



# The Development of Philosophical Interpretation in The Islamic Intellectual Tradition: From the Golden Age to the Emergence of Islamic Interpretation

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## ABSTRACT

This study discusses the development and characteristics of philosophical interpretation in the Islamic intellectual tradition by tracing its historical dynamics from the golden age of Islam to the emergence of *ishari* interpretation. The research approach used is qualitative with a descriptive-analytical method based on a literature review of classical and contemporary literature. The results of the study show that philosophical interpretation emerged as a response to the interaction between rational-philosophical thought and religious understanding in the context of medieval Islamic intellectualism. During the Abbasid period, the integration of Greek philosophy with Islamic thought gave birth to a style of rational interpretation represented by figures such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Ibnu Rusyd. However, this study also found that the emergence of *ishari* interpretation became a spiritual transition from philosophical rationality to a Sufi intuitive approach in understanding the text of the Qur'an. Theoretically, this research contributes to mapping the evolution of the epistemology of interpretation, while practically it can be an academic reference for studies of interpretation based on philosophy and Islamic spirituality.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The long journey of Qur'anic interpretation shows that Muslims' understanding of the holy book has continued to evolve. This dynamic arises because interpreters use different approaches in understanding the text, giving rise to a variety of interpretations. Historically, the way the Qur'an is interpreted has always been influenced by the social, political, and cultural situations of the time. Each period has different challenges and intellectual needs, so that the style of interpretation that emerges reflects the context of that era. Meanwhile, from an epistemological point of view, various schools of thought in interpretation show that interpretation is highly dependent on the scientific framework adopted by the *mufasssir*. The use of linguistics, theology, philosophy, law, and even Sufism shapes different characters and methods in understanding the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an. Thus, the development of interpretation is not only related to changes in historical conditions, but is also influenced by the development of thought and scientific disciplines that form the basis of the interpreters. Through this perspective, it is apparent that

tafsir is a scientific process that continues to evolve in line with the development of civilization and the spiritual needs of the people (Abrorov et al., 2022).

Interpretation of the Qur'an is a human endeavor to explore and understand Allah's message according to the intellectual capacity and competence of an interpreter. Therefore, the process of interpretation is greatly influenced by the interpreter's scientific background, intellectual tendencies, and spiritual experiences. These variations cause the interpretation of the Qur'an to develop into various styles and approaches. In general, interpretations can be categorized based on their sources of reference, namely tafsir *bi al-ma'tsur*, which is based on the history of the Qur'an, *hadith*, and the opinions of the companions; tafsir *bi al-ra'yi*, which relies on *ijtihad* and the analytical abilities of the *mufasssir*; and tafsir *ishari*, which emphasizes inner understanding in the Sufi tradition. In addition to classification based on source, tafsir can also be grouped according to style or *ittijah*, which usually follows the field of knowledge mastered by the *mufasssir*. For example, tafsir in the style of language, *fiqh*, theology, philosophy, or Sufism. Thus, the variety of tafsir that has emerged is a reflection of the breadth of Islamic scholarship and the ability of *mufasssir* to combine knowledge, experience, and methodological approaches to reveal the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an (Gofur et al., 2025).

The style of interpretation in the science of interpretation is a certain tendency or color that dominates a work of interpretation, according to the expertise and background of the interpreter. One of the styles that is quite well-known and controversial is philosophical interpretation. Philosophical interpretation is an approach to interpreting the Qur'an that integrates philosophy, logic, and rationality in understanding the holy verses. This style of interpretation emerged during the Abbasid Caliphate when Greek philosophical thought began to enter the Islamic world. Muslim philosophers such as Ibn Sina, Al-Farabi, and Al-Kindi played an important role in developing interpretation with a rational and philosophical approach (Faiziya, 2025). The emergence of philosophical interpretation is not free from controversy among scholars. In fact, many Muslim scholars reject philosophical interpretation because they consider it too much to prioritize rationality and philosophy, to the point of being considered a deviation from the truth of the Qur'an. Throughout its history, the development of philosophical interpretation has experienced ups and downs due to various criticisms from scholars such as Al-Ghazali. However, in the 20th century, this interpretation re-emerged through the works of Thabathaba'i and Abu Ya'rab al-Marzuqi. Although controversial, this philosophical interpretation plays a role in combining rationality with spiritual understanding in the treasury of Islamic knowledge. Fadal, "The Stagnation of Philosophical Interpretation and the Curiosity of the Qur'an."

The study of the Qur'an is an intellectual activity that continues to evolve in line with changes in the mindset, social conditions, and spiritual life of Muslims. Since its early days, efforts to interpret this holy book have not only focused on explaining the textual or apparent meaning of its verses, but also on exploring the philosophical, moral, and theological values hidden within it. The interpretation of the Qur'an has developed into a multi-layered scientific tradition, encompassing efforts to understand God's message in an ever-changing context. Therefore, the study of the Qur'an does not stop at simple reading, but involves an in-depth analysis of the purpose of *shari'ah*, the nature of humanity, and the relationship between humans and their God. This approach shows that the Qur'an is understood not only as a legal text or ritual guide, but as a rich and relevant source of knowledge for various aspects of life. Thus, the development of Qur'anic studies reflects the ongoing efforts of Muslims to interpret revelation comprehensively, in accordance with the challenges of the times and the needs of society (Fadal, 2022). Throughout history, various interpretations have emerged from the interaction between the revealed text and the context of Muslim society at that time. One prominent style during the golden age of Islamic civilization was philosophical interpretation, a form of interpretation that prioritizes a rational and philosophical approach to understanding the verses of the Qur'an. This style developed rapidly during the *al-Dawlah al-'Abbāsiyyah*, when translation activities and the development of science reached their peak. Through a major intellectual movement known as the *Bayt al-Hikmah* in Baghdad, the works of Greek philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato were translated into Arabic and influenced the thinking of Muslim scholars. Figures such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Rushd are strong representatives of the tendency to integrate revelation and reason, so that philosophical interpretation was born as a form of effort to harmonize rational science and religious science (Husnul Hakim & Ahmad, 2022).

However, the existence of philosophical interpretation cannot be separated from epistemological debates among Muslim scholars and intellectuals. Some theologians argue that this approach has the potential to shift the meaning of verses from their original message because it emphasizes logical

reasoning over the text of revelation itself. This concern arises from the possibility that exegetes who utilize philosophy may be driven to speculative thinking that is metaphysical in nature and not easily proven textually. They view that the dominance of reason in understanding revelation can open the door to subjective interpretations that exceed the limits set by the text. However, rationalists offer a different perspective. According to them, the use of a philosophical approach actually enriches the process of understanding the Qur'an. This approach is considered capable of revealing deep meanings that are not always apparent in literal interpretations, as well as presenting a broader and more universal perspective. In other words, philosophy is seen as a tool for exploring the wisdom and fundamental principles contained in revelation, so that the Qur'an can be understood more comprehensively and in a way that is relevant to human intellectual development. Thus, the debate over philosophical interpretation shows the dynamic relationship between the text of revelation and the use of reason in Islamic tradition (Mustakim, 2010). The debate revealed a field of study that has not been widely discussed, namely the lack of in-depth explanation of the position of philosophical interpretation in the realm of Islamic interpretation. To date, there has been no truly comprehensive explanation of how this style of interpretation should be understood, whether it should be seen as a rational tendency that has the potential to stray from the textual meaning, or rather as an expression of intellectual development that has emerged in response to the demands of the times. This research gap has resulted in philosophical interpretation often being caught in a gray area between criticism and appreciation. On the one hand, it is considered excessive because it prioritizes reason; on the other hand, it is considered capable of opening new horizons in understanding the messages of the Qur'an. This gap emphasizes the need for a more systematic study to place philosophical interpretation proportionally within the tradition of Islamic interpretation (Dasuki et al., 2025). This gap is important to study further so that the position of philosophical interpretation in the history of the development of interpretation can be understood proportionally.

This context becomes even more interesting when linked to the emergence of Islamic exegesis, a style of interpretation that emphasizes the inner, symbolic, and spiritual meaning of the Quran. This interpretation developed during the final period of Islamic glory, when the political, economic, and intellectual civilization of the Islamic world began to decline. In this situation, the need arose to restore the spiritual dimension to religious life, which was felt to have been marginalized by the dominance of philosophical rationalism. Figures such as Al-Ghazali and Ibn Arabi played a crucial role in developing this approach to interpretation. They believed that the truth of the Quran can be understood not only through rationality but also through purification of the heart and mystical experience. This shift indicates an epistemological transition from rationality to spirituality, a significant phenomenon in the history of the development of Islamic exegesis. However, previous research has tended to discuss philosophical and Islamic exegesis separately without exploring the historical and conceptual connections between the two (Sirry, 2021). In fact, explaining the relationship between these two styles of interpretation is an important step in understanding how the tradition of Qur'anic interpretation has developed over time. The relationship between philosophical interpretation and Islamic interpretation not only illustrates differences in method, but also reflects the dynamics of Islamic thought in responding to social, intellectual, and spiritual changes. By examining the relationship between the two, we can see how *mufassir* (exegetes) try to maintain a balance between the use of reason and inner contemplation, and how each approach contributes to a broader understanding of the message of the Qur'an. This understanding also helps explain why various schools of exegesis have emerged and developed according to the needs of the times, while also revealing the methodological diversity that enriches the study of the Qur'an.

A number of classical and contemporary works have made important contributions to the discussion of this theme. One such work is the research by Akhmad Dasuki and his colleagues, which provides a detailed account of the history of the emergence of philosophical interpretation, the methods used, and the figures who played a role in its development. Through their study, they offer a comprehensive overview of how philosophical interpretation was formed, developed, and positioned within the tradition of Islamic interpretation (Dasuki et al., 2025). Wahid Muhammad Hisyam examines the philosophical thought of the Qur'an from the perspective of Kyai Bisri Mustofa and explores how these ideas relate to philosophical works of exegesis. In his study, he highlights how Bisri Mustofa understands the verses of the Qur'an through an approach that combines elements of rationality and spirituality, and explains the relevance of this view to the tradition of philosophical interpretation. This research makes an important contribution in showing how the thoughts of an Indonesian scholar can be placed in a broader context, particularly in the discourse on the relationship between philosophy and Qur'anic interpretation (Wahid, 2023). Anas Mujahidin examined the

*ishari* style in al-Alusi's interpretation of *al-Ma'ani*. He revealed how al-Alusi not only interpreted verses literally, but also included spiritual dimensions obtained through the *ishari* approach. The study shows that al-Alusi combines linguistic analysis with spiritual understanding, resulting in a rich and profound interpretation. Through his research, Anas highlights al-Alusi's contribution to expanding the understanding of the meaning of verses, particularly through symbolism and gestures that reflect the depth of the Sufi tradition (Mujahiddin, 2022).

Irpan Hadi and Agus Rifqi Ridwan examined the concept of tafsir *bi al-isyari* along with various works of interpretation that use this approach. In their research, they explain the main characteristics of *ishari* interpretation, namely an emphasis on inner meaning obtained through spiritual intuition and religious experience. They also examine how *ishari* exegetes interpret verses of the Qur'an with symbolism and gestures that transcend literal meaning, without departing from the framework of Islamic teachings. Through this discussion, Irpan and Agus demonstrate the important position of *ishari* interpretation in the treasury of interpretation and its contribution to enriching the understanding of the verses of the Qur'an (I. Hadi & Ridwan, 2024). Abdul Basit and Fuad Nawawi provide an in-depth analysis of the epistemological aspects of Islamic exegesis. They highlight the foundations of knowledge used by exegetes in understanding the verses of the Qur'an, including the sources, methods, and validity of interpretation. In their study, they explain how Islamic interpretation developed through a combination of spiritual experience, intellectual reasoning, and scholarly traditions inherited from the ulama. They also emphasize that epistemology is key to determining the limits and legitimacy of interpretation, especially when dealing with the inner and symbolic meanings in sacred texts. Through this discussion, both authors make an important contribution to understanding the scientific foundations of Islamic interpretation (Basit & Nawawi, 2019). The urgency of this research lies in its attempt to present a historical and conceptual mapping that can describe the changes and dynamics of the development of Qur'anic interpretation from time to time. This study is important because it can show how various approaches to interpretation emerged, interacted, and developed in accordance with the socio-intellectual context of each period. Through this mapping, this study helps identify patterns, influences, and methodological shifts in the tradition of interpretation. In addition, this study provides a comprehensive foundation for academics to gain a deeper understanding of the position of philosophical interpretation and Islamic interpretation in the intellectual history of Islam, thereby enriching the discourse on the methodology of Qur'anic interpretation (Dungga & Indarti, 2025).

This research is also important for demonstrating that the development of interpretation is not only determined by differences in methodology, but also by the surrounding civilizational context. In terms of scientific novelty (novelty), this research offers a synthetic approach that views philosophical interpretation and Islamic interpretation not as two opposing schools of thought, but as two epistemological expressions born from different historical contexts. The philosophical interpretation reflects the spirit of rationalism during the golden age of Islam, while the Islamic interpretation reflects spirituality that grew amidst decline (Abrorov et al., 2022). The scientific contribution of this study lies in a new understanding of the epistemological dynamics of Qur'anic interpretation, where rationality and spirituality are not seen as two opposing poles, but rather as two complementary dimensions in the effort to understand revelation. Practically, the results of this study can enrich the treasure trove of contemporary exegesis and provide a more holistic perspective in understanding the text of the Qur'an amidst changing times (Dungga & Indarti, 2025). Based on these overall arguments, this study aims to explain the meaning, history of the emergence, and limitations of philosophical interpretation; explain the reasons why this style of interpretation emerged during the golden age of Islam; differentiate between the epistemological orientations of philosophical interpretation and Islamic interpretation; and explain the factors that led to the emergence of Islamic interpretation during the decline of Islamic civilization (Abrorov et al., 2022).

This study uses a qualitative approach by applying the descriptive-analytical method (Darmalaksana, 2022). This approach was chosen because it is suitable for examining conceptual and interpretative scientific phenomena, particularly in the study of Qur'anic interpretation. The research data is qualitative, namely in the form of descriptive data that is not expressed in numerical form, but in the form of texts, ideas, and thoughts contained in various literary sources. The research data sources consist of two categories: primary sources and secondary sources. Primary data sources include literature directly related to the focus of the study, namely philosophical interpretation and Islamic interpretation (Al-Zahabi, 2003). Secondary data sources consist of various supporting literature, including academic books, scientific journals, research articles, and other relevant references to enrich the perspective and strengthen the research argument.

## 2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### • Definition, History of Emergence, and Limitations of Philosophical Interpretation

Interpretation in the context of language comes from the word *fa-sa-ra*, which generally means to express, explain, and elaborate on a meaning. This term describes the process of clarifying something that was previously vague. In etymological studies, interpretation is understood as an effort to explain the meaning of Allah's words within the limits of human reason. This means that the process of understanding the Qur'an cannot be separated from the interpreter's capacity, both in terms of knowledge, method, and depth of understanding of the context of revelation. The opinions of scholars regarding the definition of interpretation are also not much different. The science of tafsir is seen as a discipline that aims to understand the Qur'an by revealing the meaning intended by Allah, based on the clues found in the text and the support of other relevant sciences. Tafsir serves to help humans grasp divine messages accurately, through explanations of words, sentence structure, the background of the verses, and the values contained therein. Thus, the science of tafsir is not only a means of understanding words and meanings, but also a bridge connecting revelation with the realities of life according to human ability and sincerity in studying it (Gofur et al., 2025).

According to Adz-Dzahabi in his work *al-Tafsir wa al-Mufasssirun*, philosophical interpretation is a form of interpreting the Qur'an that uses a philosophical approach to understand its verses. This approach is carried out in various ways. Some exegetes attempt to combine and harmonize philosophical ideas with the content of the Qur'an to form a synthesis that is considered harmonious. They believe that philosophical principles can be a tool to deepen understanding of revelatory guidance, as long as they do not conflict with the basic values of Islam. On the other hand, there are also exegetes who use a philosophical perspective to criticize or reject certain philosophical theories. For this group, when a philosophical idea is considered incompatible or contradictory to the verses of the Qur'an, then that theory must be corrected or rejected. Thus, philosophical interpretation can function both as an effort to harmonize reason and revelation and as a means of critically testing human thought. This approach ultimately shows that the interaction between philosophy and sacred texts always involves a process of dialogue, selection, and assessment, while still making the Qur'an the primary source of truth (Al-Dzahabi, 1976). M. Quraish Shihab explains that philosophical interpretation is an attempt to interpret verses from the Qur'an by examining issues related to philosophy. This approach not only discusses the literal meaning of the text, but also explores conceptual dimensions related to the nature of existence, reason, ethics, the soul, and the reality of life. In Quraish Shihab's view, philosophical interpretation basically attempts to connect the contents of the Qur'an with fundamental questions that are often discussed in the tradition of philosophical thought. Through this approach, interpreters seek to explain the verses of the Qur'an in greater depth by utilizing a rational framework of thought. However, the use of philosophy must remain within limits that do not conflict with the principles of revelation. In other words, philosophy only serves as a tool to understand the meaning of verses more broadly, not as a determinant of truth in itself. This approach emphasizes that dialogue between philosophical reasoning and the text of the Qur'an can enrich understanding, as long as revelation remains the primary source of knowledge (Shihab, 1999).

Philosophical interpretation began with Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, who was known for his *ijtihad (ra'y)*. In the following centuries, religious knowledge and science developed, Islamic culture flourished, and the translation of foreign books into Arabic was encouraged during the Abbasid Caliphate, including the works of philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato. Over time, commentators sought to understand the Qur'an using philosophical methods, which gave rise to the philosophical method. Philosophical interpretations, such as those by Al-Ghazali and Ibn Sina, attempted to explain metaphysical and ethical concepts in the context of the Qur'an. For example, interpretations of the creation and existence of humans were often linked to philosophical arguments about the existence of God. According to al-Dzahabi, the early phase of tafsir development occurred during the time of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions. Al-Dzahabi proposed a periodization of tafsir development into four phases. First, the period of the Prophet and his companions. Second, the period of the *tabi'in*. Third, the period of book writing. Fourth, the modern period. In addition, al-Dzahabi also divides it into three periods: the early period of 1-2 AH / 6-7 AD during the time of the Prophet and his companions, the middle period during the golden age of Islam until the Renaissance in the 8th to 113th centuries AD, and the contemporary period which began in the early 19th century AD, pioneered by Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905). Apart from periodization, Quranic interpretation also

developed in terms of methods, approaches, and styles. In the early period, at least two methods of interpretation emerged that were already known in the Islamic world, namely tafsir *bi al-ma'tsur* and tafsir *bi al-ma'qul*, and from these methods, new theories in interpretation eventually emerged. Tafsir *bi al-ma'tsur* developed during the time of the Prophet, while tafsir *bi al-ra'yi* emerged later after tafsir *bi al-ma'tsur* (A. Hadi, 2021).

According to al-Dzahabi, when the authority of tafsir *bi al-ma'tsur* began to weaken and public trust in it declined, there was a need to open up space for other forms of interpretation. During the Abbasid Dynasty, this condition encouraged the development of tafsir *bi al-ra'yi* as an alternative to understanding the verses of the Qur'an with a rational approach. During this period, the collection and compilation of tafsir works increased dramatically. In addition to the codification of tafsir, various other branches of knowledge began to be compiled systematically, giving rise to a more structured scientific tradition. At the same time, the movement to translate foreign works into Arabic also developed rapidly. Many books from the Persian, Greek, and Indian traditions were translated and became references for Muslim intellectuals. The influx of these new ideas enriched the intellectual heritage of Islam and influenced the mindset of the exegetes. From this process of intellectual interaction, a new trend in the method of interpreting the Qur'an emerged. Gradually, a style of interpretation influenced by Greek thought developed and became known as philosophical interpretation. This approach marked a shift in the way the Qur'an was understood, from simply following tradition to using rationality and dialogue with philosophical traditions in interpreting the sacred text. The term philosophy has various definitions that arise from the different perspectives of philosophers and the diversity of schools of thought they adhere to. This diversity means that there is no single definition of philosophy. Before examining the various views of prominent figures on philosophy, it is important to first understand its meaning from an etymological and terminological perspective. This initial understanding is necessary so that the concept of philosophy is not misinterpreted and can be appropriately placed in scientific studies. Throughout history, thinkers have often provided varying definitions of philosophy, tailored to their intellectual backgrounds, scientific traditions, and methodological approaches. As a result, philosophy has developed into a broad and dynamic discipline, with different emphases depending on the figure or school of thought discussing it (Aulia, 2015).

Etymologically, the term philosophy comes from Greek, which was then absorbed into Latin as *philosophia*, meaning love of wisdom. This word is composed of *philos* or *philia*, which means love or attraction, and *sophos*, which means wisdom, knowledge, intelligence, or skill. Thus, philosophy basically means the effort to seek and love wisdom. Meanwhile, terminologically, philosophy is understood as a discipline that studies various issues in depth, critically, and comprehensively. Philosophy attempts to trace the roots of problems to find the nature or essence of a reality. The philosophical approach requires systematic and radical thinking, so that it can explain phenomena more fundamentally. In the tradition of Islamic thought, scholars also provide a similar definition. Al-Farabi, a Muslim philosopher, explains that philosophy is the science that examines the existence of the universe and its true nature. For Al-Farabi, philosophy is a means of understanding reality comprehensively based on reason and deep reasoning. The word philosophy was then adapted into Arabic and became a synthetic root word (*Masdar ja'li*), namely *falsafah*. The term *falsafah* is the result of the Arabization of a foreign word, which means the intellectual efforts of philosophers. During the golden age of Islam, particularly during the Abbasid era around the 8th century AD, when Abu Ja'far al-Mansur (754-775) was in power, many philosophical works from various languages such as Greek, Persian, and Indian were translated into Arabic. The history of Islamic philosophy is essentially an attempt to adapt and integrate Islamic law with philosophical thought. Muslim philosophers sought inspiration from the Qur'an and hadith as the basis for developing the distinctive characteristics of Islamic philosophy. Various issues in Islamic philosophy are actually rooted in differences in the interpretation of sacred texts, namely the Qur'an and Sunnah. These differences of opinion arise because each scientist and philosopher has a different method of interpretation. Therefore, philosophical interpretation can be understood as a form of interpreting the Qur'an using the principles of philosophy and rationality as the basis for analysis. This approach does not reject the truth of revelation, but seeks to explain the contents of the verses of the Qur'an through logical arguments and rational thinking.

Historically, philosophical interpretation began to develop during the *Al-'Abbāsiyyūn* Caliphate, particularly between the 8th and 12th centuries AD. During this era, the Islamic world was at the peak of its progress in various fields of science, including philosophy, science, and theology. This development was inseparable from the large-scale translation of Greek intellectual works into Arabic, which took place mainly through the *Bayt al-Hikmah* center of learning in Baghdad. To encourage the advancement of

science, the *Al-'Abbāsiyyūn* rulers brought in many scholars from various regions, such as India, Persia, and Christian communities. These scholars had strong ties to ancient scientific traditions and classical philosophical schools. Through their contributions, various important manuscripts from Greek, Persian, and Indian civilizations became accessible to Muslim scientists. These works were then systematically translated into Arabic and became key references in the development of Islamic thought. This process of knowledge transfer paved the way for the emergence of a new, more rational and philosophical approach to interpretation, as interpreters began to interact with foreign philosophical concepts that were previously unknown in the Islamic scientific tradition (Syam et al., 2023). In subsequent developments, Muslims became interested in philosophical writings, which were seemingly new to them. The peak of foreign book translation into Arabic occurred during the reign of Caliph Al-Ma'mun in 833 AD, which made Baghdad a center of knowledge for scholars. Al-Dzahabi even referred to Baghdad as the Kaaba of knowledge (Adz-Dzahabi, 2021).

During this period, many philosophical books by philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato were translated into Arabic, giving rise to Muslim philosophers such as Ibn Sina, Al-Kindi, Al-Farabi, Mulla Sadra, Ikhawan al-Shafa, and others. Muhammad Ali Ar-Ridha'i al-Isfahani explains that the main limitations in philosophical interpretation include verses that discuss the existence of God, the nature of being, divine attributes, levels of monotheism, the question of reason (*al-'aql*), the soul (*al-nafs*), miracles (*al-ijaz*), and the concept of cause and effect (*al-'Iliyah*) (Putra, 2017). In other words, the focus of philosophical interpretation is closely related to fundamental issues that are also the core of philosophical discussion. The scope of this interpretation is basically not much different from the scope of philosophical studies themselves, because both seek to understand the nature of reality in depth. Therefore, philosophical interpretation often involves discussions about the doctrine of divinity or *tawhid*, explanations of prophethood and its characteristics, and efforts to harmonize philosophical thinking with religious teachings. This approach also serves as a bridge between rationality and revelation, with the aim of gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the messages of the Qur'an (Syam et al., 2023).

- **The Reason Philosophical Interpretation Emerged in the Golden Age of Islam**

During the Middle Ages, also known as the Golden Age of Islam, the tradition of interpreting the Qur'an developed rapidly and lasted for approximately eleven centuries. During this long period, the attention of *mufassirin* (exegetes) to tafsir (exegesis) reached its peak. Many scholars of that period not only showed great interest, but also developed special expertise in various approaches to interpretation. This progress did not occur suddenly, but was driven by the rapid development of various other disciplines that influenced the methods and styles of interpretation. The growth of *fiqh* provided a foundation for understanding the laws of the Qur'an, while advances in *kalam* enriched interpretations related to creed and theological issues. In addition, the development of Arabic language and literature enabled exegetes to study the structure and beauty of the Qur'anic language in greater depth. Philosophy, as one of the disciplines that developed rapidly at that time, also contributed greatly to the emergence of various new styles of interpretation that were more rational and analytical. Thus, the Golden Age of Islam became an important period that showed how various sciences interacted with each other and enriched the practice of interpreting the Qur'an (Izzan, 2011). The emergence of philosophical interpretation is closely related to the historical situation and intellectual developments during the Golden Age of Islam, which lasted from the 8th to the 13th centuries AD. During this period, Islamic civilization achieved remarkable progress in various disciplines, such as medicine, mathematics, astronomy, logic, and philosophical thought. This rapid development created an intellectual environment that encouraged the use of deeper reasoning in understanding various issues, including the verses of the Qur'an. It was in this context that a more rational and systematic approach to interpretation emerged. Scholars began to combine philosophical methods with religious studies, giving rise to a tradition of interpretation that sought to explain the Qur'an through intellectual analysis and logical argumentation. This period marked the beginning of the development of philosophical interpretation, in which reason and revelation were placed in a dialogical relationship to find a more comprehensive meaning of the sacred text (Shihab, 2004).

One of the main factors that gave rise to the tradition of philosophical interpretation was the proliferation of translations of philosophical works from Greece, Persia, and India into Arabic. This intellectual movement reached its peak during the reign of Caliph *al-Ma'mun*, when *Bayt al-Hikmah* in Baghdad was established as a center for translation and scientific development. Through this institution, the ideas of great thinkers such as Plato, Aristotle, and other classical figures became widely accessible

to Muslim scholars. Access to this literature allowed rational, analytical, and metaphysical thinking to become increasingly integrated into the Islamic scientific tradition. Scholars then utilized this philosophical approach to interpret the verses of the Qur'an in greater depth. As a result, a pattern of interpretation that integrated logic and philosophy began to take shape. The influence of foreign thought helped shape the way some exegetes understood the sacred text, so that interpretation was not only based on history, but also on a more systematic process of reasoning and intellectual reflection (Al-Dzahabi, 1976). In addition to being influenced by the large influx of foreign works being translated, the rise of rationalism and advances in various disciplines also encouraged the emergence of a style of interpretation that gave great importance to the role of reason. Muslim scholars at that time sought to emphasize that there was no fundamental contradiction between revelation and reason, as both were believed to originate from the same God. Reason was seen as a divine gift that enabled humans to understand the messages of the Qur'an more deeply, while revelation served as a guide that directed the use of reason onto the right path. It was within this framework of thought that philosophical interpretation developed as a bridge between the truth of revelation and human logical reasoning. This approach emphasized that understanding the Qur'an could not only be achieved through history and tradition, but also through rational reflection and in-depth analysis of metaphysical concepts and fundamental issues of life. Through philosophical interpretation, thinkers attempt to combine the two so that the resulting interpretation is not only textual but also capable of providing a comprehensive explanation in line with the intellectual developments of the time. This approach shows that religion and reason can go hand in hand in exploring the meaning of the Qur'an more broadly (Dasuki et al., 2025).

In addition to the influence of scientific developments and translation, the drive to combine religious teachings with philosophical thought was an important factor in the emergence of philosophical interpretations. Muslim scholars such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Rushd argued that philosophy was not incompatible with religion, but could instead be a means of deepening understanding of revelation. Through a philosophical approach, they interpreted verses from the Qur'an to explain metaphysical concepts, such as the nature of God, the essence of the soul, and the process of creation of the universe. In addition, the emergence of diverse foreign ideas and theological discussions, fostered by intellectual openness during the golden age of Islam, also encouraged the development of philosophical interpretation. Muslim thinkers faced various new intellectual challenges that demanded rational and argumentative responses. In this context, philosophical interpretation sought to defend Islamic teachings through logical and systematic explanations. This approach shows that philosophical reasoning can strengthen, rather than weaken, religious understanding.

- **Differences in the Orientation of Philosophical Interpretation and Islamic Interpretation**

In the tradition of interpreting the Qur'an, philosophical interpretation and spiritual Islamic interpretation are two important approaches that offer different styles of understanding. Both aim to reveal the deepest meaning of the verses of the Qur'an, but their epistemological foundations and orientations are not the same. Philosophical interpretation relies on reason, logical analysis, and rational thinking, while spiritual interpretation relies on faith, inner experience, and religious values. Historically, philosophical interpretation developed during the golden age of Islamic intellectualism when rationalism held a strong position. During this period, Muslim thinkers such as al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Rushd sought to reconcile revelation with philosophy, thereby greatly influencing their methods of interpretation with logic and metaphysical ideas. Through this approach, verses of the Qur'an were analyzed within a framework of thought that emphasized order, causality, and the nature of existence. According to al-Dzahabi, the development of philosophical interpretation cannot be separated from the intellectual dynamics of Muslims at the time, in which reason was considered an important means of interpreting revelation in a profound and systematic manner. This approach has since become an important feature of the treasury of interpretation to this day (Adz-Dzahabi, 2021), philosophical commentators believe that revelation and reason originate from the same source, namely Allah SWT. Therefore, the two cannot possibly contradict each other. The main orientation of philosophical interpretation is to seek harmony between religion and philosophy, by interpreting verses of the Qur'an related to metaphysics and rational theology.

Spirituality-oriented interpretation emphasizes an inner approach to understanding the Qur'an. This style of interpretation grew out of the Sufi tradition, which teaches that the essence of the Qur'an's teachings is not only found in its literal meaning, but also in its deeper inner meaning. Sufis argue that each verse has hidden layers of meaning that cannot be revealed through linguistic analysis or rational

logic alone. To understand these meanings, a seeker of truth must undergo a process of spiritual purification and profound spiritual experience. The concept of *kasyf*, or the unveiling of the inner veil through divine enlightenment and *al-Dzauq*, or spiritual experience, is the main path to grasping the hidden messages in the verses of the Qur'an. Thus, spiritual interpretation emphasizes intuition, sincerity of heart, and a servant's closeness to God. This approach views that true understanding of the Qur'an will only emerge when a person is able to see beyond the literal text and enter the esoteric dimension of meaning (Sholihah et al., 2024).

Al-Qushayri in *Lata'if al-Isyarat* emphasizes that the inner meaning of the Qur'an cannot be revealed solely through rational thinking. He states that the depth of the meaning of the holy verses can only be understood if a person undergoes a process of purification of the heart and strengthens his spiritual relationship with Allah. Esoteric interpretation, according to Al-Qushayri, is not merely an intellectual activity, but a spiritual journey that requires a servant to cleanse himself of negative traits and inner diseases. Only a pure heart that is close to Allah is able to receive the divine meaning that is not explicitly conveyed through the text. Therefore, understanding the inner dimension of the Qur'an requires spiritual readiness and sincerity in undergoing the process of self-purification. Al-Qushayri emphasizes that without a deep spiritual experience, a person will only stop at the outward meaning and will not be able to grasp the hidden message intended for those who have achieved inner closeness to the Creator. Thus, the inner meaning of the Qur'an is a divine gift given to those who combine intellectual effort with spiritual sincerity (Shihab, 2004). Therefore, Islamic interpretation is oriented toward an intuitive approach, which emphasizes spiritual experience as the path to true understanding of the Qur'an. While philosophical interpretation prioritizes logic and rationality as tools for understanding truth, Islamic interpretation uses spiritual experience and intuition as means for revealing divine meaning. According to Ibrahim Mustafa, the fundamental difference between the two lies in the source of knowledge used. Philosophical interpretation is based on human rational reasoning, while Islamic interpretation is based on inspiration and inner knowledge bestowed by Allah upon His righteous servants.

- **The Reasons for the Appearance of Tafsir *Ishari* in the Golden Age of Islam (The Fall of Islamic Civilization)**

Islamic interpretation is a style of interpreting the Qur'an that developed significantly during the heyday of Islamic civilization, especially towards the period of decline and fragmentation of the Islamic world. The emergence of this style of interpretation is closely related to the spiritual, intellectual, and social conditions of Muslims at that time. During the Golden Age of Islam, from around the 8th to the 13th centuries AD, Muslim societies achieved great progress in science, philosophy, and various branches of culture. However, the development of rationalism and the intensity of theological debates among scholars left many people feeling spiritually empty. An approach that overly emphasized logic was considered incapable of fulfilling spiritual needs or bringing about a deep connection with Allah SWT. The moral and political crises that followed strengthened the desire of some people to seek an approach to interpretation that emphasized the spiritual dimension. Therefore, Islamic interpretation was born as a response to the tension between intellectual progress and urgent spiritual needs, as well as an effort to return the understanding of the Qur'an to a more vivid and comforting inner experience (Nasution, 1973).

This situation then led to the emergence of Sufism as a means of seeking a deeper and more personal spiritual experience. It was from this point that Islamic interpretations began to grow and gain a place in Islamic intellectual tradition. The emergence of Sufism was initially a response to the increasing worldliness and moral degradation that afflicted Muslims after the passing of their political and economic heyday. When the power of the Islamic world began to weaken due to internal conflicts, power struggles, and the collapse of social ethics, Sufi leaders chose to distance themselves from the hustle and bustle of political issues and the dominant rational approach. Instead, they focused their attention on the inner meaning of revelation, purification of the soul, and the search for spiritual closeness to Allah. This movement was not only a reaction to social decline, but also an alternative for those who longed for depth of meaning and inner peace amid the turmoil of civilization. Thus, the development of Islamic-style interpretation was closely related to the spiritual needs of society at that time and became a way to explore the meaning of the Qur'an through a more spiritual and contemplative approach (Al-Dzahabi, 1976).

Towards the collapse of Islamic civilization, the political and social conditions of the people deteriorated. The Mongol invasion, the destruction of Baghdad in 1258 AD, and the weakening of the Abbasid Dynasty caused great turmoil and left deep historical scars. Amidst this chaos, many scholars and Sufi leaders began

to focus on the spiritual and reflective dimensions of Islamic teachings as a way to maintain faith and calm the soul. They saw that inner strength needed to be reinforced when the political and cultural structures of Islam were on the verge of collapse. From this point, Islamic interpretations, especially those oriented towards Sufi spirituality, grew as a religious response to the great crisis that befell the ummah. This style of interpretation sought to offer peace, comfort, and inner tranquility amid historical turmoil, while also serving as a means for Muslims to rediscover divine meaning that transcended worldly chaos. Thus, the development of spiritual interpretations became an important part of maintaining the identity and spiritual resilience of Muslims during those uncertain times (Wensinck, 2013). Thus, the emergence of Islamic interpretation can be seen as a response to two contradictory conditions. On the one hand, the rapid progress of rationality and intellectual development during the golden age of Islam caused some people to experience spiritual emptiness, because an approach that relied too much on reason was considered insufficient to fulfill spiritual needs. On the other hand, the moral, political, and social decline that occurred prior to the collapse of Islamic civilization created deep anxiety among the people. It was in this context that Islamic interpretation emerged as an effort to restore balance. This style of interpretation sought to reconnect intellectual aspects with spiritual dimensions, so that the teachings of the Qur'an were not only understood logically, but also felt in one's inner life. Through this approach, the community is guided to harmonize knowledge and faith, as well as to unite rational thinking with a deeper spiritual experience.

### 3. CONCLUSION

In general, the development of Islamic interpretation (tafsir) demonstrates a dynamic closely linked to the intellectual and spiritual journey of its followers. Philosophical and Islamic interpretations emerged from two major currents in the history of Islamic scholarship: rational and spiritual. Philosophical interpretation emerged during the Golden Age of Islam (8th–13th centuries CE), when science and philosophy flourished along with the translation of Greek, Persian, and Indian works into Arabic. Exegetes such as al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Rushd sought to harmonize revelation and reason and explain the verses of the Quran through a rational, philosophical approach to strengthen the theological and scientific foundations of Islam. Conversely, Islamic interpretations emerged during the period of decline and decline of Islamic civilization as a reaction to the spiritual drought caused by rationalist dominance and political conflict. This interpretation grew out of the Sufi tradition, which emphasizes the inner meaning and spiritual experience in understanding the Quran. Through an intuitive approach, Islamic interpretation invites Muslims to return to the values of purity of the soul, closeness to God, and balance between reason and the heart. Thus, it can be concluded that philosophical and Islamic interpretations are two complementary modes of interpretation within the treasury of Quranic exegesis. Philosophical interpretation enriches the intellectual and rational aspects of understanding revelation, while Islamic interpretation deepens the spiritual and inner aspects. Both reflect the efforts of Muslims throughout history to maintain the relevance and depth of the Quran's meaning as a guide to life, in keeping with changing times and the community's conditions.

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