

When Shari'a Meets Haqiqa: The Core of 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani's Sufism

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Abstract

Sufism is perhaps the most disputed part of Islam. Regarding its ontological status, some scholars assume it as acculturation of non-Islamic culture, so that by implication it is contrary to Islamic teachings. On the other hand, not a few argue that sufism is a representation of orthodoxy that arises from—and not to—the heart of the Islamic tradition, so that its teachings do not collide with the Islamic dogmas. This paper aims to discuss 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani's sufism in relation to this academic constellation. Through a qualitative analysis of al-Jilani's works, this paper shows that the true sufism according to al-Jilani originates from Islamic teachings and is not anti-nomian in its nature. In his teachings, epistemologically sufism itself requires the integration of the shari'a and the haqiqa in a balanced way, in both theoretical and practical spheres. This integration has axiological implications for the deeper meaning of Islamic dogmas, so as understood not only legally and formally, but also morally and spiritually.

Keywords: Shari'a, Haqiqa, Sufism, Al-Jilani.

I. INTRODUCTION

Indeed, tasawwuf (sufism) is an innovated term (bid'a) in Islam. This word was not known in Islamic World until the second half of the second Hijri century (Karammustafa, 2007: 1-2). In the Qur'an or the books of the Sunna, there is not a single word that has the same root as it. It means that this word was never known either in the time of the Prophet or in the time of his Companions. That is why some scholars argue that sufism is not Islamic in its origin and nature. This fact has prompted them to conclude that sufism is an infiltration of foreign cultures that are contrary to Islamic law and dogmas (shari'a). Therefore, sufism according to them represents a pure heresy that must be totally rejected.

On the other hand, although this term is relatively 'new', genealogically the essence of its teachings has been practiced by the Prophet himself, even before the revelation. Therefore, many scholars are of the opinion that Sufism is an inseparable—if not the most important—part of Islamic teachings. Although this word was not popular in the early Islam generation, its core concepts, such as zuhd (asceticism), wara' (sanctity), mahabba (divine love), etc., have been practiced and taught by the Prophet Muhammad to his Companions. The origin of Sufism is thus not foreign, so it does not conflict with Islamic dogmas. Regardless of whether in its development phase there are some Sufism ideas that are considered 'philosophical',

this cannot neglect the fact that the essence of Sufism was birthed from the womb of Islam itself.

Based on the academic polemic above, this paper will examine the views of al-Syekh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (d. 561 H.) regarding the discourse on the integration of the shari'a and the haqiqa in Sufism. The choice of this theme as the formal object of this research is based on the consideration that the average rejection of Sufism is caused by the accusation of its conflict with Islamic law and dogmas. While the selection of al-Jilani as the material object for the paper is built upon the consideration that this Sufi master represents the moderate Sufism which is characterized by harmonizing the shari'a and the haqiqa. In addition, personally al-Jilani represents a Sufi figure who has a wide influence in the Islamic world and is recognized for his sainthood by almost all Islamic sects. With these strategic reasons, the analytical conclusion on al-Jilani's sufistic thought will be meaningful, and is expected to reveal the 'confusion' related to the authenticity and validity of Sufism as part of Islamic teachings, especially the Sufism that develops in the Sunni tradition.

II. METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on library research with the qualitative method. Its primary data sources are several works by al-Jilani, those are al-Ghunyah li-Talib Tariq al-Haqq, Sirr al-Asrar, Fath al-Rabbani, Tafsir al-Jilani, and al-Mukhtasar fi-'Ululm al-Din; while its secondary sources are some articles and books related to the topic of the discussion. The data collection technique used in the research is the documentation technique. In documenting the data, I take an inventory of al-Jilani's views related to the article theme from some of his writings. To analyze those data, this paper uses an interpretive method. Technically, according to Kaelan (2010: 169-173) this method means exploring the thoughts of a figure contained in his works, either in the form of books or otherwise, to capture the nuances of the meaning that he/she specifically intended, so that a correct understanding could be achieved. In the context of this paper, this method is used to explore al-Jilani's thought that spreads in his works concerning the integration of the shari'a and the haqiqa and its axiological implications in his sufistic teachings. Before going into the main discussion, this discourse on the integration of the shari'a and the haqiqa will be drawn into the broader academic debate regarding the status of Sufism ontology, as a theoretical basis for examining al-Jilani's sufistic concepts.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 The Discourse of Sufism: Ontological Polemics

Sufism basically is about morality (khuluq). However, in Islam morality has a broader dimension. It is not only related to the relationship between human beings, but also concerns how to behave well to God, to the fellow humans, and also to the fellow creatures. As a process, this morality is also not pegged only on 'polishing' outward behavior, but rather its main goal is to substantially change the character from within, to become a noble person (Miskawaih, 2011: 273). In this regard, Junayd al-Baghdadi (d. 297 H.) (Isa, 2007: 17) defines that "Sufism is to strive for every noble character and abandon every low moral character." In other words, Sufism is the process of forging the soul to become a complete person in serving God and being respectful to the others. Meaning like that, Sufism is an integral part of Islam that cannot be separated, if not represents its most important aspect. Al-Taftazani (1979: 11) elsewhere confirms that Sufism, as a representation of Islamic morals, is a

principle of the shari'a, because if the shari'a loses this foundation, then it will become like a matter without a spirit.

Related to its ontological status, some scholars considered that Sufism basically constitutes a teaching originating from non-Islamic traditions, so that it is substantially contradictory to the Islamic dogma system. Al-Raqb (2009: 16-17) in this context explains that the genealogy of Sufism absolutely did not originate from Islamic teachings, but came into the Islamic environment along with the arrival of the mixture of various foreign cultures after the conquest of non-Arab nations. In more detail, Arberry (2008: 11-12) points out that the practice of Sufism was influenced by various foreign elements, such as Christianity, Judaism, Gnostics, Neo-Platonism, Hermetism, Zoroastrianism, and Buddhism. The environment in which Sufism flourished was a place where various philosophical and mystical teachings were widespread. Consequently, for Arberry Sufism is not an isolated manifestation of Islamic teachings, but is a product of assimilation and acculturation with these foreign teachings and traditions. In fact, these various traditions of thought and mysticism are completely foreign to Islam, so that in many ways they do not have a legal justification basis, even in certain cases they are contrary to the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. In a context like this, Goldziher (2007: 217-222) explains that the Sufis use the allegorical interpretation device as a justification tool for ideas that are not in harmony with the system of Islamic teachings and law.

Al-Jabiri (2009: 271) specifically mentions that Sufism is essentially an 'assembly' of the Gnostic-Hellenistic tradition, as seen in the concept of the *zahir-batin* (outward-inward) dualism which is the epistemology of the Sufis in perceiving reality. Reinforcing this assumption, al-Fattah (al-Fattah, 1974: 68) emphasizes that the element of gnostic-mysticism is clearly found in the Sufis' view that the true knowledge is only obtained through the inner reflection (*al-ta'ammul al-bathini*), the abstinence (*al-mujahadah al-nafsiyyah*), and the spiritual cleansing (*al-tathahhur al-ruhi*). As the implication, the Sufis reject the authority of rational knowledge which is achieved through rational-demonstrative methods and religious knowledge obtained through obeying religious texts.

Affirming the axiological implications mentioned above, Zahir (2005: 73-74) generally argues that the Sufis do not follow the Prophet's shari'a in various forms of obedience and worship. Instead, they add things that the Prophet and his Companions did not teach. In framing their teachings, the Sufis position their masters as the creators of their own shari'a, thus making various innovations (*bid'ah*) that contradict the Qur'an and the Sunnah. For this reason, Zahir (1986: 262) equates the Sufis with the *Batiniyyah* sect which abolishes religious obligations and abrogates the shari'a provisions.

On the other hand, not a few academic circles show that Sufism is an inseparable part of Islam, so that it is essentially in harmony with its external dogmas. For this group, the opinion that Sufism originates from a foreign tradition cannot be justified, because its aspects can be easily traced from the sources of Islamic teachings themselves. Guneon (2006: 92-93) in this regard asserts that Sufism is in fact very *qur'anic*, because its principles are clearly contained in the Qur'an. Meanwhile, Chittik (2008: 4-5) argues that genealogically Sufism is a translation of the concept of *ihsan* (beneficence) which complements the pillars of *iman* (faith) and *islam* (submission). As recorded in a popular hadith (Muslim, 2000: 25), the Prophet said about the *ihsan*: "(ihsan is that) you worship Allah as if you see Him, and even if you do not see Him, He sees you." Al-Gummari (2014: 3) explains that the *ihsan* represents Sufism, because it symbolizes the conditions of *muraqabah* (divine

supervision) and *mushahadah* (divine witness) which are nothing but two noble spiritual conditions (*ahwal*).

Based on the argumentation above, Stoddart (2012: 25) concludes that Sufism is a completely orthodox conviction, in the sense that its teachings do not conflict with the dogma system constructed by Islamic sources. Therefore, both at the conceptual and practical levels, there is no contradiction between Sufism and the *shari'a* dogmas, because both represent a unified Islamic teaching. A Sufi cannot collide the outer dimension with the inner one, because after all, the later requires the former as the main foundation and starting point. Guneon (2006: 96-100) illustrates that the *shari'a* is like the shell, while the *haqiqah* is like the kernel. The *shari'a* is a path that must be traversed by anyone, including the Sufis. The urgency of the *shari'a* lies in the fact that it is a well-defined path that becomes the main guide in the spiritual journey. Without the *shari'a*, a Sufi will not only fail to reach the *haqiqah*, but will also distance himself from that highest spiritual realization.

Some scholars and researchers, especially in the West, often regards Sufi groups as a form of movement that is totally free from legal-ethical demands and religious formalities. However, Schimmel (1975: 106) argues that such an opinion is too hasty and inappropriate, because in the Sufi belief, the *shari'a* is precisely the source from which spiritual achievement comes. In Schimmel's view, the Sufis do not abandon the forms of religious rituals, but instead interpret them more deeply. 'Isa (2007: 402) elsewhere warns that if scholars analyze the expressions of the Sufis in all their works that assert high loyalty to the *shari'a* and absolute adherence to the Qur'an and the Sunnah, then it will be clear that anything contained in these works, that apparently contradict the basic principles of Islam, is an expression of ecstasy that must be interpreted, or constitutes a form of false infiltration (*madsus*). This is because basically the mystical journey of a Sufi (*al-tariqa*) whose ultimate goal is the realization of the ultimate truth (*al-haqiqah*) must be based on the demands of the revealed *shari'a*. Although this legalistic obedience does not represent the final destination for *sufistic odyssey*, it absolutely cannot be marginalized, considering that the *shari'a* is the starting point for realizing the divine truth (Heck, 2006: 256).

In this regard, it should be immediately underlined that Sufism is not identical with the Gnostic-Mysticism as known in the Western tradition. Mysticism, especially in the Christian tradition, is a gnostic knowledge built upon purely subjective experience, which separates itself from the order of the Church dogmas. This mystic understanding demands a passive attitude towards the order of life, as the main prerequisite for a mystic to abolish himself in God. Being a mystic means that he automatically has to avoid normal life, so that he/she is no longer included in the community of the believers who base their beliefs on the religious sources (Certeau and Brammer, 1992: 12-13). This fact has no relevance to Islamic Sufism, because Sufism represents an integral part of Islam that is in accordance with its other aspects and also does not reject social life. Even if there are some similarities between Sufism and mysticism in using certain expressions, Guneon (2006: 93) explains, this does not mean that Sufism is an assembled product of the prototype of Christian Mysticism, because these similarities do not touch the essential principles of the Sufism.

Islamic Sufism genealogically also cannot be referred to the influences of some Greek philosophical thoughts. Massignon, as quoted by al-Badawi (1975: 48), argues that this opinion is a simple hypothesis that is difficult to accept. This is because the distinctive *sufistic* concepts are formed at the center of the Islamic culture, through careful recitation and contemplation of the Qur'an and the Sunnah,

under the influence of various social and individual crises. Apart from this opinion, we cannot deny the historical fact that in several phases of its development, Sufism began to come into contact with various outsiders thoughts which to some extent also colored the form and content of its teachings. Al-Taftazani (1979: 19) shows that since the sixth Hijri century, there has been Sufi masters who mixed their Sufism teachings with various foreign sources and understandings, such as Greek philosophies, especially Neo-Platonism. However, the thing that must be highlighted is that considering its origins Sufism is purely Islamic. Besides, al-Badawi (1975: 56) argues that the seeds of *wahdat al-wujud* conception, namely *ittihad* and *hulul*—which are usually considered as the most important ‘imported products’ in philosophical Sufism—are nothing but the effect of contemplating monotheism verses more deeply. Accordingly, no matter how philosophical the appearance of Sufism is, it still cannot be separated from the construction of the *shari’a* and Islamic sources as its essence and spirit. In addition, conceptually *wahdat al-wujud*, or the concept of *ittihad* and *hulul* as its embryo, cannot be understood simply as an ‘organic’ mixing of Allah with His creatures in a single entity of existence (Panteism), but is a spiritual witness that ‘erases’ the awareness of self and everything other than God. Thus, ontologically, this Sufism idea still emphasizes the ‘substantial distinction’ between God and His creatures (Haq, 2019: 6).

The conclusion that can be drawn from the above debate is that Sufism constitutes an inseparable aspect of Islam. Sufism was born in the heart of the same tradition where the other *shari’a* sciences (*‘ulum al-shari’a*) also originated. Various arguments stating that Sufism is an infiltration of foreign cultures cannot be justified, because the Islamic sources themselves, be it the Qur’an, the Sunnah, and the Salaf tradition, talk a lot about the key concepts of Sufism, even though thermologically this word was only known in the second half of the second Hijri century. This fact shows that the practice of Sufism has existed simultaneously alongside with the descent of the revelation of Islam itself, so that it is substantially in harmony with its other aspects. Sufism is basically a process of spiritual journey towards God as the highest Essence. In that journey, it is impossible for a person to achieve his goal without the media. The *shari’a* in this regard represents an exoteric aspect of Islam in the form of a system of dogmas and legal provisions that functions as a medium for him/her to get closer to Allah as the ultimate purpose. In other words, the true Sufism in practice requires the integration of the *shari’a* and the *haqiqa*.

3.2 Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani: An Agent for Moral-Social Change

‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (d. 561 A.H.) was among the Sufi figures who taught the teachings of Sunni Sufism, which combines the *haqiqa* and the *shari’a* in a balanced way. It is not surprising that his character is recognized by almost all Muslim circles, including even literalist scholars. Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 A.H.) (Al-Kaylani, 2014: 17) for example in this regard admits, “al-Syekh ‘Abd al-Qadir was among the greatest Sufi leaders of his time in terms of obedience to the *shari’a* and religious orders; prioritizing the *shari’a* over intuition and submission to destiny; and calling for the restraint of the ego and lust.” Thanks to his Sufism teachings, al-Jilani has a tremendous influence on people, both in the field of religious *da’wah* or in the field of societal life. Al-Shathanawfi (d. 713 A.H.) reports that the number of congregants who attended his sermons could reach tens of thousands (2013: 55-57). Al-Kaylani (2014: 14) reveals that ministers, officials, and rulers always joined his sermons along with the people, so that his influence reached all levels of the society. Al-Jilani was born in

470 AH, in a small town, Niff, in the Jilan or Kaylan area, northern Iran, south of the Caspian Sea, and died in 561 A.H. in Baghdad (al-Kaylani, 1994: 94).

Baghdad at the time of al-Jilani was the center of world civilization. Goodwin (2003: 24-28) describes that Baghdad at that time was the economic epicenter for transactions of various commodities from all over the world, besides the city was also an open place for the development of higher science, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, Islamic jurisprudence, and astrology. However, at the same time Baghdad was also a metropolis affected by a multi-dimensional crisis. Geo-political conditions at the center of government were uncertain, because the power of the Abbasid caliphs dynasty was only a pseudo power. The de facto power was in the hands of the Seljuk sultans (al-salajiqah). This was exacerbated by internal conflicts among the Seljuks in their struggle for power (Al-Kaylani, 1994: 102). The political commotion and crisis at the palace level had an impact on arbitrary behavior towards the people. The ruling elites did not hesitate to politicize religion in order to fulfill their personal ambitions to win influence and sympathy. They also did not hesitate to burden the people with tax obligations that afflict the poor (Masduki, 2012: 87).

In the socio-religious sphere, there were a lot of feuds and bloody conflicts between various sects and schools of thought, which were caused by trivial things. Hanbali scholars, for example, were at odds with Hanafi scholars because of differences in the interpretation of one single verse of the Qur'an, or because of the issue of whether or not drinking nabidh is lawful. Likewise, conflicts occurred between the adherents of the Shafi'i school and the adherents of the Hanbali school, only because of difference in pronouncing basmalah loudly or not in some prayers (Al-Kaylani, 1994: 102). As a result, religion became a mere form of formality, but lacked its essence. A moral-spiritual crisis like this was the main factor causing al-Jilani's deep disappointment. This chaos made al-Jilani confused and problematic, between staying or leaving Baghdad. Initially, al-Jilani was determined to leave Baghdad, saving himself and his faith from the effects of those social ills. But in the middle of his journey, before entering the gates of Helb in Syria, he felt there was a secret power that wanted him back to Baghdad. Eventually, al-Jilani gave up his intention to leave Baghdad and chose to take 'uzlah (seclusion) temporarily, inhabiting the desert and the ruins of the dead city, in order to form a psychologically and spiritually mature person (Al-Kaylani, 1994: 114-115). After feeling ready, he finally returned to Baghdad. It was at this phase that al-Jilani was busy struggling to fix this moral-spiritual crisis by teaching, writing, preaching, and serving for the benefit of the people.

3.3 The Episteme of al-Jilani Sufism: the Integration of the Shari'a and Haqiqah

Harmonization between the dimensions of the shari'a and the haqiqah is a characteristic that represents a land mark of Islamic Mysticism, especially the Sunni Sufism. The shari'a as a representation of Islamic exotericism is a medium for achieving the haqiqah, which is none other than the 'deepest reality' of Islamic teachings (Stodart, 2012: 23). The relationship between these two dimensions, theoretically as well as practically, is a mutual relationship, which is intertwined to knit the practice of Islam as a whole. As long as a sufistic teaching is in harmony and does not conflict with the shari'a, then it is considered valid and acceptable, but if it is not, then it is considered a deviant one. Therefore, the measure for the validity of spiritual journey is none other than its harmony with the shari'a, which will guide to the realization of the haqiqah.

Shari'a literally means a place where water flows from its source which is made by humans for the benefit of life. In popular terms, shari'a could be easily conceived as the practical laws with regard to human activities. According to al-Zuhayli (2013: 28-29), these laws are divided into two categories. First, the laws of worship, such as prayer, fasting, zakat (alms giving), hajj (pilgrim to Mecca), vows, oaths and so on. Second, the laws of mu'amalah (transactions), such as contracts, work, punishments, crimes, and others, which are related to the wider human relations. However, al-Jilani (2009: vol. 1, 250) has a special understanding of the term shari'a. Unlike the general view that limits its scope to legal aspects only, al-Jilani shows in one of his interpretations that the shari'a is a dogmatic system, which includes aspects of law, human relations, and aspects of faith. This view can also be found, for example in al-Mukhtasar fi 'Ulum al-Din (2010: 74-81), where when he details the scope of the shari'a sciences, he includes aspects of belief (al-islam wa al-iman) into it, before the elements of formal worship. The shari'a can thus be understood as a system of Islamic dogmas which represent the main basis for human salvation in this world and in the hereafter.

Meanwhile, haqiqa literally means the true reality of a thing. The haqiqa of something means the belief in its real condition (yaqinu sya'nihi) (Mandzur, 2008: vol. 4, 177). Thermologically al-Hufni (1997: 78) defines the haqiqa as "the condition of a servant at the level of a direct relationship (mahall al-wisal) with Allah, while the eyes of his heart remain at the level of tanzih (the purification of God's Essence)," or according to another opinion, "removing the traces of human nature with the influence of His attributes, because He is essentially the real Actor (al-fa'il) for humans in all their activities." Thus, the haqiqa is the attainment of spiritual qualities that lead to the realization of direct witness (al-mushahadah) to God, without abandoning the shari'a and the demands of servanthood. At the highest level, this witness removes human's consciousness from everything, including from himself, into one consciousness of God (Knysh, 2010: 303-309). In line with this explanation, the haqiqa according to al-Jilani (2012: vol. 2, 272-273) is a spiritual peak condition, namely when a servant has entered the throne of the wahdaniyyah (divine solitude), where the majesty of God is revealed; when his eyes see the outcrop, he will be speechless without huwwiyyah (essence), annihilated from his consciousness.

Sufism in practice is a tireless struggle against lust and low ego, until a Sufi reaches the pinnacle of the monotheism realization, that is al-fana' fi-Allah (self-annihilation in Allah). Nevertheless, these efforts can reap true results only with the guidance of God's infallible revelation. These goals which lead to the perfection of 'ubudiyah (servanthood) must somehow be reconciled with the guidance of revelation, for spiritual intuition in itself does not guarantee the truth. Therefore, a Sufi must follow and obey the teachings and practices of the Prophet as a whole, both physically and spiritually. There will be no Sufism without total obedience to the shari'a order (Mahmud, 2016: 123). In line with the explanation above, in Fath al-Rabbani al-Jilani (2007: 63) explains that the core foundation of Sufism is islam, iman, practicing the Qur'an and the Prophet's shari'a, then being sincere with a perfect monotheistic belief. In the final stage, a true believer will be 'erased' from everything else but Allah. Thus, Islamic teachings and the shari'a which are deduced from the texts of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, represent the main basis in the process of purifying the soul, without which it is impossible for a person to come to an encounter with God. Exoterism as a representation of Islamic dogmas constitutes a controlling medium for the knowledge, experience, and practice of the Sufis. In al-Mukhtasar fi-'Ulum al-din al-Jilani (2010: 247) reminds, "the science of the tariqa

(spiritual journey) represents the core to be addressed, while the science of the shari'a acts as a container that protects it."

In al-Jilani's thought of Sufism, the urgency of the shari'a is a logical consequence of the integration of outer (zahir) and inner (batin) dimensions which represents the main characteristic of Sunni Sufism. In *Sirr al-Asrar*, al-Jilani (2013: 65-66) emphasizes that the truth experts (ahl al-haqq), who are very few in quantity, can be identified by the testimony of two things, namely outer witness and inner witness. Outer's witness is a high compliance with the demands of the shari'a in the form of orders and prohibitions. While the inner witness is that his spiritual journey (suluk) must adhere to the eye of heart, "so that he/she can see inwardly the role model he imitates, namely the Prophet Muhammad, who acts as a spiritual intermediary between God, the Prophet's spirituality, and the servant's physicality." In the same work, al-Jilani (2013: 19) explains the details of those outer and inner dimensions as follows:

All knowledge is summarized in four categories. First, the outer shari'a in the form of orders, prohibitions, and other shari'a laws. Second, the inner shari'a which is called the knowledge of tariqa. Third, the inner tariqa which is called the ma'rifa (the science of God). And fourth, the the innermost inner (batn al-bawatin) which is called the science of haqiqah. A true Sufi must be able to acquire all levels of this knowledge, as the Prophet said, "the shari'a is like a tree, the tariqa is like its branch, the ma'rifa is like its leaves, while the haqiqah is its fruit."

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that al-Jilani's emphasis on the importance of Islamic esotericism as an essential dimension does not necessarily encourage him to deconstruct the order of the shari'a dogmas. Islamic teachings are not merely a moral-spiritual guidance that denies the construction of the shari'a. In al-Jilani's view, the moral-spiritual significance of Islamic teachings is as fundamental as its legal-material significance. The dimension of exotericism, which is often likened to an intermediary or media, in practice will not lose its relevance no matter how high the spiritual level of a Sufi is. Forever exotericism serves as a key barometer that measures the validity of a Sufi's spiritual experience. This is because, as emphasized by al-Thusi (1960: 28), "the Sufi school is not at all identical with the tendency to choose rukhsah (reliefs), seek ta'wil (distorted interpretation), tend to luxury, or take advantage of syubhat (legal uncertainty). All of this constitutes a form of harassment against Islam and is far from being prudent."

The plus point that distinguishes the Sufis from other Muslims is precisely their practice of the shari'a with all their soul, which does not stop at what is an obligation, but also pays attention to various suggestions and measures of appropriateness as a God servant. Regarding this matter, al-Thusi (1960: 28) continues, "after practicing various rules of the shari'a, they move up to a higher degree and experience a noble spiritual condition and achievement, through many acts of worship, true obedience and excellent morals."

Al-Jilani (2012: vol. 2, 270) more elaboratively explains that in order to achieve the realization of the highest level, a Sufi must continuously carry out mujahadah al-nafs by performing various obediences; being alone with Allah; being patient in refraining from various disobediences; willing to God's decision and choosing His provisions; feeling ashamed of being seen by Allah; putting forth all his might to do what Allah loves; performing every deed that can convey it to Allah; being content with shabby and hidden conditions so as not to desire human praise; and learning to love his Lord by multiplying the voluntary worships sincerely, so that he finally arrives at Allah's side and gets degrees along with the Allah's lovers. Therefore, the way of

Sufism is adherence to the shari'a, but it does not stop at mere formality. Furthermore, Sufism teaches us to reach for moral propriety and spiritual significance in order to serve Him totally.

The harmonious integration between the exoteric and esoteric dimensions of Islam is a land mark shown by 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani in his sufistic teachings. This fact can be easily traced in each of his works, including his qur'anic exegesis. This can be found for example when al-Jilani interprets Q.S. Al-Jatsiyah [45]: 18 where Allah says:

"Now We have set you 'O Prophet' on the 'clear' Way of faith (shari'a). So follow it, and do not follow the desires of those who do not know 'the truth'."

In this regard Al-Jilani (2009: vol. 5, 308) explains,

(Then) know! O thou most perfect messenger, that indeed We, on the basis of Our grace and mercy, (made you) follow, obey, and tread (the shari'a) and the tariqa, which explain (affairs) that represent the the reason you came to remind it, namely the haqiqa, which is the expression of the oneness of God's Essence. (Then follow) the shari'a that can lead to the truth with a sincere intention, (and do not follow the lusts of) those (who do not know), because how could they possibly reveal the secrets of the shari'a and the wisdom behind it.

In this interpretation, al-Jilani emphasizes that in order to reach the peak of realization of the Divine consciousness (the haqiqa), one must combine the shari'a and the tariqa as its intermediary. Although the text of this verse only mentions the word shari'a, al-Jilani expands its meaning build upon his holistic view, so that the scope of its meaning reaches the dimensions of the tariqa and the haqiqa. This implies that according to al-Jilani, the threefold teachings of Islam (the shari'a, the tariqa, and the haqiqa) are a unified whole that cannot be separated. The combination of the shari'a law and the tariqa with sincere intentions in turn will lead a person to reach the level of the haqiqa as the end of spiritual journey, where he/she will only witness the oneness of the Divine substance (wihdat al-Dhat al-Ilahi). In practical terms, these three elements go hand in hand, so it is impossible for a clash among the three to occur. A person who has reached the haqiqa will increasingly show high loyalty to the demands of law and morality, as a direct reflection of his deep spirituality.

3.4 Axiological Implications

The integration of the shari'a and the haqiqa in Sufism directs a servant to the deeper understanding of the Islamic dogmas. Every dogma is not conceived merely in its formal form, but is more deeply realized as a medium for moral cultivation and realizing spiritual culmination. Without this understanding which is oriented towards moral-spiritual significance, every religious teaching is nothing more than a pile of forms without any content. Likewise for 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, the true Sufism does not deconstruct the Islamic shari'a order, but gives it a deeper dimension of meaning that requires a servant to serve Allah physically and spiritually. As its axiological implication, behind every form of external dogma there lies an inner significance that constitutes its core. In more detail, below I will show the implications of the integration of the shari'a and the haqiqa according to al-Jilani in understanding aspects of faith and worship more holistically.

3.5 Faith Based on Mushahadah

The teachings of the Sufis in the aspect of faith are the same as the school of the majority Muslims, especially the Ash'ariyyah school (Zayd, 1993: 277-278). For a Sufi, the beginning to live a spiritual life properly is to believe in and obey all Islamic doctrines (Baharuddin, 2000: 626-627). However, the point that becomes the point of difference between the theologians and the Sufis is that the detailed explanation of faith in the hands of the former is build upon speculative-theological arguments (Shah, 2007: 430-431), while for the later the true faith is not enough just to be approached with reason, but must be combined with intuitive experience that witnesses the real subjects of faith (al-'iyani). Faith is 'self-authenticating' knowledge that a person achieves when he is in a state of 'God-relatedness'. This belief is realized through his own direct intuitive experience, so that it does not leave the slightest element of doubt (Baharuddin, 2000: 623-624). Thus, the essence of faith is a direct inner witness. In al-Fath al-Rabbani al-Jilani (2007: 298) illustrates, "if the heart is pure, then its vision becomes clear. If the heart is clean, then it is actually close to the Truth. When a person sees with the eye of closeness ('ayn al-qurb) and the ma'rifa, then his sight actually comes from Allah." In other words, according to al-Jilani believing in Allah, as the subject of knowledge, is not enough if obtained only by reason, but must be based on the true closeness and the direct experience through a pure heart.

As the implication of the shari'a-haqiqa integration, faith has the outer and inner dimensions. Its outer dimension is verbal confession and the physical actions, while its inner one is a direct disclosure that pierces the heart based on a sense of love and serenity (al-'uns) with Allah, encouraging full obedience and deep sincerity (Tuayjiri, 2006: Vol. 1, 690). The disclosure of the heart is not enough if merely built upon the theological premises, but must be accompanied by spiritual practice and cultivation, which can arouse a longing for Allah. This is because, as explained by al-Jilani, that the real of faith is achieved in two ways; First, by fighting and curbing the lust (al-mujadah wa al-mukabadah); and Second, originating from the gift from Allah who bestows His wisdom and mercy on His chosen servants, without any hard work, though this phenomenon rarely occurs (Al-Jilani, 2007: 296). In other words, although basically the highest level of faith could be a gift from God, nevertheless human propriety has to be serious in trying to realize it.

In al-Mukhtasar fi-'Ulum al-Din, al-Jilani (2010: 77) divided the faith into three levels, as follows:

1. The level of *tahqiqi* (based on the realization of the *haqiqah*), that is when a servant's belief covers his heart completely, so that, even if all beings in the universe have different beliefs with him, he does not feel the slightest tingle of doubt in his heart. This condition is realized, when the light of God (*anwar al-tarbawiyah*) reflects on the surface of the servitude (*safahat al-'ubudiyah*).
2. The level of *istidlali* (based on theological arguments), that is when a servant makes the creation as the evidence for the existence of the Creator. For example, a trace indicates the presence of a tracer. Likewise, the heavens and the earth show the existence of a powerful Creator. This type of belief according to al-Jilani is not easily shaken, but the former is stronger.
3. The level of *taqlidi* (based on blind imitating), that is when a person has faith by following the beliefs of his ancestors and acknowledges the opinions of the scholars without argument. According to al-Jilani, this belief is weak, because it potentially could be shaken by a slight disturbance of doubt.

Based on above explanation, the highest degree of faith, for al-Jilani, is the haqq al-yaqin belief which requires the direct spiritual witness and revelation (al-mushahadah wa al-mukashafah), leaving no trace of any doubt. Below this level, a person's degree of faith still has the potential to experience a reduction, because it has not yet reached the maximum level of confidence.

In his work of tafsir, al-Jilani terms the essence of this faith as the perfect faith that has reached the degree of the 'iyan (the real revelation) and the 'irfan (the intuitive science) This is as explained by al-Jilani when interpreting the verse of Q.S. Al-Anfal [8]: 2, that is, "The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts become fearful, and when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith. " Al-Jilani (2009: Vol. 2, 190) interprets the verse as follows,

(The believers), namely those who are perfect in their faith, who have reached the degree of the 'iyan and the 'irfan , who confirm all the prophets who explain the way of monotheism for them, (are only those who, when Allah is mentioned), the One who is separate with His uluhiyyah (divinity) and rububiyyah (deity) status (their hearts become fearful) because of the power of His greatness and His majesty, (and when His verses are recited to them) which shows His greatness and majesty, and which was revealed to His Prophets and Messenger (it increases them in faith).

This interpretation emphasizes that the essence of faith is the belief based on spiritual witness. At this level, the subject of faith is no longer proven by rational arguments, but is witnessed directly, even its presence is felt for real. This highest degree of faith is basically the grace of God which is bestowed upon His chosen servants. However, one must strive for it by forging the soul and fighting the passions continuously, so that his heart becomes clear enough to be able to receive the reflected light of the divinity (al-anwar al-tarbawiyyah). The direct implication of the tahaquqi faith is outward and inward obedience, which is manifested in an attitude of complete submission to Allah.

3.6 Worship as A Way to Meet Allah

The Sufis are equal to other Muslim groups in terms of the obligation to carry out all the commands and stay away from all the prohibitions. Therefore, every true Sufi will carry out the deeds of worship that are charged to every believer, because high loyalty to the teachings of Islam is a clear proof of his faith. However, the Sufis view that carrying out those various forms of obedience is inappropriate to stop only at the value of their mere formality, but must reach the moral-spiritual significance behind their outward appearance, namely the perfection of the taqqarrub level (getting closer to Allah). Therefore, various acts of worship are not just physical movements and activities. Every act of worship—in addition to having its formal provisions that must be fulfilled—also has the essential meaning that becomes its spirit. This is as emphasized by 'Abd al-Salam (1995: 11), that the core purpose of worship is the taqarrub to Allah.

Worship requires a person to act and behave in accordance with His will, when he is faced with a crossroads filled with lustful temptations (Zaman, 1986: 328-329). However, in the perspective of Sufism, worship is not enough to be based on mere submission, but must also be based on the sincerity of love that drives the heart of the seeker to meet Him. This love-based servitude can form a holistic person who submits his totality to whatever Allah loves, whether in belief, speech, or deed (Al-Qaradawi, 2009: 54). 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani confirms this when interpreting Q.S. Al-An'am [6]: 162-163 which reads: "Say, Surely my prayer, my worship, my life, and my death are all for Allah—Lord of all worlds. He has no partner. So I am

commanded, and so I am the first to submit.” Regarding its interpretation, al-Jilani (2009: vol. 2, 82) explains,

(Say) O you the most perfect messenger... (surely my prayer), that is my inclination with all my limbs and parts of my body, (my worship), which is a way of drawing me closer to God, and all activities of (my life and my death) . (are all for Allah) alone, the One who governs the mulk [material] and the malakut [spiritual] realms with what He wills, independently and voluntarily [without coercion], because He is (God of the universe). (He has no partner) who opposes Him, there is no opponent who equals or resembles Him, because [in essence] there is no existence at all for other than Him.

This interpretation emphasizes that all acts of worship and all human activities, including those that are outward and inward, must be offered sincerely only to Allah alone, not for other purposes or interests. This awareness arises because the real essence is only Allah, while everything other than Him is nothing. He is the only one who deserves to be the anchor for the whole existence.

When a servant treads this path of total obedience and servitude, he will achieve the core goal called the nearness and the meeting. The meaning of nearness to Allah is to isolate oneself from everything other than Allah, while the meaning of meeting Him is to separate oneself from everything other than Allah (Ma’sumi, 1964: 17). Therefore, the essence of worship in the view of the Sufis is not just a formal form without any essential content, but is a means of getting closer to Allah with all one’s soul (Al-Tuayjiri, 2006: Vol. 2, 1711), to the level of witnessing Him. Worship is a vehicle for spiritual practice, in which a person forges himself to be as close as possible to Allah, as the final goal of all his activities. Regarding this, ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani in his al-Ghunya (2012: Vol. 1, 226) clarifies,

Because of Me (God), a person can come to obedience, with the light of the obedience he comes to witness (al-‘iyan), and with the witness he no longer needs an explanation, because his heart has become a vessel for the secrets of the unseen and afterlife sciences. Whoever succeeds in reaching his Beloved, then he will be saved from the lamentation of sorrow.

This mystical expression implies that the obedience is essentially a gift of God bestowed on His servants. Nevertheless, when someone does it, its significance lies not only in itself, because its role is as a stepping stone to reach a higher degree, where when a servant succeeds in reaching it, he can witness various secrets that cannot be revealed.

Worship in a wider scope is the purpose behind the creation of the universe. Allah says in Q.S.Al-Dhariyat [51]: 56, “I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me.” In his tafsir, al-Jilani (2009: Vol. 5, 424-425) sublimatively interprets,

And know that verily (I did not create jinn and humans), I did not show their shadows in physical existence, I did not create them in beautiful forms, nor did I grant them the substance of enlightened reason, (except to worship Me), knowing Me [ma’rifa], and attaining the realization [tahaqquq] of My oneness in My being and all My actions and My entitlement [istihqaq] to obedience and absolute servitude, without the slightest element of partnership or opposition from anyone.

In this interpretation, al-Jilani further emphasizes that the moral-spiritual significance of worship does not only stop at the level of closeness to Allah. But more than that, its purpose penetrates the significance of knowing to Him, which at a later stage can lead a servant to the level of fana (self-annihilation), where all he sees is the oneness and solitude of Allah in all universal phenomena.

In Fath al-Rabbani al-Jilani (2007: 152) explains that if a servant is sincere in worshipping Allah alone, then Allah is with him in all of his conditions and changes him

from one level to another, so that his totality becomes meaningful and he reaches the degrees of faith, understanding, closeness, and disclosure, which are like day without night, clear without cloudiness, and annihilated without self-existence. Therefore, the moral-spiritual significance of worship is as a vehicle (markab) to get closer to Allah, meet Him, then dissolve in His oneness. However, this total obedience based on transcendental love does not then deprive a Sufi from social life. Zaman (1986: 329) explains that this divine love, as an expression of one's devotion to God, can be realized through devotional acts. Service (khidmah) to fellow human beings constitutes a means for increasing spiritual quality, so that it is an integral part in the existential journey to God.

In al-Jilani's view, social service is the effect of the mental-spiritual condition of a person who is only concerned with preparing himself to meet his Lord, so that his heart is no longer bound by worldly desires. In this context, al-Jilani (2007: 71-72) carefully explains,

A believer must gather afterlife supplies, while a disbeliever lives to have fun. A believer must cultivate those supplies because he is on a long journey, so he must be content with a little wealth, while most of it he reserves for the hereafter, because his heart and mind are there... If he has delicious food, he will prioritize it to the poor, because he believes that in the afterlife he will get much better food.... Be aware! Come back to your Lord! Do not become a polytheist because of your wealth and depending wholeheartedly on it! Do not stop because of it. Take out the wealth from your heart, and let it remain in your homes and your pockets, for your offspring and wives, and those closest to you, but you, wait for the invitation of death!

According to this explanation, the underlying reason for all forms of generosity is the longing for an encounter with God in the hereafter, which leaves no room for the need for the various aspects of material-worldly life. This longing for God then reflects in the heart of a Sufi into a feeling of compassion for fellow creatures. This is because the spiritual journey clears the heart of various kinds of impurities, so that as one of its effects, the heart is filled with compassion for humans (Al-Kaylani, 1994: 273).

In short, worship in al-Jilani's view is not limited to its external dimension. Worship is internalized mystically-spiritually as a vehicle for forging the soul to be ready to meet Allah and then annihilated in His Oneness. In addition to reaching all aspects of life, worship also covers the totality of human existence, including the inner deeds which are the spirit for every form of servitude. Although worship at the peak of its significance erases the *huwwiyyah* (existence) of a Sufi, this condition does not necessarily encourage him to neglect the legal demands of Islam and the socio-humanitarian significance. At the *shari'a* sphere, the spiritual sublimation of a Sufi will not result in the abandonment of dogmatic demands, because all kinds of worship represent the purpose behind the creation. Meanwhile, at the social sphere, the essence of divine love not only must be realized in the total obedience, but also must be externalized in the form of social servitude and compassion for His fellow creatures. Therefore, *khidmah* in al-Jilani's view is a reflection of the deeper spiritual quality.

IV. CONCLUSION

Sufism is a part of Islam that represents the esoteric dimension of its teachings. By origin, Sufism was born along with the revelation of Islam to the Prophet Muhammad. Therefore, the allegation that states the alienation of Sufism from Islamic sources does not have the support of historical facts, as well as normative arguments. In fact, the core concepts in Sufism have been practiced by the Prophet himself, taught to his

companions, and transmitted to the next generation in the form of a prophetic tradition. Therefore, Sufism, although relatively is a new term, is substantially orthodox, because it is anchored in the sources of Islamic teachings.

In the view of 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, Sufism is essentially a process of purifying oneself in order to climb the spiritual stairs, leading to an encounter with Allah. In this process, a Sufi needs the shari'a foundation that can keep him steady and not deviate from the path of truth. Without the shari'a, there is no guarantee of safety for anyone who takes this spiritual path, just as without the media of a boat, there is no guarantee that someone will be safe from the raging waves of the ocean.. In this case, the shari'a serves as the main foothold that ensures his journey in order not to deviate into a heretical practice (zandaqah). Thus, tasawuf correctly means taking the spiritual path (tariqa), with the foundation of Islamic law (shari'a), towards the peak of realizing the encounter with God (haqiqa). Sufism itself requires the integration of the shari'a, the tariqah, and the haqiqa, so that epistemologically there will be no conflict among these three dimensions.

The implications of the shari'a and the haqiqa integration in al-Jilani's Sufism are seen in how he interprets every religious dogma. Every doctrine of faith or law is not understood in black and white manner, but is interpreted more deeply as a means for increasing spiritual level. Thus, the shari'a in al-Jilani's thought, is not a pile of doctrines and rules that lacks meaning. Each point of its teachings, in addition to having a legal-formal function, also contains another significance that is oriented towards cultivating moral-spiritual dimension. Sufism does not abandon the instrumental role of the shari'a, but gives it an additional meaning that can lead a Sufi to the top of mushahadah. Based on this, faith, for al-Jilani, is not sufficient to be understood rationally, but mainly it must be anchored in direct spiritual witness, so that it becomes a tahqiqi belief that does not leave the slightest remnant of doubt. Likewise, the significance of worship does not stop as a legal-formal reference, but must be interpreted further as a means for forging levels of morality and spirituality. The urgency of worship does not lie in itself, but as an instrument to raise the status of servanthood to a higher degree, until finally the human ego (ananiyyah) is annihilated in God consciousness.

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