaning, not a replacement for the meaning of the Hadith. However, some interpretations show an expansion of meaning that is quite far from the text, such as in al-Muḥāsibī and al-Tijānī. These interpretations can still be accepted as long as they do not replace the outward meaning. If made the sole meaning, they would exceed the boundaries of the *ishārī* approach.

Thus, the *ishārī* approach is part of the tradition of understanding Hadith that combines outward and inner meanings, as long as it preserves linguistic rules, transmission integrity, and the principles of Islamic law.

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