

Philosophical Insights: Unraveling the Rich Tapestry of Qur'anic Interpretations through Falsafi Tafsir

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Abstract:

The existence of the philosophical interpretation (tafsir falsafi) has sparked serious debates among scholars, who consider it too radical and potentially harmful to the community due to its freedom in utilizing reason. However, through this research, we explore that the diversity in interpreting the Quran is actually a result of human thought, especially in the realm of philosophy, as the quest for meaning in the Quran fundamentally involves philosophical thinking. The objective of this research is to refute views that label philosophical interpretation as a radical and dangerous approach merely because it is associated with the philosophy of that time, especially that which originated from historically non-Islamic Greek philosophy. The research methodology employed is a literature study (library research), involving the collection and screening of data from various sources to be presented systematically. With this argumentation, we aim to prove that philosophical interpretation significantly contributes to enriching the understanding of the Quran. The philosophy that dominates in this interpretation is not something deviant or perilous in interpreting the verses of the Quran, but rather a reflection of philosophical thought applied to the object of justification, namely the Quran itself, and not the other way around. The diversity in philosophical approaches contributes significantly to the development of philosophical thought related to the Quran.

Keywords: *Islamic science; Islamic thought; philosophical interpretation; Quranic understanding; tafsir.*

INTRODUCTION

The Al-Quran, as the foundation of teachings and life guidance for Muslims, occupies a central position in the development of Islamic science and knowledge (Shihab, 2003; Zuhdi & Syamsuddin, 2018). Understanding the Qur'an through interpretation plays a crucial role in the progress of human civilization (Hanafi, 2007). As Muslim knowledge develops, various new thoughts emerge, including Western understandings, which trigger a diversity of approaches in interpreting the Qur'an, giving rise to pros and cons from time to time (Ramadayanto et al., 2021). One of the prominent approaches is the philosophical mode of interpretation, which integrates philosophy into the process of interpreting the Al-Quran.

Philosophy, derived from the Greek "philo" (love) and "sophia" (wisdom), is etymologically translated as love of wisdom (Rahman, 2020). Practically, philosophy can be interpreted as the realm of thinking, where

philosophizing means thinking (Lasiyo & Yowono, 1985). The existence of philosophical interpretation has received attention and debate among ulama, considered too radical and potentially dangerous to the people because of its freedom to use reason (Ghinaurrahil et al., 2021). However, a deeper understanding reveals that diversity in the interpretation of the Al-Quran is the result of human thought, especially in the realm of philosophy, which is the main basis for searching for the meaning of the Al-Quran (Mustaqim, 2010).

This article aims to examine the epistemology of philosophical interpretation, involving the history of its emergence, its limitations, and the debate surrounding this style of interpretation. This research is based on previous studies such as the epistemology of interpretation based on the relationship between philosophy and the Qur'an (Muhammad Alwi), the development of philosophical interpretation in Islamic thought (Syafieh), the study of philosophical interpretation related to the progress of Islamic thought (Aldomi Putra), and the methodology of philosophical interpretation which uses Al-Quran verses as justification for philosophical thinking (Abdurrahman, n.d.). By digging deeper into the history, limitations, debates, and tafsir books that adopt a philosophical style, this research aims to provide a more objective and comprehensive view regarding the contribution of philosophical tafsir in expanding the interpretation of Al-Quran verses.

METHOD

This research summarizes knowledge about philosophical interpretation, Islamic philosophy, and the history of the emergence of the Al-Quran through a literature study approach (Baidan, 2005). With structured methodological steps, this research aims to explore comprehensive and in-depth information. First, in selecting literature sources, this research focuses on identifying and selecting literature related to philosophical interpretation, Islamic philosophy and the history of the Qur'an (Zabidi, 2020). The selected literary sources include scientific articles, books, journals and theses, with the aim of gaining an in-depth understanding of the history of the emergence of the Al-Quran, the philosophical concepts that underlie philosophical interpretations, and the debates surrounding it. Then, in the data collection stage, this research carried out an analysis of the selected literature. The focus is to identify information related to the epistemology of philosophical interpretation, the history of its emergence, and relevant debates (Berg & Lune, 2004). The data found is recorded systematically to form the basis of arguments and research findings. The next step is data processing, where this research organizes the data according to the main themes discussed. This includes the history of the emergence of philosophical interpretation, its limitations, and scholarly debates.

An analysis of related philosophical concepts is carried out to understand the rationale behind the interpretation of the Al-Quran. Apart from that, the systematic presentation of information is implemented by arranging data systematically in structured chapters. This involves historical background, philosophical concepts, scholarly debates, and analysis of philosophical interpretations of certain books. Within the analytical framework, this research develops an in-depth approach to present information in a balanced and objective manner. The analysis not only covers historical and philosophical aspects but also discusses the impact of the contribution of philosophical interpretation to the understanding of the Qur'an and broadening the horizons of Islamic thought. Thus, through this method, it is hoped that this research can provide a comprehensive picture of philosophical interpretation and its contribution to the understanding of the Al-Quran. Historical perspectives, philosophy and the views of ulama are the basis for forming a broader and deeper understanding of the interpretation of the Qur'an.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

History of the emergence of philosophical interpretation

Philosophical interpretation is an attempt to interpret the Qur'an, which is linked to philosophical issues (Shihab, 2003). Tafsir Falsafi is a book of interpretation that is interpreted with the dominance of philosophical theories as its paradigm. Another definition of philosophical interpretation is, the interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an using philosophical theories in it (Rahman, 2016). With this, Adz Dzahabi said that mufassir interprets the Qur'an based on philosophical thoughts and opinions so that, in this case, it is the verse that functions as justification for the thoughts written, not the thoughts that should justify the verse (Ad-Dzahaby, 2003). Like the book of tafsir written by Al Farabi, Ibn Sina and Ikhwan Al Shafa, which according to Adz Dzahabi, tafsir was rejected because it had damaged the religion of Islam itself from within.

The beginning of the emergence of tafsir with its own philosophical pattern was during the Abbasid caliphate which began during the caliphate of Al-Manshur (775 AD). At that time, the sciences experienced very rapid progress. Islamic culture developed in the regions that became Islamic power, so that at that time, there was also a movement of translating foreign books into Arabic (Ahmad Hilmi et al., 2020; Syafieh, 2017). To achieve their goals, the Abbasids used a group of Persians, Indians, and Christians who were closely related to the ancient school. Therefore, foreign books of philosophy from Greek, Persian, and Indian philosophers came in and were translated into Arabic.

Then, these books were distributed among the Muslims so that they felt interested in reading them because they had not found anything like these books before. The process of translating books from outside reached its peak during the time of the caliph Al-Ma'mun (833 AD) and made Baghdad a scientific Kaaba for students (al-Dzahabī, 2005). At that time, philosophy was new for Muslims, especially the works of Greek philosophers such as Plato (427-347 BC) and Aristotle (384-322 BC). The productive translation of philosophical books into Arabic triggered the birth of new figures in the field of philosophy, especially Muslim philosophers who are also called Islamic philosophers. Among these Islamic philosophers are Al-Farabi (870-950 AD), Ibn Sina (980-1037 AD), Ibn Masykawaih (932-1030 AD), and others. Apart from being a philosopher, Al-Farabi also translated Greek books into Arabic and he received the nickname Mu'allim At-Tsani (Second Teacher) after Aristotle (Hilmi et al., 2020). Abdurrahman Al 'Ak in his book *Ushul At-Tafsir wa Qowaiduhu* mentions the term philosophical interpretation as *Falsafi Al-Kalami*.

He said that the development of Kalamiyah philosophy began in the process of translating Greek philosophy books into Arabic. So, according to him, at that time, the discussion about Al-Kaun Al-Mahsus from the occult sciences was mixed with the understanding of the Al-Jahmiyah and the Mu'tazilah. The mixing caused a debate about the thoughts that entered Islamic science so that the debate eventually gave rise to interpretations on the verses of *mutashabihat* and *ta'wil* on the attributes of God by adjusting their respective views (Al-Akk, 1994). The Al Jahmiyah people, for example, call out that God's attributes are null and void. According to them, the Quran is a creature. A famous figure in this trend is Al-Jahm bin Shafwan (Widayati, 2022).

Meanwhile, the Mu'tazilites expressed their views on the attributes of Allah SWT by asking whether the attributes of 'ain Zat have no meaning. Or is nature other than a substance, then it is another substance that is the same as the substance of Allah SWT? And if nature is a substance, then is that nature *qadim* like Allah SWT? and so on (Al-'Akk, 1994). These understandings emerged due to the influence of Greek philosophy when philosophical thought was translated and then studied by Muslims. The interpretation of the Al-Quran using a philosophical approach is relatively often found in a number of tafsir books when discussing certain verses that require a philosophical approach. However, there are not many tafsir books that specifically take an overall philosophical approach to the verses of the Qur'an (Hilmi et al., 2020).

Limits of Philosophical Interpretation

The Qur'an has many different styles according to the expertise of its interpreters (Hashim, 2020). This also makes each of these patterns have its own character. There are theoretical boundaries that are within the scope of the pattern itself so that what is discussed does not leave its realm and becomes a permanent part of the pattern. One of the many styles is philosophy, namely interpretation based on logic or philosophical thinking that is liberal and radical. A philosophical interpretation makes philosophy a very important variable in it. The meaning of philosophy itself here is not that it only discusses methods of thinking, but philosophy has become a scientific discipline that discusses the relationship between humans and God and the existence of God (Rahman, 2018). Because the scope or limitation of philosophical interpretation is to reveal the Qur'an's views on beliefs and theological systems in a comprehensive manner. The process carried out is not based on taking sides with a particular school or school, but rather as an effort to seriously explore the views of the Qur'an when it comes to theological issues.

Philosophical interpretation has special characteristics and characteristics. As follows: Interpretation of Al-Quran verses relating to the form of Allah and His attributes; Regarding *mutashabihat* verses; Interpreting the Al-Quran in a spiritual way and reconciling philosophical thinking with Al-Quranic verses, as well as using Al-Quranic verses that are in accordance with philosophy; Using reason and *Burhan* (evidence) and using an *ijtihad* and rationality approach in interpretation; The motive for interpreting is to maintain philosophical views and philosophical theories in particular (Akbar et al., 2020).

Based on the characteristics above, it can be understood that there are limitations and scope for discussion of philosophical interpretation which are actually not far from the object of philosophical study itself.

The scope of philosophical interpretation is as follows: The issue of the doctrine of monotheism or the oneness of Allah SWT; Problems regarding prophethood; Problems regarding the settlement between philosophy and religion. Based on several objects explained above, it can be concluded that tafsir, with this philosophical school of thought, has a tendency to combine religion and philosophy. They make efforts to interpret religious texts in accordance with philosophical or philosophical thought, by looking at phenomena and then considering them from the perspective of the Qur'an (Akhdiat & Abdul, 2022). In other words, they prioritize and prioritize logical considerations, after that they look at the source of the Shari'a, namely the Qur'an.

The Qur'an has many different styles according to the expertise of its interpreters. This also makes each of these patterns have its own character. There are theoretical boundaries that are within the scope of the style itself so that what is discussed does not go outside its realm and becomes a permanent part of the style (Anshari & Rahman, 2021). One of the many styles is philosophy, namely interpretation based on logic or philosophical thinking that is liberal and radical. A philosophical interpretation makes philosophy a very important variable in it. The meaning of philosophy itself here is not that it only discusses methods of thinking, but philosophy has become a scientific discipline that discusses the relationship between humans and God and the existence of God. Because the scope or limitation of philosophical interpretation is to reveal the Qur'an's views on beliefs and theological systems in a comprehensive manner (Zulaiha et al., 2021). The process carried out is not based on taking sides with a particular school or school, but rather as an effort to seriously explore the views of the Qur'an when it comes to theological issues.

Falsafi Ulama's Debate About Philosophical Interpretation

In a scientific treasure, one of which is the science of exegesis, as it continues to develop, exegetical sciences are emerging in an effort to make it easier to understand the Qur'an, one of which is philosophical exegesis, in its journey, it cannot be separated from two groups, namely those who support it and those who reject it. Each has its own arguments regarding the existence of these philosophical interpretations, the following will explain the pros and cons related to philosophical interpretations (Hasanudin & Zulaiha, 2022).

In fact, the seeds of debate regarding philosophical interpretation began with debates among scholars regarding the interpretation of *bi ra'yi* (Zainuddin, 2016). Tafsir *bi ra'yi* is controversial because it uses *ra'yu* in its explanation of the Qur'an. One of the famous propositions is the hadith narrated by At-Tirmidhi: The Prophet SAW said: *"Whoever lies in my name intentionally, then let him occupy his seat from the fire of hell, whoever says something about the Qur'an with the ra'yu then let him occupy his seat from the fire of hell"*

The group refuses to admit that there are theories that conflict with their beliefs and the Islamic religion. So many of them stood up and started protesting too. destroyed the postulates in it and forbade Muslims to read it. In responding to the interference of Greek philosophy in the process of interpreting the Qur'an, Muslims are divided into two groups, namely as follows: *First*, A group that despises philosophy because they find a conflict between philosophy and religion. This group radically opposes philosophy and tries to distance people from it. The pioneering figure of this group was Imam al-Ghazali, which was why he wrote it "*tahafut al-falasifah*" called them heretics. According to him, they pride themselves on the assumption that they will be honorable if they do not accept the truth taqlid, even though, on the contrary, they actually accept lies without criticism. Al-Ghazali (2000) actually does not prohibit using a philosophical approach. What he did not like and criticized was the approach to the speculative metaphysical model of Ibn Sina and other philosophers. However, he did not forbid studying logic, *tabiiyat*, mathematics and others.

Likewise, Fakhr al-Razi (Ar-Râzi, 1981) in his book, tafsir expressed his understanding and abolished his philosophical theory because it was considered contradictory to religion and the Qur'an. He explained philosophical ideas that he saw as contradictory, especially with the Qur'an and in the end, firmly rejected them based on reasons and arguments that he considered sufficient.

Second, the group admires and accepts its own philosophy and some ideas conflict with the Sharia text. This group tries to compromise between philosophy and religion and attempts to reveal all these conflicts, but their efforts have not yet resulted in a final resolution but are still half-heartedly trying to resolve the problem because their explanation of the verses of the Qur'an starts from only one point of view. a philosophical theoretical view in which many things are impossible to apply and are imposed on the texts of the Qur'an.

According to philosophers, there are two ways to reconcile philosophy and interpretation. First, by interpreting religious texts and the essence of the Shari'a using philosophical thinking. This means that they place the Qur'anic text in philosophical thought so that the two seem to go hand in hand. Second, specifically by explaining religious texts (*sharah*) and the nature of sharia using philosophical theory. They consider philosophy

as the main part and the Qur'an as a side part. What this means is philosophy beyond the Qur'an. According to Husein Ad-Dzahabi, this method is more dangerous and misleading than the first method (Al-Dzahabi, 2012). This is what makes many scholars reject philosophical interpretations.

The book of Tafsir has a philosophical character

Below we will explain several books of interpretation that use philosophical interpretation styles, including: First, Fushush Al-Hikam Karya Al-Farabi (950 M). Of the many works of al-Farābī, namely, It wasshuhshul Ḥwe had, which is a topic of discussion in the study of philosophical interpretation that the author is referring to. Because It wasshuhshul Ḥwe had contains various interpretations of the verses of the Qur'an using a philosophical approach (Al-Farabi, 1995).

Interpretation of *Fuṣūṣul Ḥikām* Imam Al Farabi's work does not interpret the Qur'an in its entirety, 30 juz, but only takes verses that are in accordance with his thoughts. He also interprets that nature is eternal according to Plato's understanding and also says that the universe and the creatures in it come from God in the sense that has eternal properties or substances as well as needs itself, adapted from the understanding of soul nature and also explains supernatural things such as angels depicted with several characteristics similar to humans

An example of the interpretation is as expressed by Al-Dzahabī (Al-Dzahabi, 2012). Al-Dzahabī explained that al-Farābī in interpreting Qs. Al-Hadid/57:3;

هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

Meaning: He is the First and the Last, the Visible and the Inner; and He knows all things.

Huwa al-awwalu wa al-akhiru interpreted by Al-Farābī based on Aristotle's opinion, by saying the antiquity of nature, he said 'indeed God is the beginning of *Jiha*, and from Him everything that exists besides Him originates. The beginning of *jihah* means that the whole era is due to Him with his existence' (Ad-Dzahaby, 2003). The meaning is that the universe is truly from God and relies on Him, by relying on everything that exists on God Swt., then the existence of God SWT More than what is on this earth. Then al-Farābī continued the interpretation *al-akhiru*, the end is the end of something. The end of jihad means the entire last period of it, and there is no last period of al-Haq.

Wa al-Zahiru wa al-Bathinu, explained that 'there is no existence more perfect than the existence of God, so there is nothing hidden from the lack of existence, then it is in His manifest essence, and because it is manifest, He is inner, and with Him it appears everything that is visible, like the sun, it reveals everything that is hidden, and hides not because it is hidden' and al-Farābī explains the meaning of al-bathin is 'God is inner because indeed He is very real, because He is very real he is hidden (bathin)' (Ad-Dzahaby, 2003). The meaning that al-Farābī wants to convey is that Allah with *azh-Zhair*, and the extreme *Zhar-hir*, will give rise to the inner, because God is inner, because humans cannot sense it. The same as the example of the sun mentioned above. That the sun, with its very strong rays, will cause it to become spiritual for those who see it, because its very strong rays will prevent the senses from getting/seeing it.

Second, Rasail Ibn Sīnā. One of Ibn Sīnā's works, which is the highlight is the book *Rasail* In his opinion, Ibn Sina's philosophical thought is divided into two, namely the philosophy of the soul and the philosophy of being. The Qur'an as the main pillar in Islamic preaching was reconciled by Ibn Sīnā with philosophical theories, which were far from conflicting between the two. Al-Dzahabī explained Ibn Sīnā's views on the Qur'an and his views on philosophy, then he explained philosophical theories in the texts of the Qur'an, after that Ibn Sīnā explained (interpreted) the Qur'an using pure philosophical theories. Thus, Ibn Sina's way of interpreting the Qur'an is to explain the nature of religion with philosophical thinking.

Al-Dzahabī said that in practice Ibn Sīnā failed, and was far from the essence of religion and far from the spirit of the Qur'an al-Karim. The following is an example of Ibn Sina's interpretation of Qs. Al-Haqah/69:17.

وَالْمَلَكُ عَلَى أَرْجَائِهَا وَيَحْمِلُ عَرْشَ رَبِّكَ فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ ثَمَنِيَّةٌ

Meaning: And the angels are in various corners of the sky. On that day eight angels raised the Throne of your Lord above their heads.

Ibn Sina interprets Lafadz *عَرْشٌ* with the ninth planet being the center of the solar system. Then he stated that the words that Allah rests on the 'Arsh and its circumstances show that the 'Arsh is the end existence from a

physical aspect. This understanding is in accordance with what philosophers say that the ninth planet is the end existence physically the center of the solar system.

Third, *Rasail Ikhwan As-Shafa*. The Ikhwan As-Shafa (Holy Brotherhood) is a secret and mysterious organization of Arab Muslim philosophers who conduct research in secret and are difficult to trace (Al-Safa, 1992). This organization was headquartered in Basra, Iraq, which at that time was the capital of the Abbasid Dynasty (around 10 AD). Tafsir of the Al-Qur'an As-Shafa Ikhwan can be found in his great works, especially *Rasail Ikhwan As-Shafa*. For example, when explaining heaven and hell, they say that heaven is the kingdom of the stars/solar system and hell is the kingdom under the moon, namely the world. They also explain angels with the planets in the universe. They said: "Indeed, the planets in the solar system are the angels of Allah SWT and the kings of the sky. Allah SWT created it for the construction of the world, to rule the creatures in it and they are the kings of Allah SWT in the solar system as the kings on earth are the kings of the world (Ad-Dzahaby, 2003).

Fourth, Mafatih Al-Ghaib the work of Fakhrudin Ar-Razi (1210 AD). Ar-Razi was one of the scholars who mastered various sciences, including naqli and 'aqli (Ar-Râzî, 1981). He is famous for his book of tafsir entitled *Mafatih Al-Ghaib* or *Tafsir Al-Kabir*. Ar-Razi is said to be a scholar who opposes philosophical interpretation. Through Makanya he also wrote a comment about *Mafatih Al-Ghaib* in response to his rejection. According to Manna Al-Qattan, Ar-Razi in his interpretation described various sciences as exact sciences, physics, astronomy, philosophy and discussions of divine problems raised by rational philosophers. He also raised the issue of fiqh when discussing several verses (Ad-Dzahaby, 2003).

Fifth, Tafsir Al-Mizan by Husain Thabathaba'i (1981 AD). Categorizing it as a tafsir that has a philosophical style, this departs from Thabathaba'i's mastery in the field of philosophy. Thabathaba'i was a 14th century Muslim philosopher, theologian and mufassir (Al-Thabathaba'i, 1997). He was the most influential Shiite cleric in ideological discourse of his time. His famous book of tafsir is *Tafsir Al-Mizan*. This interpretation is mostly philosophical. Thabathaba'i collects discussions with philosophical nuances. Later, during the writing process, the study of the Qur'an and philosophy was so intense that Thabathaba'i included it in his explanation. Apart from that, the Shiites have a tradition of combining the study of philosophy with the study of the interpretation of the Al-Qur'an (Fauzan, 2018).

Advantages and Disadvantages of Philosophical Interpretation

According to Hassan Hanafi, there are several advantages of philosophical interpretation, including (Hanafi, 2001): First, Going beyond textualist, Naqli and historical methods Second, Far from fanaticism. Third, Able to interact with other civilizations Hassan Hanafi further explains that the philosophical pattern is the further development of the theology that refers to, absorbs, and defends neighboring cultures. The interesting thing here according to Hassan Hanafi is the philosophical idea about God, the world, humans, destiny, prophetic, eschatology And the priesthood It is related to Mu'tazilah interpretation because both depend on the autonomy of reason. Meanwhile, it is related to tafsir because both of them practice ta'wil esotericism

Meanwhile, the weakness of philosophical interpretation is that it moves too far in speculative analysis due to its dependence on pure reason which uses classical elements and culture from neighboring countries, especially Greek culture. The purity of reason ends in one particular type of domination (Hasan, 2001). And there is another opinion that says the weakness of philosophical interpretation is that it tends to build universal propositions based only on logic and because the role of logic is so dominant, this style pays little attention to aspects of the historicity of the holy books (Hidayat, 1998).

CONCLUSION

The philosophical style is not a deviant and dangerous style in interpreting the verses of the Qur'an just because it is dominated by philosophical thinking or because of the thinking of people who do not like philosophy. In fact, with this thought, the Al-Qur'an is the object of justification that must be interpreted, not thought as a justification for the verse. The philosophical style is so great in providing a contribution to thought in terms of philosophy. This philosophical style makes efforts to interpret religious texts in accordance with philosophical or philosophical thinking, by looking at phenomena and then considering them from the perspective of the Qur'an. In other words, they prioritize and prioritize logical considerations, after that they look at the source of the Shari'a, namely the Qur'an. There are debates regarding the interpretation of the Al-

Quran which is actually an effort to search for the meaning of the contents of the Al-Quran in depth. So it is not impossible that one day there will be books of interpretation with ideal philosophical nuances that are based on appropriate interpretive rules and do not deviate from religious norms.

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