The Crisis of Sufistic Tawhid: Seeking the Divine in Spiritual Cyberspace

Moh. Zaki
Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel, Surabaya, Indonesia
Email: Muhmmadzakiahmad1@gmail.com

Abstract:. *Advancements in digital technology have created a new space for individuals to express and practice their spirituality, including searching for God. However, spiritual cyberspace introduces new challenges regarding the authenticity of spiritual experiences, interpretation of religious beliefs, and impact on traditional religious practices. This study analyses how the concept of Sufi monotheism (tauhid sufistik) can provide a framework for understanding the complexities of religiosity in the digital age. Using a qualitative approach and literature review, this study explores how digitalization transforms faith paradigms and Sufi practices while also examining how cyberspace serves as both a medium for religious exploration and a potential source of spiritual distortion. The findings indicate that, while cyberspace offers broad access to religious knowledge, it also risks replacing traditional religious authority. Therefore, critical awareness is essential for engaging with spiritual cyberspace to ensure that the essence of tauhid is preserved in digital religiosity.*
Keywords: *Tauhid, Sufisme, Cyberspace, Spiritual, Digital*

A. Introduction

In the 21st century, most of the human population has directed their eyesight toward smartphone screens rather than physical reality. Subconsciously, the imperatives of cyberspace have begun to become a daily rule that changes human attitudes toward the world. People who are supposed to interact face-to-face have switched to bowing their heads towards the screen to experience physical freedom. In this era, humans began to feel the anxiety of meeting in person that could not be shifted, as well as seeing photo uploads on social media if they did not like it. The digital man or homo digitalis has become the king of the smartphone buttons. We are in a world that Thomas Khun calls an "anomaly," or what Martin Haideger calls the revelation of a new reality through technology.[1]

Budi Hardiman also questioned homo sapiens, which has essentially changed through its continuous engagement with cyberspace. He questioned whether Homo sapiens will experience greater symbiosis with digital techniques in the future. He predicted an evolutionary transition from Homo sapiens to digital Homo. According to him, this assumption is very reasonable, as humans can see that smartphones have become the existence of their thoughts and thinking through the Internet network.[2]

Religions and technology have faced various challenges and gaps in their civilizational histories. This can be traced through various theoretical and philosophical studies of the

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[1] Renita Eka Fitri and Ahmad Gunawan, "Revolusi Digital Dalam Manajemen Sumber Daya Manusia Membangun Tenaga Kerja 4.0," *ULIL ALBAB: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin* 2, no. 12 (2023): 21; F. Budi Hardiman, "Manusia Dalam Prahara Revolusi Digital," *DISKURSUS - JURNAL FILSAFAT DAN TEOLOGI STF DRIYARKARA* 17, no. 2 (2018): 177–192.

[2] Hardiman, "Manusia Dalam Prahara Revolusi Digital," 180.

existence of God. As Spinoza said, "talking about God is the same as talking about the universe as a universe (Deus Sive Natural), because the substance of the universe is the same as the substance of God".[3] There is an assumption that everything related to this universe is God as a mystical energy that is the basic essence of life in the universe. The existence of God can be felt by living beings, as well as Homo sapiens (humans), who can feel the existence of a divine nature within themselves.

In his introduction to al-Ghazali's book *Tahafut al-Falasifah*, Sulayman Dunya posits a relationship between God, the universe, and humans predicated on existence, which itself is inextricable from other manifestations.[4] The study of the relationship between God, humans, and the universe is also widely reviewed in the science of *tawhids* and *tasawwufs*. In his book Kimiya al-Sa'adah, Imam al-Ghazali explains famous hadith from the Prophet: "Whoever recognizes himself (existence), he knows God." Al-Ghazali continues, "True happiness cannot be separated from *ma'rifat* (knowing God).[5]

This underscores the significance of attaining knowledge of God for human beings, a pursuit facilitated by the science of Sufism or, more specifically, Sufistic monotheism, which is essential for achieving true happiness. Al-Ghazali further elaborates, stating that an individual who merely superficially engages with Sufism is no more advanced than a learned person. A thorough examination of this subject reveals that true happiness is inseparable from the *ma'arifat* of knowing God. [6] Upon his initial engagement with Sufism, Hassan Hanafi realized that there is an imperative for individuals to revert to the Qur'an as a primary source of religious instruction, emphasizing the significance of monotheism in Islam and the concept of *wahdah ash-shuhud wa wahdah alwujud*, as articulated by Sufis.[7]

The impact of cyberspace on human religiosity and spirituality is a subject of considerable research interest. In his book Dunia yang Berlari, Yasraf Amir Piliang explored the ways in which cyberspace has transformed religious communication, worship rituals, the dissemination of religious teachings, and the expression of spirituality. Piliang contends that the influence of cyberspace is not limited to a mere shift in paradigms concerning spirituality, religion, or even the concept of God itself. [8] E.B. White, in Harper's magazine, predicted that the contemporary conflict is between God and computer visionaries who have lost interest in merely replicating reality, opting instead to substitute it with virtual reality.[9] Mark Slouka characterizes this as a fusion technology that leads humans to meld into a synthetic world.[10]

Concerns have emerged regarding the intersection of religion and technology, particularly in the digital realm. The potential for a shift in the values articulated in religious teachings, resulting in their reduction or misuse, is a concern for many. Gary R. Bunt's Hashtag Islam posits that the accessibility of religious teachings through non-conventional methods can lead to a looseness that fosters a paradoxical analysis. On the one hand, the convenience of cyberspace eliminates the limitations people face in accessing religious

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[3] Olaf Herbert Schumann, Filsafat & Agama (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2018), 39.

[4] Armin Tedy, "Kritik Ibnu Rusyd Terhadap Tiga Kerancuan Berfikir Al-Ghazali," *El-Afkar: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman dan Tafsir Hadis* 5, no. 1 (2016).

[5] Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, Kimiya' al-Sa'adah: Kimia Ruhani Untuk Kebahagiaan Abadi, tras. Dedi Slamet Riyadi dan Fauzi Bahreisy (Jakarta: Zaman, 2001), 28–31.

[6] Al-Ghazali, *Kimiya' al-Sa'adah: Kimia Ruhani Untuk Kebahagiaan Abadi*, 22.

[7] Hasan Hanafi, Studi Filsafat 1: Pembacaan Atas Tradisi Islam Kontemporer (Yogyakarta: LkiS, 2015), xvi.

[8] Yasraf Amir Piliang, *Dunia Yang Berlari: Mencari Tuhan-Tuhan Digital* (Jakarta: Grasindo, 2004), 3.

[9] Mark Slouka, Ruang Yang Hilang: Pandangan Humanis Tentang Budaya Cyberspace Yang Merisaukan (Bandung : Mizan , 1999), 44.

[10] Slouka, *Ruang Yang Hilang: Pandangan Humanis Tentang Budaya Cyberspace Yang Merisaukan* , 45.

teaching. However, cyberspace can erode the critical thinking of religious people in understanding their teachings, thereby raising new challenges regarding the originality of teachings disseminated in cyberspace.[11]

Previous studies have been conducted on *tawhids* and *tasawwufs*. *First*, written by Zulfan Taufik and Muhammad Taufik, titled "Mediated Tariqat Qadiriyat wa Naqshabandiyat in the Digital Era: An Ethographic Overview." The researchers found that Sufism groups can adapt, develop, and innovate using online media. The use of various platforms by Tarekat Qadiriyyah Naqshbandiyyah (TQN) reflects the adaptability of Sufism to the digital era. Through online media, the TQN provides information about Islamic teachings and Sufism, current news, activity schedules, and fundraising. Although TQN members are active in the virtual community, they still adhere to the principles of personal adherence that are vertical, conservative, and involve sacred rituals.[12]

In addition, Muh et al. et al. Mustakim, titled "Spiritualization of Child Education in the Qur'anic Sufism Perspective in the Context of the Coronavirus Pandemic," revealed that parents play a pivotal role in children's education during the pandemic, serving as the primary educators within the family unit. This finding aligns with the perspectives of prominent educators such as Comenius, Nasih Ulwan, Abdurrahaman An-Nahlawi, and Ki Hajar Dewantara, who underscored the significance of family education. The integration of three theological concepts within the framework of Qur'anic Sufism, namely the theology of revelation, the theology of nature, and religious experience, as proposed by Barbour, is a distinctive feature of the spiritualization of children's education. This integration underscores the necessity of spiritualizing children's education.[13]

The third paper, titled "Sufistic Da'wah in the Digital Era and the Era of the Coronavirus (Covid-19)," was authored by Siswoyo. This study seeks to address the question of how Sufistic da'wah is manifested in the digital era. According to Candra Malik, contemporary Sufis no longer need to adhere to traditional dress norms, such as robes and turbans, and can operate publicly without hiding.[14]

The fourth article, titled 'Transforming Sufism into Digital Media: Eshaykh and Simplification of Tarekat Orthodoxy'," was authored by Ziaulhaq Hidayat. This article examines the emergence of tarekat (Sufi order) in the context of the digital realm, with a particular focus on Eshaykh's website. The advent of progress, however, gives rise to novel concerns, particularly regarding the disparities in terms of access between digital tariqahs and the conventional tariqah entities that are embedded within them. This article employs a virtual ethnography approach, with a primary focus on the Eshaykh website of Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah Haqqaniyah (TNH) as the principal source. The website offers comprehensive information about the tariqah, encompassing both doctrines and *wirid*, presented in an online format. Conventional tariqahs have historically maintained a rigorous

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[11] Sih Natalia Sukmi, "Konstruksi Identitas Pengguna Media Baru," *Konferensi Nasional Komunikasi 2013*, no. (2013); Laila Hayati, Herdiyanti Herdiyanti, and Putra Pratama Saputra, "Konstruksi Identitas Di Era Media Baru: Youtube," *Jurnal Neo Societal* 6, no. 2 (2021); Rulli Nasrullah, "KONSTRUKSI IDENTITAS MUSLIM DI MEDIA BARU," *KOMUNIKA: Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi* 5, no. 2 (1970).

[12] Zulfan Taufik and Muhammad Taufik, "Mediated Tarekat Qadiriyah Wa Naqshabandiyah in the Digital Era: An Ethnographic Overview," *ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 22, no. 1 (2021).

[13] Muh. Mustakim, Kana Safrina Rouzi, and Tumin Tumin, "Spiritualization of Child Education in the Qur'anic Sufism Perspective in the Covid-19 Era," *International Journal of Islamic Educational Psychology* 2, no. 1 (2021).

[14] S A Munandar, "Sufistic Da'Wah in the Digital Era and the Era of Covid-19," *Tasâmuh* 20, no. 1 (2022).

orthodoxy, yet the advent of the Eshaykh website in the digital public sphere aims to provide an accessible and inclusive tariqah practice catering to diverse societal segments.[15]

The fifth article, authored by Shofiatun Nikmah and Muchammad Saiful Muluk and bearing the title "Existence of Islamic Boarding School Sufism in the Digital Age: Buya Syakur Yasin's Sufism Moderation Thoughts," offers a noteworthy perspective on the subject. This study examines the evolution of Sufism in *pesantrens* over time, with a particular focus on the contributions of Buya Syakur Yasin to promoting religious moderation through a Sufistic lens in the digital age. The findings indicate that the dynamics of Sufism in *pesantrens* can be categorized into four distinct typologies: the early Islamic, colonial, modern, and digital eras. Concurrently, Yasin employs digital platforms to disseminate an interpretation of moderate Sufism, which is intricately intertwined with humanistic Sufism, thereby fostering an overarching humanistic awareness that promotes religious moderation from both perspective and behavior in everyday life.[16]

Sixth, Gustia Tahir's "Spirituality in Millennial Community" posits that the development of information technology, concomitant with the advent of industrial society 4.0, has contributed to the exacerbation of human challenges. This is evidenced by the prevalence of feelings of panic among individuals confronted with various life challenges, particularly in the context of their occupations being increasingly supported by technological advancements. Consequently, Sufism has emerged as a compelling alternative therapeutic modality for millennials. The millennial generation must acknowledge that life is not solely personal, but rather a multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses interactions with numerous individuals. Social interaction, respect, and compassion are indispensable components of millennial society. Sufism, as a philosophy, emphasizes the value of collective existence and the necessity of harmonious coexistence.[17]

The distinguishing characteristic of this article is its investigation of phenomena related to the search for God in the context of Sufistic monotheism through spiritual space in cyberspace, also referred to as "spiritual cyberspace." The development of information technology and the Internet has enabled the adoption of the digital medium by the homo digitalis to explore and seek information on Sufistic monotheism and to know God. This paper aims to analyze how this phenomenon occurs, what implications it has for traditional Sufistic practices, and the roles and challenges faced by Sufism followers in exploring this spiritual space.

B. Method

This study employs a qualitative research method with a literature review approach. Data and information are collected from various sources, including books, academic journals, scholarly articles, and relevant online materials related to Sufi monotheism (*tauhid sufistik*) in spiritual cyberspace. The data analysis technique involves interpretative analysis and conceptual synthesis, aiming to understand how the concept of Sufi monotheism can serve as a relevant framework for navigating religious phenomena in the digital era.

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[15] Ziaulhaq Hidayat, "TRANSFORMING SUFISM INTO DIGITAL MEDIA," *Epistemé: Jurnal Pengembangan Ilmu Keislaman* 17, no. 2 (2023).

[16] S Nikmah and M S Muluk, "Existence of Islamic Boarding School Sufism in the Digital Age: Buya Syakur Yasin's Sufism Moderation Thoughts," *Analisis: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, no. Query date: 2023-08-15 01:53:33 (2022).

[17] Gustia Tahir, "Spirituality in Millenial Community," *Jurnal al-Hikmah* 24, no. 1 (2022).

The research process consisted of several stages. First, data collection involved reviewing literature related to Sufi monotheism, cyberspace, and digital spirituality. Second is the classification of information, where the data are categorized based on key themes, such as the transformation of Sufi practices in the digital world, authenticity challenges in spiritual cyberspace, and the impact of digitalization on religious practices. Third is analysis and synthesis, where key concepts are interpreted based on existing literature and linked to contemporary religious developments in the digital sphere. Finally, the conclusion presents a conceptual understanding that can serve as a foundation for further studies on the interaction between Sufism and the digital world.

C. Results and Discussion

Cyberspace and Homo Digitalis

Cyberspace is an expression introduced by William Gibson, Canadian American writer. In his book Neuromancer, Gibson says "Cyberspace. A consensual hallucination experienced dialy by billions of legitimate operators."[18] A cyberspace is a virtual space that presents a shared hallucination that can be experienced daily by millions of people in every country. This hallucination is a highly complex graphical representation of the data in the human reasoning system, which is then abstracted into the data bank of each computer. In cyberspace, humans can perform all activities in their social lives in a new and artificial way.

Cyberspace offers humans the chance to have a life in an alternative world, namely a virtual world, as a substance of reality or beyond reality. Cyberspace can take over and radically replace existing reality. This transcending and artificial world has colonized almost all existing realities. Cyberspace and all its radical changes have led humans into new realities that have never been imagined before and have lost past realities that are more supportive of human development, such as bonds of morality, spiritual spirit, a sense of community, and a sense of depth.[19]

According to Mark Slouka, cyberspace as a virtual reality cannot increase one's value as a human being. Cyberspace imprisons humans in all worlds, rendering them silent. In addition, cyberspace brutally attacks moral values, boundaries, and responsibilities. For him, cyberspace turned into an anarchic space, a space in which freedom runs wild, freedom to berate other humans without guilt, freedom to show off without shame, and freedom to do anything without sin. The hyperreality of images creates moral indifference, spiritual insensitivity, social injustice, and environmental indifference.[20]

When cyberspace is emptied of theologies, philosophies, and ethics that have long been the social consensus in the real world, it mutates into a brutal and anarchic channel of human desire, free and indulgent. In the hybrid cyberspace, every good side of life is at the same time the same side of evil. Freedom in cyberspace becomes a tool for cyber violence, the absence of identity becomes a tool of cyber-porn, power becomes a tool of cyber-anarchy, and all depraved human desires find their outlet in virtual reality, without any barriers. Morality is no longer meaningful in cyberspace, because everything in it is built on the foundation of the absence of identity.[21]

One of the insanities that occur in cyberspace is cyber-semiotic violence. The colonization and rape of images, uncontrolled visual hybrids, distortion of the truth, distortion

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[18] Willian Gibson, *Neuromancer* (Berkley Publishing, 1984), 49.
[19] Piliang, *Dunia Yang Berlari: Mencari Tuhan-Tuhan Digital*, 15.
[20] Piliang, *Dunia Yang Berlari: Mencari Tuhan-Tuhan Digital*, 21–27.
[21] Piliang, *Dunia Yang Berlari: Mencari Tuhan-Tuhan Digital*, 33.

of facts, and distortion of information are part of semiotic violence in cyberspace. This brutality makes certain information unclear and meaningless because of the superficial effects of the free play in cyberspace. Thus, the devil in man finds the safest place to tempt him. In cyberspace, which is anonymous or without identity, humans are socially constructed to avoid feeling pity, guilt, sin, shame, or fear. In cyberspace, humans do not feel watched by anyone else.[22]

In this case, cyberspace can be called a place for the release of human libido energy, which is much freer and more brutal than in the real world. The libido of paranoia, the libido of sadism, the libido of perversion, and the ecstasy of violence find their paradise, which in the real world is the stronghold of various forms of morality provisions, customs, regulations, or clear laws. In the extreme, cyberspace becomes a kind of nihilism, like al-Khwarizmi's first discovery of number zero and a space that starts from nothing, that is, no ethics, morals, boundaries, and laws. In cyberspace, everything is reconstructed as emptiness. Anything in cyberspace becomes permissible, right, and useful; however, as Slouka says, it is a vacuum without ethics.[23]

William Simon in his book Postmodern Sexuality says, there is no emotional, only emotional collages, no desire, only an ecology of desires, no satisfaction, only an economy of satisfaction. Yasraf Amir Piliang in his book Dunia yang Berlari explains that the development of the digital information age, especially the development of cyberspace, has fundamentally changed various aspects of life. Digitalization is the process of constructing anything using numbers as basic material. A life that no longer depends on existence or "being" in a certain time and space.[24]

In cyberspace, the human self has a virtual surrogate (digital image manipulation) or alter ego called an avatar, which can easily play itself into whatever it wants or, in other words, easily manipulate images. 26 The difference between the natural body (original) and the digital body (simulacra), according to Baudrillard, simulacra, presents the human self as a complete copy of the original body that has a natural physique. According to him, a digital body contains elements of deviation. Body simulation in cyberspace is a body built by numerical information particles (bits) that have no ontological status in real space and time.[25]

Digital bodies constructed by digital information technology take various forms; for example, automatons that can move on their own, even though they have been programmed by computers, then robots that are autonomous or semi-autonomous machines that can function like living humans, or cyborgs, and organisms combined with machines that dominate. A digital body is a body that has been artificially constructed on the Internet, resulting in a digital image called the virtual body. The relationship between the original body and simulacra creates a relationship that transcends scientific relations, is mediated and ephemeral, and lacks durability and longevity. The effect is that the conditions of consciousness, memory, and perception have no empirical properties. In cyberspace, the digital body's thinking is processed, its perception is scanned, and its memory is retrieved.[26]

In the digital body, seeing is separated from empirical experience, touch is separated from the human body, and sensation is uprooted from physical objects; this is called

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[22] Piliang, *Dunia Yang Berlari: Mencari Tuhan-Tuhan Digital*, 34.

[23] Piliang, *Dunia Yang Berlari: Mencari Tuhan-Tuhan Digital*, 35.

[24] Yasraf Amir Piliang, Dunia Yang Berlari: Dromologi, Implosi, Fantasmogoria (Yogyakarta: Cantrik Pustaka, 2017), 97.

[25] Piliang, *Dunia Yang Berlari: Dromologi, Implosi, Fantasmogoria* , 98.

[26] Piliang, *Dunia Yang Berlari: Dromologi, Implosi, Fantasmogoria* , 99.

dissociation. According to Piliang, empirical experience is the only factor that defines human existence in the world. With this digital body, humans build an image space that continues to distance them from real life.[27] Budi Hardiman in his book "I click, then I exist" (*premo ergo sum*) says that today, nothing is more certain than "I click, then I exist". Certainty in cyberspace turns Homo sapiens into Homo digitalis, shifting the certainty of reality with the certainty of the screen in the form of cyberspace. The term "digitalis" itself is a Latin word that means "finger."

Homo digitalis ensures its existence by clicking on fingers and exchanging corporeal existence for digital existence. The actual world in which humans are engaged continues to be decolonized into a world of schooling that takes place anywhere, yet nowhere. Schooling seems to bewitch anyone and anywhere. Hardiman questions whether Homo sapiens in the future will experience greater symbiosis with digital techniques. He predicted an evolutionary transition from Homo sapiens to digital Homo. According to him, this assumption is very reasonable, as humans can see that smartphones have become the existence of their thoughts and thinking through the Internet network.[28]

The intersection between digital transcendence and corporeal immanence gives rise to what is called "schizophrenia" in the daily lives of unquestioned humans. Homo digitalis in its corporeal presence shows different "reality" behavior and tends to contradict what happens in its cyberspace in its social media. Everyone in cyberspace easily changes their existence, branding themselves to whatever they want. However, this does not change real human beings; every user of digital technology is just a component of a gigantic digital machine controlled by artificial intelligence.[29]

Capurro called the condition quo of homo digitalis trapped in various digital entities separate (separate intelligence), which is like Google's search space. Capurro interprets this digital homo's way of being in virtual reality to be like that of an "angel", neither bound by place, nor place. St. Thomas Aquinas, in medieval times, described this condition with what theology called "angels". Cyberspace forms a dynamic self-sustaining process that even homo digitalis can no longer control. Cyberspace seems to have its own intelligence and escapes the supervision of homo digitalis.[30]

Soren Kierkegeraard makes human freedom within theological limits, for him the intersection of human existence with the object of reality will be well directed when God is used as a focal point by humans in the expression of their existence.[31] Faith for Kierkegeraard is very important as a foundation in life because faith does not eliminate the authenticity of human existence. However, faith is more about guidance, so the dignity of human existence can be elevated. However, responsibility is also an important thing in existence, responsibility can direct humans to constructive actions. If human freedom is not accompanied by responsibility, then social life will be chaotic.[32]

Humans must not only know themselves but also know their God. Sufism is a vaccination against human hyper morality in cyberspace, to suppress human desire. Because in Sufistic teachings, desire tends to lead humans to forms of hyper morality or immorality.

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[27] Piliang, *Dunia Yang Berlari: Dromologi, Implosi, Fantasmogoria* , 99.

[28] Hardiman, "Manusia Dalam Prahara Revolusi Digital," 180.

[29] Hardiman, Aku Klik Maka Aku Ada; Manusia Dalam Revolusi Digital, 42.

[30] Hardiman, Aku Klik Maka Aku Ada; Manusia Dalam Revolusi Digital, 43.

[31] Save M. Dagun, *Filsafat Eksistensialisme* (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 1990), 50–51.

[32] Merigala Gabriel, *Subjectivity and Religius Truth in the Philosophy of Soren Kierkegaard* (Macon: University Press, 2010), 180.

In cyberspace, Homo sapiens has been freed from the various powers of the body to become digital homs playing in cyberspace, a technology that creates space as a place where various forms of "human desire power" flow, without the need to be bound by moral, religious, and social orders. Human desire tends to move towards resistance to all forms of forces that limit the freedom of the body, including the constraints of God.[33]

Searching for God in Spiritual Cyberspace

The development of cyberspace coincides with the development of various new visions that also impact aspects of spirituality and knowledge information in the religious field, such as religious spirituality and knowledge of God (*tawhid*). In cyberspace, the development of "sprit" in "digital bits of information" is absurd. In addition, a new vision is also developing spiritual cyberspace regarding "spiritual places," which are no longer in the form of material and real churches, mosques, temples, and synagogues. With the development of digital technology, various aspects have begun to be abstracted in cyberspace and artificial intelligence.[34]

When homo digitalis tries to recognize God by searching for information in cyberspace, a question arises that becomes an academic anxiety regarding the originality of the teachings obtained through artificial intelligence and how the role of the murshid in Sufistic monotheism, considering that religious teaching is a very sensitive field, requires in-depth understanding and accurate and authentic references. The phenomenon that occurs is that there is a platform that can provide answers through dialog (conversational interaction model). In 2020, OpenAI launched its GPT-3 with 175 billion parameters, which demonstrates an extraordinary ability to understand, generate text, and provide information.[35]

ChatGPT is a cyberspace platform loved by millennials to search for various types of information, including religious information. ChatGPT aids and information to users through interactive conversations. Providing answers and information: The ChatGPT can answer questions and provide information on various topics known by the model. Assist in information search: ChatGPT can assist users in searching for information assistance in problem solving. ChatGPT can assist users in solving problems by providing advice, guidance, or steps.[36]

Spiritual cyberspace in its development creates a paradox, more precisely a "fatalistic" attitude from various bad and scary sides. In spiritual cyberspace, on the one hand, the development of digital technology in the context of religion and spirituality creates positive characteristics while being seen as a "communication medium". But on the other hand, spiritual cyberspace can replace the existing reality, in which a type of "new spirituality, 'new religion' and even 'new God' is developed.[37] Therefore, the assumption and question circulating among academics is whether there is still a face of God in the spiritual chaos of cyberspace. This requires a philosophical and religious answer.

Leary Timothy in his book Chaos and Cyberculture says about God in cyberspace "you're impelled to want a peaceful, tolerant, funny word. You can choose your gods to be

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[33] Piliang, *Dunia Yang Berlari: Mencari Tuhan-Tuhan Digital*, 197.

[34] Piliang, *Dunia Yang Berlari: Mencari Tuhan-Tuhan Digital*, 4.

[35] https://chat.openai.com diakses 5 Juli 2023.

[36] https://chat.openai.com/?model=text-davinci-002-render-sha diakses 6 Juli 2023.

[37] Piliang, *Dunia Yang Berlari: Mencari Tuhan-Tuhan Digital*, 5.

smart, funny, compassionate, cute and goofy".[38] This means that everyone can choose his or her own God, whether he or she is handsome, beautiful, funny, loving, smart or ignorant. But is what Leary said true? Mark Slouka in his book The Lost Space explains about the issue of God that develops among cyberists or homo digitalis. Among homo digitalis, there is a shift in the role of God in information technology, towards an artificial God. This God whose presence is the result of the imagination, projection and hallucination of digital homo. Humans no longer see cyberspace as a space for information and communication in the teachings about God, but they make cyberspace as God.[39]

This transition can be seen in its journey into three phases of God's "presence" for human life, which in its history, this transition increasingly shows the sharpening of God from the world of "appearance" of human creation, namely cyberspace. First, the phase of theosophy, this phase is when the representation of God's presence fills the world and human life. The phase when the names of God fill the face of the world, in this phase God becomes a wall that limits human life, his desires and movements with an ethic. It is also in this phase when all human signs and images are manifestations of God's existence. Signs and images that not only adorn the image of man in terms of his spirituality, but also objects, such as mosques, calligraphy and so on.

Second, the techno Sophy phase, the phase when God's "presence" is rivaled by the presence of technology created by humans and takes over the role of God. The phase in which humans with the ability in technology and science can create a new world, a new artificially based space that is later referred to as cyberspace. The phase where humans rival the world of substance that God has made for human life with a world full of shadows of obscurity. humans create a technology that is no longer a tool to prove God's majesty and power, but as a means of proof to show that humans have "majesty and power" over the universe.[40]

The third phase is the libido Sophy phase, in which human desires are unrestrained and limitless. During this phase, ideas, notions, and images are uncontrolled in cyberspace and technology becomes a conduit for the release of human libido. In this phase, humans no longer require the presence of God, and they become their own deities. Technology then becomes a stimulant tool for the release of libido and the desire to rule over the universe. Technology enables humans to manipulate space (cyberspace), subdue time, overcome speed, create digital bodies (Homo Digitalis), and manipulate thoughts (downloaded) via internet networks. This phase fosters a sense of self-transcendence, leading humans to perceive themselves as equal to, or even superior to, God.[41].

Cyber-semiotic violence is one of the insanities of cyberspace. The colonization and rape of images, uncontrolled visual hybrids, distortion of truth, distortion of facts, and distortion of information are part of semiotic violence in cyberspace. This brutality renders certain images or information gray (unclear) meaningless because of the superficial effects of the free play of cyberspace. This is how the devil finds the safest place to tempt him.[42]

In this case, cyberspace can be conceptualized as a domain for the uninhibited and unrestrained expression of human libido, a concept that extends beyond the confines of

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[38] Leary Timothy, Chaos and Cybercultur (Berkeley: Ronin Publishing, 1994), 236.

[39] Slouka, *Ruang Yang Hilang: Pandangan Humanis Tentang Budaya Cyberspace Yang Merisaukan* , 62.

[40] Fase ketika batas-batas yang telah ditetapkan Tuhan mulai ditantang dan ditrobos oleh manusia melalui teknologi, fase ketika keterbatasan-keterbatasan yang dimiliki manusia mulia dilampaui dan dipecahkan oleh kemampuan sains dan teknologi, Piliang, Dunia Yang Berlari: Mencari Tuhan-Tuhan Digital.

[41] Piliang, *Dunia Yang Berlari: Dromologi, Implosi, Fantasmogoria* , xvi.

[42] Piliang, *Dunia Yang Berlari: Dromologi, Implosi, Fantasmogoria* , 45.

traditional morality. Libido, in its various manifestations—be it paranoia, sadism, perversion, or the pursuit of violence, attains a state of uninhibited freedom within the virtual realm. This phenomenon stands in stark contrast to the constraints imposed by the real world, where various forms of morality, customs, regulations, and clear laws serve as bulwarks against such unbridled expression. In its most extreme manifestation, cyberspace can be regarded as a nihilistic domain, akin to the historical moment of al-Khwarizmi's inaugural discovery of the zero. It is a space devoid of ethical boundaries, moral constraints, or legal frameworks. Within this virtual realm, all elements are deconstructed into a state of emptiness. Any content or entity within cyberspace can be deemed permissible, legitimate, and useful. However, as Slouka asserts, it is a vacuum devoid of ethical principles.[43]

The absence of a divine entity in the digital realm has been demonstrated to influence the conceptualization of morality. In his seminal works, Literature and Evil, George Bataille posits that the phenomenon of hyper morality, or the absence of traditional moral frameworks, signifies a condition wherein prevailing moral orders and standards established by a divine entity become ineffectual for human beings. These ethical principles become obscured due to the emergence of a state in which conventional distinctions between good and evil, truth and falsity, and right and wrong, have been transcended.[44] Morality can no longer penetrate the strongholds of human libido in cyberspace, the language of morality can no longer understand the images that have formed like a jungle in cyberspace, the symbol of morality can no longer interpret the speed of the passing development of cyberspace, and the principle of morality can no longer explain the values of lifestyle in cyberspace.[45]

The question then becomes, is there still a face of God in cyberspace to bring back the morality that has been lost in cyberspace? History has given a lesson to human beings that everything that leads to the most extreme point, such as the prague about God in cyberspace, will also develop to the point of "self-destruction." Therefore, God must remain present in all human spaces, which means that every boundary set by God, such as the wall of morality, must be maintained, and there is someone to guard. Religious teachings, especially Sufistic monotheism taught in a traditional way, can be used as a discourse to control moral boundaries that have been violated by humans in cyberspace. Religious teachings, especially Sufistic monotheism, are new hopes for the future of homo digitalis, which is full of falsehood and deception in cyberspace.[46]

The Concept of Sufistic Tawhid and the Experience of God

The process of attaining knowledge of the divine is not as straightforward as the practices of homo digitalis, who seek God through spiritual cyberspace, thereby creating spiritual divine prahara (Sufistic *tawhid*).According to Sufis, God Himself is the only entity that is capable of comprehending the essence of divinity. Therefore, humans require knowledge that is divinely revealed to grasp God's essence. In accordance with this understanding, Sufis devised a comprehensive system of spiritual classification known as maqamat, which delineates various levels of spiritual development. This framework is intended to facilitate the ascent of an individual's spiritual quality (ahwal) and, by extension, the bestowal of God's nur ma'rifah, thereby unveiling divine essence.[47]

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[43] Piliang, *Dunia Yang Berlari: Mencari Tuhan-Tuhan Digital*, 35.
[44] George Bataille, Literature and Evil (London: Marion Boyars, 1993), 22.
[45] Piliang, *Dunia Yang Berlari: Dromologi, Implosi, Fantasmogoria* , 22.
[46] Piliang, *Dunia Yang Berlari: Mencari Tuhan-Tuhan Digital*, 213.
[47] Muhammad Alif, "Tauhid Dalam Tasawuf," *Aqlania* 8, no. 2 (2017): 202.

The term "*tawhid*" is no longer a foreign concept to every Muslim.Etymologically, the word "*tawhid*" is derived from the Arabic word "wahid," which means "one" or "one." Based on the lexical meaning of "*tawhid*," it can be defined as "to unify" or "to unite." Generally, the concept of "*tawhid*" signifies the unification of things that are divided and scattered. For instance, within the context of Arabic, the term "*tawhid al-kalimah*" is employed by some Arabs to denote a state of unity, signifying an amalgamation of forces.In the realm of Islamic theology, particularly within the discipline of kalam, the term "*tawhid*" assumes a distinct technical significance, representing the concept of monotheism. It is noteworthy that the term "*tawhid*" is not explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an; only the terms "wahid" and "ahad" are present. However, the understanding of "*tawhid*" among mutakallim or dialectical theologians accurately encapsulates the concept of unitarianism found in the Qur'anic teachings. Moreover, "*tawhid*" embodies the fundamental essence of the teachings propagated by all messengers of God, thus serving as a unifying concept across diverse religious traditions.[48]

M. Quraish Shihab in his book entitled Insight of the Qur'an explains the unity of God in (Qs. Ash-Syura (42): 11) which reads, "There is none like Him, He (Allah) is All-Hearing, All-Seeing". According to Shihab, this verse means that nothing resembles God in His attributes and asma, either in fact or in imagination. Therefore, God's oneness is absolute, as the diversity or number that exceeds one (esa) is the substance of His creation, not the essence of God as the Creator. Oneness in God's action means that everything that exists in the universe, both in the form of order, cause, and the existence of creatures, is the work of God alone. In another sense, God's will is absolute; what he wills happens, and vice versa. This will is known as sunnatullah.[49]

The term "*Sufism*" is derived from the Arabic word "*Shuf*," which signifies "fleece." Within the context of linguistics, the term "*Shuf*" is employed to denote a particular style of clothing, characterized by its simplicity and the use of woolen fabrics. This notion of simplicity is further embodied by the term "*Ahl Ash-Shuffah*," which originated in the era of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. The term "*Ahl Ash-Shuffah*" refers to the companions of the Prophet, including both the Anshar and Muhajirin, who would often gather in the courtyard of the Prophet's mosque. These companions are regarded as abid, zahid, and the closest students of the Prophet.The term "*Shuffah*" bears a resemblance to the term "Shaff," which indicates a row in prayer. This appellation is attributed to Ahl Ash-Shuffah, who during that period exhibited steadfast piety in the foremost row during the congregational prayer.[50]

In the book Modern Sufism by Buya Hamka, the author expounds on the terminology of Sufism as elucidated by Junaid al-Bagdadi. Sufism is defined as a doctrine aimed at purging human beings with malevolent and abhorrent characteristics, thereby guiding them toward the acquisition of commendable moral principles. Consequently, Sufism can be regarded as a personal transformation process that fosters self-improvement and moral enhancement. Additionally, Hamka expounds on the fundamental purpose of Sufism, characterizing it as a process of spiritual purification (*tazkiyatu an-Nafs*) that involves the refinement of intuition (*taste*), the revitalization of the heart through religious spirituality, and the integration of

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[48] Nurcholis Majid, Karya Lengkap Nurcholis Majid , ed. Budy Munawar Rachman (Jakarta: NCMS, 2019), 603.

[49] M. Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan Al-Qur'an: Tafsir Tematik Atas Pelbagai Persoalan Umat* (Bandung: Mizan, 2014), 44–46.

[50] Haidar Bagir, Buku Saku Tasawuf (Bandung: Mizan, 2005), 89.

God's ethics into daily life (*riyadah*). As outlined by Hamka, this process aims to subdue human desires (mujahadah).[51]

In the context of Islamic spirituality, Sufism is defined as a spiritual path, and the adherents of Sufism are likened to actors traversing this path. A critical question that emerges from this framework pertains to the concept of God among the Sufis. The concept of Sufistic *Tawhid* emerges as a response to this inquiry, signifying a particular understanding of God within the Sufi tradition. Sufis elucidates the concept of God's absoluteness as articulated in the Qur'an. For instance, the term "ahad" in surah al-Ikhlas signifies absolute regarding the absoluteness of God. Ibn Athaillah Askandary expounds on this in his book al-Hikam and in his kalam hikmah regarding the oneness of God, stating, "The existence of Allah SWT is fixed and there is no partner of Allah. He is at present (in) that which has been fixed upon Him (Allah SWT)." [52] This perspective elucidates Ibn Athaillah's unshakable belief in the absolute oneness of God, encompassing His Essence, attributes, and actions.

In his book Kimiya al-Sa'adah, Al-Ghazali expounds on the path to attaining knowledge of God. In the hadith, "Whoever knows himself, he will know his Lord," Al-Ghazali proposed an alternative method that involves contemplation. Al-Ghazali asserts that self-reflection leads to the realization that one's existence prior to this moment was nonexistent. This assertion is supported by the Qur'anic verse, "Does not man know that before he was nothing?" Al-Ghazali's approach encourages individuals to introspect and contemplate their creation from a mere drop of semen, emphasizing the fundamental unknowns that characterize the human condition. According to al-Ghazali, this introspection leads to the realization that regardless of one's level of perfection, the ability to create oneself, or even a single hair, is beyond human capacity. This realization fosters a sense of helplessness, leading to the acknowledgment that one's physical form is a reflection or miniature of the grandeur, might, wisdom, and love of God. The realization of his origins and the manner of his creation lead to the acknowledgment of the existence of a supreme creator. The human traits that manifest in individuals reflect the supreme creator's divine nature. Furthermore, the spiritual essence of human beings serves as a conduit, guiding individuals towards the recognition of the supreme creator.[53]

The question of how humans can achieve their true happiness is complex. Al-Ghazali, a prominent figure in Islamic philosophy, posited that love is the foundation of happiness. He suggested that love for God can be cultivated through spiritual practices, such as worship and dhikr. Al-Ghazali further elaborated that loving God does not entail the complete elimination of human desires and passions. Instead, he emphasized the importance of limiting and controlling these desires and passions by aligning them with the spiritual guidance provided by the Prophets. The laws established by God through revelation to the prophets must be obeyed; otherwise, humans are effectively torturing their own hearts. According to al-Ghazali, humans must cultivate knowledge of themselves and their God. Al-Ghazali argues that humans who do not desire knowledge are comparable to humans who do not like healthy food. When death approaches and physical life are extinguished, influenced by desires (libido), all desires dissipate, but the human soul persists, is alive, and is imbued with the capacity to store all knowledge about God.[54]

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[51] Hamka, *Tasawuf Modern* (Jakarta: Yayasan Nurul Iman, 1981), 21.

[52] Muhibdduin Muhammad Waly, Al-Hikam: Hakikat Hikmah Tauhid Dan Tasawuf Jilid 1 (Aceh : Al-Waliyah Publishing, 2017), 205.

[53] Al-Ghazali, *Kimiya' al-Sa'adah: Kimia Ruhani Untuk Kebahagiaan Abadi*, 29–30.

[54] Al-Ghazali, *Kimiya' al-Sa'adah: Kimia Ruhani Untuk Kebahagiaan Abadi*, 40–45.

D. **Conclussion**

This study posits that the quest for spirituality in the digital realm is a multifaceted and intricate phenomenon. On the one hand, cyberspace provides a myriad of opportunities for individuals to delve into and enrich their spirituality. On the other hand, cyberspace also gives rise to novel challenges and inquiries concerning the authenticity, significance, and repercussions of spiritual experiences in the digital domain.

The Sufi tradition's concept of *Tawhid* can offer a pertinent framework for comprehending and navigating the intricacies of spirituality in the digital era. *Tawhids*, which emphasize the oneness of God and the significance of connecting all things to God, can assist individuals in maintaining a sense of connection with the divine within the dynamic digital landscape.

This article underscores the significance of critical discernment in navigating the spiritual realm of cyberspace, emphasizing the need for individuals to exercise discernment in evaluating and distinguishing between information and spiritual experiences offered in the digital domain.Furthermore, it highlights the necessity of maintaining a balance between one's spiritual life in the digital realm and one's real-life existence.

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