

THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF JAVANESE QUR'ANIC EXEGESIS

A Study of Ṣāliḥ Darat's Fayḍ al-Raḥmān¹

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Abstract

This article seeks to analyse the structure of the epistemology of Fayḍ al-Raḥmān, a Javanese Qur'anic-exegetical work by Ṣāliḥ Darat, a prominent Javanese ulama in the nineteenth century. It is the only Javanese Qur'anic-exegetical work (kitāb al-tafsīr) with the Sufi-esoteric interpretation (al-tafsīr al-ṣūfī al-ishārī). Yet, there has not been research discussing its epistemology of interpretation whereas it is significant to grasp its fundamental structure of thought. Employing historical-philosophical approach, this article argues that Fayḍ al-Raḥmān's exegesis reflect the illuminative epistemology (ʿirfānī) by which Ṣāliḥ Darat does not only explain the textual meaning (al-ma'nā al-ẓāhir) but also the esoteric meaning (al-ma'nā al-ishārī) of the Qur'an. In Ṣāliḥ Darat's view, the relation of the two resembles the relation between spirit and body that cannot be separated. The esoteric interpretation thus constitutes revealing inner meanings of the Qur'an. According to Ṣāliḥ Darat, the ideal interpretation is to grasp both the textual and esoteric meaning of the

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Qur'an. With the Sufi-esoteric interpretation, Ṣāliḥ Darat truly intends to bridge the epistemological polemics between Muslim jurists (fuqahā') who are inclined to the textual meaning and Sufi-philosophers who are inclined to the esoteric meaning. Besides, written in Arabic-pegon script, Ṣāliḥ Darat's Fayḍ al-Raḥmān fortifies the Javanese cultural identity in the sense that Javanese Qur'anic exegesis have equal authority as Arabic Qur'anic exegesis. This also reflects the cultural strategy to oppose the policy of the Dutch colonialism that enforced the use of Latin alphabet on behalf of bureaucracy and correspondence at the time.

[Artikel ini mendiskusikan tentang struktur epistemologi tafsir Fayḍ al-Raḥmān karya Ṣāliḥ Darat. Kitab tersebut merupakan satu-satu kitab tafsir berbahasa Jawa dengan corak tafsir sufi isyari. Namun demikian, selama ini belum ada riset-riset terdahulu yang mengkaji tentang isu epistemologi tafsirnya. Padahal, dengan mengkaji epistemologinya, kita akan memahami struktur fundamental pemikirannya. Dengan pendekatan historis-filosofis, artikel ini berargumen bahwa epistemologi tafsir Fayḍ al-Raḥmān mencerminkan epistemologi 'irfānī (illuminaasi) dengan corak tafsir sufi isyari. Ketika menafsirkan al-Qur'an, Ṣāliḥ Darat tidak hanya menjelaskan dimensi makna ṣāḥir ayat, tetapi juga makna batinnya. Baginya, relasi keduanya tidak dapat dipisahkan, ibarat tubuh dan ruh. Sehingga, penafsiran al-Qur'an menjadi lebih hidup dan mendalam. Penafsiran yang ideal ialah manakala mampu menangkap kedua makna tersebut secara sinergis. Dengan corak tafsir sufi isyari, Ṣāliḥ Darat sebenarnya ingin mendamaikan konflik epistemik antara kaum fuqahā' yang hanya berorientasi pada makna ṣāḥir dan kaum sufi yang hanya berorientasi pada makna batin. Di sisi lain, penggunaan tulisan Arab-Pegon dalam kitab tafsirnya merefleksikan penegasan identitas kultural Jawa bahwa tafsir berbahasa Jawa memiliki otoritas yang sama dengan tafsir-tafsir yang berbahasa Arab. Hal ini juga merupakan strategi kebudayaan untuk melawan kolonialisme Belanda yang ketika itu menginstruksikan agar menggunakan tulisan latin dalam birokrasi dan surat-menyurat.]

Keywords: Ṣāliḥ Darat, *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān*, Qur'anic exegesis, *al-tafsīr al-ishārī*.

A. Introduction

Discussing epistemological matters not only pertains to one branch of philosophy but also to all sciences, including Qur'anic hermeneutics.

It is based on an assumption that an exegetical work reflects a mode of thought, discourse, and particular socio-cultural and religious context in which it is produced. The sociology of knowledge reveals that any product of knowledge can't dissociate from space, social cognition, and socio-cultural-religious context, even surrounding ideology in which it is constructed.² Accordingly, Qur'anic exegesis, as a hermeneutic reception of the Qur'an, is a result of dialectical and interactional process between readers, the Qur'an, and the particular context in which it is interpreted.³

Among the interesting Javanese Qur'anic exegesis is *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān fī Tarjamat Kalām Mālik al-Dayyān* written by kiai Ṣāliḥ Darat in 1309 AH/1893 AD. According to the Islamic historiographical narrative of Southeast Asia, Ṣāliḥ Darat, who lived in the coastal region of Java, is a pivotal figure because he was a prominent part of the Nusantara *ulama* network.⁴ Historically, *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* is the first Qur'anic commentary written in Arabic-*pegon* script⁵ in Java in the late nineteenth century.⁶ It remains unique since most of *ulamas* at the time wrote Islamic works in

² Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966); Robert K. Merton, "The Sociology of Knowledge", *Isis*, vol. 27, no. 3 (1937), pp. 493–503.

³ Abdullah Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach* (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 116–7.

⁴ Munawir Aziz, "Produksi Wacana Syiar Islam dalam Kitab Pegon Kiai Saleh Darat Semarang dan Kiai Bisri Musthofa Rembang", *Afkaruna: Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol. 9, no. 2 (2013), pp. 112–28.

⁵ The Arabic-*pegon* script is Arabic letters which are modified to write Javanese words. The word "pegon" is originated from the Javanese word *pégo* that means distortion. It is due to the fact that Javanese words written in Arabic letters are considered anomalous. Not only is the Arabic-*pegon* script actually used to write Javanese words, but also other local languages, such as Sundanese, Malay, and Madurese words. See: M. Irfan Shofwani, *Mengenal Tulisan Arab Melayu* (Yogyakarta: Adicita Karya Nusa, 2005).

⁶ See: Ṣāliḥ Darat, *Tafsīr Fayḍ al-Raḥmān*, Digital edition, ed. by Anasom and Ikhwan (Semarang: Panitia Haul K.H. Sholeh Darat, 2012). Since Islam arrived in Java, there had been hermeneutic receptions of the Qur'an. This is signified by the discovery of *makbūṭāt* (manuscript) of Tafsīr Sunan Bonang written in the fourteenth century. The manuscript is kept at the museum of Demak mosque, Central Java. I have its copy containing of *Tafsīr Jalālain* along with its Javanese translation written in Arabic-*pegon* script, from the chapter of *al-Fātiḥah to al-Kaḥfi*. This signifies that there had been Qur'anic reception within the process of Islamic knowledge transmission in Java during the fourteenth century.

Arabic. It is no exaggeration to suggest that Ṣāliḥ Darat actually performed the transmission and transformation of knowledge, which, according to A. H. John, can be called “vernacularization” of the Qur’an within the context of Javanese society.⁷

In addition, the use of Javanese language in Arabic-*pegon* script shows the local wisdom of Ṣāliḥ Darat. Not only does his language choice actually reflect a tool of communication, but it is also both a way of thinking and an instrument for an interpreter to convey his/her ideas and to sustain a particular culture.⁸ As such, the use of Arabic-*pegon* script implicitly contains the ideological message of anti-colonialism against the Dutch who implemented political policies, including forcing Indonesian society to use the Dutch language and Latin alphabet, on behalf of maintaining bureaucratic interests at the time.⁹

Nevertheless, *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* seems not to have been popular compared to other Javanese Qur’anic exegesis, such as Bisri Mustafa’s *Tafsīr al-Ibrīz*, Bakri Syahid’s *Tafsīr al-Hudā*, and Misbah Mustafa’s *Tafsīr al-Iklīl fī Ma’āni al-Tanzīl*. Presumably, this is because it was neither published widely nor was it studied extensively at *pesantren* in Indonesia. According to Martin Van Bruinessen, some Qur’anic exegesis written in Arabic, such as *Tafsīr al-Jalālain*, *Tafsīr al-Bayḍawī*, *Ibn Kathīr* and those written in Javanese such as *Tafsīr al-Ibrīz* and *Tafsīr al-Iklīl*, were taught at *pesantren*.¹⁰ But, *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* was never used as a compulsory literature there.

Apart from its unpopularity, *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* remains unique, for

⁷ Vernacularization is an attempt to translate the Qur’an into local languages. See: Farid F. Saenong, “Vernacularization of the Qur’an: Tantangan dan Prospek Tafsīr al-Qur’an di Indonesia, interview with A. H. John”, *Jurnal Studi al-Qur’an*, vol. 1, no. 3 (2006), p. 579.

⁸ Karl Bühler, *Theory of Language: The Representational Function of Language*, trans. by Donald Fraser Goodwin (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2011), pp. 1–10.

⁹ Since the early twentieth century, the Dutch language was more widespread through the development of colonial education system. After forty years of the implementation of ethnic politics, Over 40% Indonesians were capable of reading Latin alphabet. Meanwhile, since the seventeenth century, Arabic had been used as the bridge of communication with foreign cultures. See Karel A. Steenbrink, *Pesantren, Madrasah, Sekolah: Pendidikan Islam dalam Kurun Modern* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1986), pp. 174–5.

¹⁰ Martin Van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren dan Tarekat* (Yogyakarta: Gading Publishing, 2012), pp. 178–9.

Ṣāliḥ Darat implements what Viktor Shklovskij named as *de-familiarization* in the sense that the epistemology of *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* is different from other Qur'anic exegesis which are mostly dominated by *bayānī* epistemology.¹¹ In interpreting the Qur'an, Muslim exegesis employing this kind of epistemology usually emphasize linguistic analysis, *e.g.* the relation between a particular word and its meaning.¹² Meanwhile, *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* is a Javanese Qur'anic exegesis that employs *ir'fānī* epistemology, or illumination. The meaning of its title *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* is "the emanation of God, The Most Merciful," terminology from Sufism that reflects *ir'fānī* epistemology, defined as a way to obtain knowledge through unveiling (*kashf*) and divine inspiration (*ilhām*).¹³ Furthermore, when this is applied in interpreting the Qur'an, an interpreter emphasizes discerning the esoteric, inner meanings of Qur'anic verses along with their textual or exoteric meanings.¹⁴ This is very noticeable in *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān*. Ṣāliḥ Darat sets out to explain the Qur'an's esoteric meaning (*al-ma'nā al-ishārī*).

For Sufis, the Qur'an contains both exoteric and esoteric meanings the relationship between which is said to resemble the relation between body and spirit.¹⁵ The Qur'an will only be alive if its esoteric meaning

¹¹ De-familiarization is the artistic technique of presenting to audiences common things in an unfamiliar or strange way in order to enhance perception of the familiar. The term was first coined in 1917 by Viktor Shklovskij in his essay, "Art as Technique". See Lawrence Crawford, "Viktor Shklovskij: Différance in Defamiliarization", *Comparative Literature*, vol. 36, no. 3 (1984), pp. 209–19.

¹² Almost all Nusantara Qur'anic exegesis, from *Tarjuman al-Mustafid* (the 17th century) by Abd Rauf al-Sinkili, *Tafsīr al-Ibrīz* (1960) by Bisri Mustāfa, *Tafsīr al-Hudā* (1979) by Bakri Syahid, to *Tafsīr al-Iklīl fī Ma'ānī al-Tanzīl* (1985) by Misbah Mustāfa, constitute the orientation of *bayānī* epistemology, *i.e.* a mode of thought based on narratives and linguistic analyses. Rational (*burhānī*) nuances are presented only in defence of *bayānī* reasoning. See: Islah Gusmian, *Khazanah Tafsīr Indonesia: Dari Hermeneutika hingga Ideologi* (Jakarta: Teraju, 2003); M. Nurdin Zuhdi, *Pasaraya Tafsīr Indonesia: Dari Kontestasi Metodologi hingga Kontekstualisasi* (Yogyakarta: Kaukaba, 2014).

¹³ Muḥammad 'Ābid al-Jābirī, *Bunyat al-"Aql al-Arābi: Dirāsāt Taḥlīlīyat Naqdīyyat li-Nuẓūm al-Ma'rīfat fī Thaqaḥat al-'Arābiyyah* (Bairūt: al-Markaz al-Thasaqafi, 1991), p. 251.

¹⁴ Ignaz Goldziher, *Madhābīh al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī* (Cairo: Maktabah Khanjī, 1955), pp. 238–47; Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Dhahabī, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1976), pp. 352–4.

¹⁵ In the Qur'an, the term *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin* are in binary opposition, as mentioned, for example, in Qur'an, 31: 20 and Qur'an, 6: 120. According to al-Ṭabārī, the *ḥadīth* also acknowledges that the Qur'an has both exoteric and esoteric meanings. See Abū

is also interpreted.¹⁶ However, Ṣāliḥ Darat also insists that the esoteric meaning of a verse might not be simply deduced before addressing its exoteric meaning (*al-ma'nā al-ẓāhir*). For example, Qur'an, 20: 24, *idhḥāb ilā fir'aun innāhu ṭaghā* ("go you to Pharaoh, for he has indeed transgressed all bounds").¹⁷ The word *fir'aun* cannot be immediately interpreted as "the strong desire" as its esoteric meaning.¹⁸ Instead, it must be interpreted at first as Pharaoh, the tyrannical king. Subsequently, the interpreter can address the text's esoteric meaning: any desire that strongly tempts a human being to act outrageously is symbolized by the figure of Pharaoh.

Having said this, it is significant to explore further the epistemological aspects of Ṣāliḥ Darat's *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān*, as the study of Qur'anic exegesis also pertains to the problem of epistemology which encompasses the question of the sources, the method, and the validity of knowledge.¹⁹ In addition, Qur'anic interpretation science, according to Amīn al-Khūlī, is never final; it necessarily requires continuous study and development in light of changing situations.²⁰

This article seeks to examine the epistemological aspects of *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān*, which encompasses four folds: its sources of interpretation, Ṣāliḥ Darat's root of thought, method he used in interpreting the Qur'an, and how to measure the validity of his interpretation. I employ a historical-philosophical approach²¹ to explain the basic structure of *Fayḍ*

Ja'far al-Ṭabāri, *Jamī' al-Bayān*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Muassasat al-Risālah, 2001), p. 72.

¹⁶ Dhunnūn al-Miṣrī, *al-Taḥsīn al-Ṣūfī al-'Irḡānī lil al-Qur'ān* (Cairo: Maktabah Madbuli, 2007); Qushairī al-Nisāburi, *Laṭā'if al-Ishārah* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutūb al-Ilmiyyah, 2000).

¹⁷ This translation is taken primarily from Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an* (Nairobi: The Islamic Foundation, 2003), p. 241.

¹⁸ Ṣāliḥ Darat, *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān fī Tarjamat Kalām Mālik al-Dayyān*, vol. 1 (Singapore: Haji Muhammad Amin, 1893), p. 1.

¹⁹ See Laurence Bonjour, *Epistemology: Classic Problems and Contemporary Responses* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010); Rajih Abdul Hamid al-Kurdi, *Naẓariyah al-Ma'rifah: Bayn al-Qur'ān wal al-Falsafah* (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Mu'ayyad, 1992), p. 63; Harold H. Titus, *Persoalan-Persoalan Filsafat*, trans. by H.M. Rasjidi (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1984), pp. 187–8.

²⁰ Amīn al-Khūlī, *Manāḥij al-Tajdīd fī al-Nahwī wal Balāghah wa al-Tafsīr wal Adab* (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, 1961), p. 302.

²¹ The main objective of philosophical approach is to explain the basic structure of a person's thought. See: M. Amin Abdullah, *Studi Agama: Normativitas atau Historisitas*

al-Raḥmān's epistemology and critical discourse analysis to explain how the language used in *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* is connected to the context, history, power, and ideology of the status quo. The critical discourse analysis is relevant to deeply analyse and criticize a Qur'anic exegetical work. Thus, it puts emphasis on describing a text and context simultaneously in a communication process.²²

B. The Intellectual Transmission of the Thought of Ṣāliḥ Darat (1235-1321 AH/1820-1903 AD)

The birth of *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* cannot be separated from the process of transmission and transformation of the thought of Ṣāliḥ Darat who is known as the *ulama* and teacher of many *kiai* in Java. I argue that the intellectual authority of *kiai* can be seen from the following. First, there is the chain of expertise, from whom he obtains the transmission of knowledge. Second, his intellectual productivity manifests itself in his works as a result of the transformation of the knowledge received from his teachers. A third significant factor is how his thoughts influence his disciples. Fourth, the character and personality of a *kiai* as an heir of the prophets is shown in how he acts as a guardian of morality, according to Qur'an, 9: 122. Each of these can be seen in the figure of Ṣāliḥ Darat.

Ṣāliḥ Darat contributed significantly to the development of Islam along Java's northern coast, particularly in Semarang. His eloquence as a preacher was well-known. He transmitted Islamic sciences to both lay common people and aristocrats. He wrote numerous books on Islamic sciences, including Islamic jurisprudence, ethics, Sufism, and Qur'anic exegesis.²³ *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* was the first Qur'anic exegesis written in Javanese language and had inspired later generations of Indonesian Muslim leaders, such as Kiai Hasyim Asy'ari, one of the founders of Nahdlatul Ulama'; Kiai Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of Muhammadiyah; and Raden Ajeng Kartini, the famous advocate for women's education (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1996), p. 285.

²² Guy Cook, *The Discourse of Advertising* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 1; Eriyanto, *Analisis Wacana: Pengantar Analisis Teks Media* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2008), pp. 7–13.

²³ Mukhamad Shokheh, "Tradisi Intelektual Ulama Jawa: Sejarah Sosial Intelektual Pemikiran Keislaman Kiai Shaleh Darat", *Paramita: Historical Studies Journal*, vol. 21, no. 2 (2011), pp. 157–8.

and emancipation in Indonesia.²⁴

Şālih Darat's complete name was Muḥammad Şālih Ibn 'Umar. He was born in Kedung Jumbleng village, Mayong, Jepara, Central Java, in the 1820s. His father, *Kiai* Umar, was one of the *ulama* fighting against Dutch colonialism and had been involved in the rebellion led by Prince Diponegoro.²⁵ Şālih Darat was educated by his father from the time he was a child and it is clear that his spirit of anti-colonialism was already developing in his childhood. As mentioned earlier, his use of Arabic-*pegon* script in *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* can be understood as resistance against the Dutch colonialism.

After a long enough time learning with his father, Şālih Darat began to study Islamic sciences in various places, first in Java and then travelling to Mecca which was not only the destination for the Hajj pilgrimage but also the centre of intellectual exploration for the *ulama* of Nusantara at that time.²⁶ Accordingly, the title of *haji* was a mark of intellectual accomplishment, for pilgrimage in those days meant more than completing a set of rituals. After performing pilgrimage rituals, many Indonesians learned Islamic sciences from Muslim scholars in Mecca.²⁷ The number of Indonesians who settled in Mecca was constantly increasing. In 18XX, van der Plas, the Dutch consul in Jeddah at the time, reported that their number had reached at least 10,000 people.²⁸

Indonesians made use of the time waiting for their ships to arrive to learn Islamic sciences and to seek chain of transmissions of Islamic knowledge from Muslim scholars in Mecca, or *isnād*. Interestingly, after

²⁴ Mohammad Masrur, "Kyai Soleh Darat, Tafsir Fa'id al-Rahman dan RA. Kartini", *At-Taḡaddum*, vol. 4, no. 1 (2016), pp. 21–38.

²⁵ Abu Malikus Salih Dzahir and M. Ichwan (eds.), *Sejarah & Perjuangan Kiai Sholeh Darat Semarang (Syekh Haji Muhammad Sholeh bin Umar al-Samarani): Maha Guru Ulama-ulama Besar dan Tokoh Pergerakan Kemerdekaan RI Pada Abad 20 M* (Semarang: Panitia Haul Kiai Sholeh Darat Semarang, 2012), p. 5.

²⁶ Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren, dan Tarekat*, pp. 7–8; Martin van Bruinessen, "Mencari Ilmu dan Pahala di Tanah Suci: Orang Nusantara Naik Haji", *Ulumul Qur'an*, vol. 2, no. 5 (1990), pp. 42–8.

²⁷ C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka in the Latter Part of the 19th Century: Daily Life, Customs and Learning of the Moslems of the East-Indian Archipelago*, trans. by James Henry Monahan (Leiden: Brill, 1931), p. 291.

²⁸ Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren, dan Tarekat*, p. 13.

arriving back in their homeland, they influenced the society to fight against Dutch colonialism. Therefore, the Dutch government asked a young scholar named Snouck Hurgronje (1857-1936) to study Islam for the sake of understanding the weaknesses of both Islam and Muslims. As a result, he succeeded to recruit several native Javanese to join the Dutch as *penghulu*, government officials assigned to perform such duties as the supervision of marriage, divorce, and inheritance.²⁹ However, although he was offered such a position, Ṣāliḥ Darat had no intention of compromising with the Dutch colonialists. He also refused to follow a colonial regulation against translating the Qur'an, instead producing his masterpiece interpreting the Qur'an in *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān*.

The intellectual journey of Ṣāliḥ Darat in Mecca led him to study Islamic sciences from great Muslim scholars, obtaining the scientific chain of Islamic sciences from them. The chain of transmission (*isnād*) is a traditional system that links Muslim scholars as a way of legitimating authority which can be obtained through learning from a *sheikh* or a Muslim scholar of great respect in the *umma*.

The intellectual genealogy of Ṣāliḥ Darat includes many of the leading teachers of the day. He learned Islamic theology from Sheikh Muḥammad al-Muqrī al-Miṣrī al-Makkī, particularly *Ummu al-Barāhin* by al-Sanusi, Islamic jurisprudence and Arabic grammar from Sheikh Muḥammad Sulaimān Hasballāh, particularly *Fatḥ al-Wabbāb*, *Sharah al-Khātib* and *Alfiyah Ibn Mālik*, and Sufism from Sheikh Sayyid Aḥmad Ibn Zaini Dahlan, particularly *Iḥyā' Ulūm al-Dīn* by al-Ghazālī. He studied *al-Hikam* by Ibn Aṭā'illah al-Sakandari³⁰ with Sheikh Aḥmad al-Naḥawī al-Miṣrī al-Makkī, *Iḥyā' Ulūm al-Dīn* with Sheikh Muhammad Ṣāliḥ al-Zawawī al-Makkī, *Fatḥ al-Wabbāb* with Kiai Zahid, *Fatḥ al-Wabbāb* with Sheikh 'Umar al-Shāmi, and *Sharah Taḥrīr* by Zakariyya al-Anṣārī with Sheikh Yusuf al-Sunbuwalī al-Miṣrī. His teacher for Qur'anic exegesis was

²⁹ Jajat Burhanudin, "The Dutch Colonial Policy on Islam: Reading the Intellectual Journey of Snouck Hurgronje", *Al-Jāmi'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol. 52, no. 1 (2014), pp. 25–6.

³⁰ He is well known as a Sufi and expert of the esoteric-Qur'anic interpretation. See: Tajuddīn al-Subki, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shafi'iyyat al-Kubrā*, vol. 5 (Egypt: al-Babil al-Halabi, 1964), p. 176.

Sheikh Jamal, a Meccan *mufti* from the Hanafite tradition.³¹ Considering Ṣāliḥ Darat's intellectual genealogy, we can see that he was immersed in studying both Islamic jurisprudence and Sufism, particularly the Shafiite School of Islamic jurisprudence and Sunni Sufism. *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* which addresses the esoteric interpretation (*al-tafsīr al-ishārī*) was inspired by both of those fields. He achieved a creative synthesis transcending the domination of *bayāni* epistemology.

The esoteric interpretation constitutes a deeper understanding of the Qur'an, for it does not accentuate the textual meaning, but goes deeper in order to grasp the esoteric meaning (*al-ma'nā al-ishārī*). This can be achieved through *kashf* (unveiling) as God's emanation for those who have undergone the spiritual way.³² In this regard, Ṣāliḥ Darat's *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* was successful in synthesizing the textual and esoteric meanings of the Qur'an, and bridging its *sharia* and *haqīqat* dimensions.

After returning from Mecca, Ṣāliḥ Darat taught at the *pesantren* of Kiai Murtado, his father-in-law. With him there, the *pesantren* grew rapidly. *Santri* from various regions of Java came to the *pesantren* for the purpose of learning Islamic sciences from him. Among his prominent disciples were, in addition to the founders of Nahdlatul 'Ulama' and Muhammadiyah, as mentioned above, the founders of the famous *pesantren* at Krapyak, Yogyakarta, and Termas, Pacitan, Kiai Muhammad Munawir and Kiai Mahfudz. It is not exaggerating to say that Ṣāliḥ Darat then can be called the grand teacher of the *ulamas* of Java.

Among Ṣāliḥ Darat's works are as follows:

- *Majmū'at al-Sharī'at al-Kāfiyah li al-'Awām* on *sharia* for ordinary people.
- *Kitab Munjīyāt*, on Sufism, quoted from al-Ghazālī's *Ihyā' Ulūm al-Dīn*.
- *Matn Al-Hikam*, on Sufism, on Ibn Aṭṭā'illah's *al-Hikam*.
- *Laṭā'if al-Ṭabārah wa Asrār al-Ṣalāh* on Islamic ritual purity and the secrets of Islamic prayers.

³¹ Dzahir and Ichwan (eds.), *Sejarah & Perjuangan Kiai Sholeh Darat Semarang (Syeikh Haji Muhammad Sholeh bin Umar al-Samarani): Maha Guru Ulama-ulama Besar dan Tokoh Pergerakan Kemerdekaan RI Pada Abad 20 M*, pp. 7–8; Shokheh, "Tradisi Intelektual Ulama Jawa: Sejarah Sosial Intelektual Pemikiran Keislaman Kiai Shaleh Darat", pp. 161–2.

³² Abdul Mustaqim, *Dinamika Sejarah Tafsir al-Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: Adab Press, 2014), pp. 125–31.

- *Manāsik al-Hajj wal 'Umrah* discussing ways of performing pilgrimage.
- *Kitab Pasolatan* on Islamic prayers.
- *Tarjamāt Sabīl al-'Abād 'alā Jawharat al-Tawhīd* on Sunni-Islamic theology.
- *Al-Murshīd al-Wajīz* on 'Ulum al-Qur'an and Tajwid
- *Minhāj al-Atqiyā'* on Sufism and Islamic ethics.
- *Ḥadīs Ghaithy Isra' Mi'rāj* discussing the holy journey of the Prophet Muhammad to receive God's command of prayers.
- *Alfiyyah al-Tawhīd*, on Islamic theology
- *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* on Qur'anic exegesis

Ṣāliḥ Darat passed away on 18th December, 1903, and was buried in Bergota, Semarang. On every 10th Shawwal, the tenth month in the Muslim calendar, pilgrims from various regions in Semarang come to Bergota to commemorate his death: an annual ceremony to remember his struggle and to pray for him.

C. The Structure of Epistemology of *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān*

1. On The Description and Background of *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān*

Fayḍ al-Raḥmān consists of two volumes. According to his inscription, Ṣāliḥ Darat began writing on Rajab 20, 1309 AH and finished on Muharram 7, 1311 AH. It was first printed in a limited edition in Singapore on Rabi'ul Akhir 27, 1311 AH or 1893 AD by the publisher of Haji Amin Muhammad. *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* is not a commentary on the entire text of the Qur'an. Instead, the first volume of 577 pages starts with an introduction followed by the interpretation of two *sura*, al-Fātiḥah and al-Baqarah. Meanwhile, the second volume, consisting of 705 pages, provides interpretation of 'Ali Imrān and al-Nisā'. Each chapter is preceded by a preface leading to the interpretation.

Ṣāliḥ Darat indicates there are several factors that give the birth of *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān*. First, the theological factor. The Qur'an was revealed in order to that humans would ponder its messages (Qur'an, 47: 24 and Qur'an, 38: 29). To understand and grasp its message, Qur'anic interpretation is required. In this vein, Ṣāliḥ Darat states:

When I look at some Qur'anic verses, actually God's sayings were revealed

to prophets in order to that all human beings deeply contemplate their meanings.³³

Second, sociological factor. At the time few Javanese had any capability to understand Qur'anic meanings, because they were not familiar with its language and did not understand how to interpret it. Şālih Darat says:

I see that most of non-Arabic people can't contemplate the meaning of the Qur'an, because they don't know the way to interpret and to understand its meaning. Indeed, the Qur'an was revealed in Arabic. That is why I intend to write a translation of the Qur'an which refers to the sayings of ulamas, such as those of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, al-Rāzī's al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr, and etc.³⁴

Thus, Şālih Darat determined that he would write in Javanese when he observed that the Javanese generally did not understand the language of the Qur'an. By writing *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* in Javanese, he intended to interpret the Qur'an for the purpose of transmitting its messages to the Javanese. Accordingly, the use of Javanese in *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* reflects a local wisdom and is a proper way to communicate Qur'anic messages to them. In this regard, Şālih Darat truly understands the sociology of preaching (*da'wah*). Javanese language has rich vocabularies, so it is more appropriate to find a meaning which is equivalent to Arabic. For example, he translates the Arabic word *al-Raḥmān* as *Dzat Kang Moho Welas* and *al-Raḥīm* as *Dzat Kang Moho Asih*. However, Şālih Darat sometimes uses Arabic words in interpreting the Qur'an, such as *ghālib*, *insān*, *mahal*, *nişyān*, *ujam* and so on, without translating them into Javanese. As a consequence, for those who did not know Arabic, it will be difficult to understand the meaning.

Fayḍ al-Raḥmān is usually associated with Qur'anic translation due to the following statement from Şālih Darat: "that is why I intend to write a translation of the Qur'an which refers to the sayings of *ulamas*".³⁵ In fact, *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* is not a Qur'anic translation but a Qur'anic interpretation, for he also explains the esoteric meaning of the Qur'an. His statement actually reflects his intellectual and moral awareness. Not only did he write

³³ Darat, *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān fī Tarjamat Kalām Mālik al-Dayyān*, 1, p. 1.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

a Javanese Qur'anic exegesis seriously, he consciously acknowledged that his interpretation remains related to the interpretations of the *ulamas*.

2. *The Ontological View of the Qur'an*

The ontological view is fundamental for Ṣāliḥ Darat on the subject matter, namely the Qur'an itself. According to Ṣāliḥ Darat, the Qur'an is holy scripture containing lessons and meanings that must be comprehended. Otherwise, its existence would be meaningless. The Qur'an was revealed for humans so that they may reflect on (*tadabbur*) and take lessons from its meanings.³⁶ Ṣāliḥ Darat's ontological view on the Qur'an is based on:

“Do they not consider the Qur'an (with care)? Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found therein much discrepancy” (Qur'an, 4: 82).³⁷

“(Here is) a book which We have sent down unto you, full of blessings, that they may meditate on its Sign, and that men of understanding may receive admonition” (Qur'an, 38: 29).³⁸

From the perspective of discourse analysis, Ṣāliḥ Darat intentionally uses the word *tadabbur* (contemplation, reflection) to emphasize the esoteric meaning of the Qur'an instead of its textual meaning. Semantically, the word *tadabbur* is derived from the word *dubur* which means “a back path”.³⁹ Following the verb form, *tafa'ala*, *tadabbara* means “to find out a meaning of a text beyond its textual meaning”. By addressing the word *tadabbur*, Ṣāliḥ Darat seems to acknowledge that an attempt to grasp the esoteric meaning of the Qur'an is justified by the Qur'an itself (Qur'an, 4: 82). However, to do *tadabbur* requires the purity of thinking which is free from desire (Qur'an, 38: 29).

Ṣāliḥ Darat also sees that the Qur'an has myriad meanings. It contains vast and deep meanings. This is reminiscent of Anna M.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, p. 65.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 362.

³⁹ Al-Rāghib al-Aṣṣḥānī, *Mu'jam Mufradāt al-Fāṣḥ al-Qur'an* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1972), p. 166.

Gade's idea that "the Qur'an is multifaceted".⁴⁰ Šāliḥ Darat contends that interpretation (*tafsīr*) is an attempt to understand God's words according to the competence of exegetes (*mufasssīrūn*). A Qur'anic-exegetical work (*kitāb al- tafsīr*) will never be able to grasp the whole meanings intended by God. In other words, exegetes don't know the essence of Qur'anic meanings, but they just exert their competence and capability to reveal them. According to Šāliḥ Darat, the meaning of the Qur'an is endless, and only God knows its essence.⁴¹ In this vein, he bases his view on Qur'an, 18: 109:

"Say: if the ocean were ink (wherewith to write out) the words of my Lord, sooner would the ocean be exhausted than would the words of my Lord, even if we added another ocean like it, for its aid"⁴²

Furthermore, the Qur'an, according to Šāliḥ Darat, is the revealed Word of God (*kalām Allah*) which is historically embedded. In Ramadan, the Qur'an was revealed from the Preserved Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-mahfūẓ*) to the world sky via the angel Gabriel. He showed the word of the Qur'an to angles of the sky. Then the Qur'an was written as one whole in *ṣuḥuf* (pages) and preserved in the holy place known as *bait al- 'izẓāh*. Subsequently, it was gradually revealed unto the Prophet Muhammad for about 23 years, in accordance with the context of his missions (*da'wah*). This began when he was forty years old, chosen by God to be His messenger.⁴³

Šāliḥ Darat's view on Qur'anic revelation reflects both theological and historical consideration of the Qur'an. Theologically, Šāliḥ Darat acknowledges that the Qur'an is the verbally revealed Word of God, but historically, the Qur'an was gradually revealed to Muhammad in response to his contemporary. It is noteworthy that the Qur'an uses different expressions to describe the two: the expression '*anzalnā*' to describe its revelation from the Preserved Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-mahfūẓ*) to the world sky, as one whole (Qur'an, 96: 1), and *naẓẓalnā* to describe its gradual revelation

⁴⁰ Anna M. Gade, *The Qur'an: An Introduction* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2010), pp. 7–8.

⁴¹ Darat, *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān fī Tarjamat Kalām Mālik al-Dayyān*, 1, p. 2.

⁴² Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, p. 233.

⁴³ Darat, *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān fī Tarjamat Kalām Mālik al-Dayyān*, 1, p. 329.

to the Prophet (Qur'an, 15: 9).⁴⁴

Ṣāliḥ Darat's consciousness of the historicity of the Qur'an affects the way he interprets the Qur'an. He takes the occasions of revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*) into account to explain the context in which the Qur'an was revealed and the dynamic of the Prophet's mission in the midst of the people of the seventh century of Arabia peninsula. For example, on the historical context of Qur'an, 3: 10, Ṣāliḥ Darat says:

When Abū Ḥāris, a Jew preacher, told to his brother, "O my brother, for God's sake, I truly recognize that Muhammad is the messenger of God. His arrival has been eagerly awaited. But, if I express my belief on Muhammad, the food supplies from the Roman King will be stopped. My property will disappear." This is the opinion of all unbelievers. Accordingly, the verse was revealed to explain that property and children can't release a person from God's torment.⁴⁵

By taking into account the *asbāb al-nuzūl*, Ṣāliḥ Darat's *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* includes one of hermeneutical elements: the micro-historical context of the Qur'an. This reflects "the historical consciousness", borrowing Gadamer's term, that a particular context surrounding a text should be understood in order to understand its significance in the contemporary context.⁴⁶

3. *Arabic-Pegon Script and Anti-Colonialism Ideology*

The Arabic-*pegon* script uses Arabic letters modified to write local languages, such as Javanese, Sundanese, Madurese, and Malay languages. The word *pegon* is derived from a Javanese word *pégo* that means "to deviate", as Javanese words written in Arabic are viewed as unusual. The emergence of *pegon* script is significantly influenced by the Islamicate culture of Nusantara, and of Java in particular. It has been known since the era of Samudra Pasai, an Islamic Kingdom in Aceh. According to Koentjaraningrat, the Arabic-*pegon* script emerged in Nusantara around the thirteenth century, along with the arrival of Islam in Indonesia that superseded Hinduism and Buddhism. Some sources state that the Arabic-

⁴⁴ Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkashi, *al-Burhan fi Ulum al-Qur'an*, vol. 1 (Cairo: Dar al-Turāth, 1988), pp. 289–90; Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur'an*, pp. 26–41.

⁴⁵ Darat, *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān fi Tarjamat Kalām Mālik al-Dayyān*, 1, p. 17.

⁴⁶ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 350.

pegon was introduced by Sunan Ampel, a famous Sufi in Java, himself at Dentha Pesantren, Surabaya. Other sources states that it was Syarif Hidayatullāh or Sunan Gunung Jati who introduced it.⁴⁷ Apart from that, the *Arabic-pegon* script then became the model of literacy tradition for the *pesantren* community to transform Islamic sciences, as manifested in Islamic works written by Indonesian *ulamas* and the *makna gandul* translations of the classic texts known as the *kitab kuning* (yellow books).

The use of *Arabic-pegon* script of *Fayḍ al-Rahmān* is a form of vernacularization of the Qur'an into Javanese and ideologically can be seen as a symbol of resistance against Dutch colonialism. Almost all of Šālīḥ Darat's works are written in *Arabic-pegon* script.⁴⁸ Historically, in the nineteenth century, the Dutch instructed the Javanese to use the Latin alphabet in the bureaucracy and for all correspondence and they prohibited the use of *Arabic-pegon* script. The policy was strongly opposed by the *pesantren* community.⁴⁹ Generally many *pesantrens* continued to use the *Arabic-pegon* script in the process of transmission and transformation of knowledge, as Šālīḥ Darat himself has exemplified in his works.

Furthermore, the attitude of Šālīḥ Darat's anti-colonialism can be traced from his father, *Kiai* Umar, who was involved in the guerrilla warfare led by Prince Diponegoro in 1825-1830 against Dutch colonialism. The war is well known as "the Java war" and was supported by both *ulamas* and Muslim governments.⁵⁰ During the era of Dutch Colonialism, *ulamas* prohibited the use of any symbol used by the Dutch colonialists, e.g. wearing neckties, hats, or trousers. They based their attitude on the Prophet's *ḥadīth*: "whoever imitate a certain group, so he belongs to it."⁵¹

⁴⁷ See: Shofwani, *Mengenal Tulisan Arab Melayu*; Raminah Baribin, *Inventarisasi Sastra Jawa Pesisir Sebelum Abad XX* (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1992).

⁴⁸ *Kiai* Ahmad Rifa'i also did the same thing (d. 1870) in the eighteenth century. See: Abdul Djamil, *Perlawanan Kiai Desa: Pemikiran dan Gerakan Islam KH. Ahmad Rifa'i* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2001).

⁴⁹ Budi Susanto (ed.), *Politik dan Postkolonialitas di Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2003), p. 287.

⁵⁰ Yudian Wahyudi, *Perang Diponegoro: Tremas, SBY dan Ploso* (Yogyakarta: Pesantren Nawesca Press, 2012), p. 3.

⁵¹ Šālīḥ Darat, *Majmū'at al-Sharī'at al-Kāfiyah li al-'Awām*, Digital edition (Semarang: Panitia Haul K.H. Sholeh Darat, 2012), p. 25; Aḥmad Ibn. Ḥanbal, *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol.

Another *ḥadīth* confirms that “whoever imitates outside us, so he doesn’t belong to us. Don’t imitate the Jew and Christian.”⁵² Accordingly, using the Latin alphabet was viewed as a form of imitating the Dutch: a symbol of colonialism that must be avoided. It is noteworthy that the *ulama* or *kiai* as the charismatic figures succeeded in influencing the society to be anti-colonialism.⁵³ This doesn’t necessarily mean that they only employed the strategy of using the *Arabīc-pegon* script. Rather, they also fought against the Dutch colonialism physically, as they largely involved in several wars.

In addition, *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān*, as a form of hermeneutic reception on the Qur’an, is an act of resistance to the Dutch colonial government’s rule which prohibited translation of the Qur’an. As a result, many *ulamas* did not dare to translate the Qur’an.⁵⁴ The rule was established because the Dutch were worried that Qur’anic messages would inspire the society to rebel against the colonialism. It is true that many Qur’anic verses encourage Muslims to struggle and rebel against any oppression, including colonialism.⁵⁵

Historically, since the era of Sunan Giri, in the fourteenth to fifteenth century, resistance against the Portuguese colonialism and rebellion against the Dutch colonialism could not be separated from the revolutionary spirit of the Qur’an.⁵⁶ The Qur’an firmly encourages Muslims to fight against any repressive and despotic actions (*ṭagḥūt*). According to Ṣāliḥ Darat, the word *ṭagḥūt* in Qur’an, 2: 257 includes all forms of *kufr* as well as decisions of any ruler or leader who calls for

9, ed. by Adil Murshid (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risālah, 2001), p. 123.

⁵² Muhammad ibn ‘Isa Tirmidhi, *Sunan al Tirmidhi* (Egypt: Sharikah Maktabah wa Maṭba’ah Muṣṭafa al-Bab al-Halabi, 1975), p. 56.

⁵³ See: Mohd. A. Nawawi, “Punitive Colonialism: The Dutch and the Indonesian National Integration”, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2 (1971), pp. 159–68.

⁵⁴ Up to 1922, many *ulamas* still objected to translate the Qur’an. Generally, they contended that translating the Qur’an is legally forbidden (*ḥaram*). See: Mahmud Yunus, *Tafsīr Qur’ān Karīm*, 18th edition (Jakarta: P.T. Hidakarya Agung, 1990), p. iv.

⁵⁵ For example, several verses suggest to fight in God’s way (Qur’an, 2: 218, 5: 35, 6: 72-74, 9: 41, 86), to help the oppressed people (Qur’an, 4: 98), and to fight against tyrannical rulers (Q. 20: 24).

⁵⁶ Abubakar Aceh, *Sedjarah Al-Qur’ān* (Djakarta: Sinar Pudjangga, 1952), pp. 295–6.

destruction or immorality.⁵⁷

Although Ṣāliḥ Darat does not explicitly mention that the Dutch colonialists could be categorized as *ṭaghut*, implicitly they are included, for their policies oppressed Indonesians. Due to Ṣāliḥ Darat's *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* and his other works, Javanese could understand the meaning of the Qur'an and Islamic teachings alike. As a consequence, although the influence was not explicit, the Javanese society possessed the spirit of anti-colonialism to fight against the colonialism. It is said that loving the homeland was a part of faith, and thus fighting against the colonialism was obligatory (*fardū 'ain*). Therefore, if a person died during the war, he died as a martyr (*shahīd*). Such a belief can be seen, for example, in Kiai Hasyim Asy'ari's call for *resolusi jihad* (jihad resolution), issued on October 22, 1945. It is stated that defending the homeland was obligatory for Muslims and a manifestation of jihad.⁵⁸

4. *The 'Irfānī Reason and Esoteric Meaning*

The noticeable characteristic of *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* is the use of illuminative (*'irfānī*) epistemology that emphasizes the esoteric, inner meaning (*al-ma'nā al-ishārī*) in interpreting the Qur'an. Etymologically, the term *'irfānī* (عرفانی) is derived from the word *'ir'fān* (عرفان), an *isim maṣdar* (infinitive, verbal noun). According to Muḥammad 'Ābid al-Jābirī, in the epistemology discourse, the *'irfānī* reason is a kind of knowledge obtained directly from God, *i.e.* through the experience of intuition (*ilhām*), unveiling (*kashf*), direct perception (*a'yān*), and illumination (*ishrāq*). The *'irfānī* reason is commonly discussed along with the two other reasons: the *bayānī* (textual) reason which is based on transmission (*naql*) and textual analysis, and the *burhānī* (rational) reason which is based on rationality (*aql*). Terminologically, the term *'irfānī* is the disclosure on knowledge attained through the illumination of God's substance to His servants. This can be done through spiritual training (*riyāḍah*) which is

⁵⁷ Ṣāliḥ Darat, *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān fī Tarjamat Kalām Mālik al-Dayyān*, vol. 2 (Singapore: Haji Muhammad Amin, 1893), pp. 492–3.

⁵⁸ Gugun El-Guyanī, *Resolusi Jihad Paling Syar'i* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pesantren, 2010); Said Aqil Siradj, "Resolusi Jihad Melawan Lupa", in *Nasionalisme dan Islam Nusantara*, ed. by Abdullah Ubaid and Mohammad Bakir (Jakarta: Penerbit Buku Kompas, 2015), p. 8.

based on love (*maḥabbah*).⁵⁹

According to 'Ābid al-Jābirī, genealogically, the *'irfāni* epistemology, as the system of knowledge, has been recognized by the major religions, such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and even Paganism. Essentially, the term *al-'irfāniyyah* (Gnosticism) refers to a plural denomination pattern. 'Ābid al-Jābirī contended that the concept of *'ir'fān* in the Islamic knowledge can be traced since the pre-Islamic era. Over the second or third century, Imlikh Jamlichus, a Neo-Platonist philosopher and Syrian descendant, was prone to Hermes' philosophy based on the illuminative reason, rather than Aristotle's philosophy based a demonstrative reasoning (*burbānī*). He was quite popular in Arabic translations and among Arabic authors. In the late Greek era to the midst of seventh century, along with the emergence of Islam and its spreading, the *'ir'fān* tradition had become a school of thought that developed and opposed to the Greek rationalism.⁶⁰

In the context of Qur'anic exegesis, the main concern of the *'irfāni* reason is to discern and grasp the inner meaning of the Qur'an. The textual and inner meaning of the Qur'an is not viewed as a binary opposition. Rather, both are in complementary. Accordingly, Ṣāliḥ Darat incorporates the two within his *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān*. According to al-Muḥasibi (d. 857 AD), al-Sulami (d. 412 AH), al-Ghazālī (d. 1111 AD), and Ibn. 'Arabi (d. 1240 AD), each Qur'anic verse contains both textual and inner meanings. While the former is called *tafsīr*, the latter is called *ta'nwīl*. Furthermore, each Qur'anic verse also contains *hadd* and *maṭla'* meanings. While the former refers to a maximal comprehension on an expression (*kalām*), the latter refers to a comprehension higher than the former (*hadd*), through which a person can experience divinity (*shubūḍ*).⁶¹

The *bayāni* reason constitutes that an interpreter is prone to textual analysis for the sake of grasping Qur'anic meanings. As such, Qur'anic meanings are merely deduced from the linguistic structure of the text. By contrast, the *'irfāni* reason, employed by Ṣāliḥ Darat in his *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān*, departs from the explanation of the textual meaning (*al-ma'nā*

⁵⁹ al-Jābirī, *Bunyat al-'Aql al-Arābi: Dirāsāt Tablīliyyat Naqdīyyat li-Nuẓūm al-Ma'rīfat fī Thaqaḥat al-'Arābiyyah*, p. 251.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

al-ẓāhir) towards the inner meaning (*al-ma'nā al-ishārī*). In this regard, Ṣāliḥ Darat is different from most of followers of the *ir'fāni* reason, who contended that while meaning (*al-ma'nā*) is the root (*al-aṣl*), utterance (*al-laḥẓ*) is its branch (*al-far'*) that must follow the fundament. According to Ṣāliḥ Darat, an interpreter should acknowledge the textual meaning of the Qur'an at first, subsequently he/she could explain the esoteric meaning. For example, when Ṣāliḥ Darat interprets Qur'an, 2: 219 that prohibits drinking alcoholic drinks, he explains that the word *khamr* has two meanings. First, in terms of the textual meaning, *khamr* is a liquid made of squeezed grapes, dates, or other fruits which are fermented. Second, in terms of the inner meaning, *khamr* refers to anything that can intoxicate a person and prevent him or her from remembering God, such as ignorance (*ghaflah*), hedonism (*ḥubb al-dunyā*), and uncontrolled desire (*ittiba' al-hawā*).⁶²

Then the problem is that how are inner meanings of the Qur'an derived? According to al-Jābirī, the inner meaning is understood as *i'tibar* or *qiyas ir'fāni*, i.e. the inner meaning attained through unveiling (*kashf*), distinct from the textual meaning of the text. For example, in interpreting Qur'an, 55: 19-22, some Shiite scholars who argued for the superiority of 'Ali's family, analogized the Prophet Muhammad with a barrier (*barẓakh*), while Hasan and Husein are analogized as pearls (*lu'lu'*) and coral (*marjān*). Meanwhile, al-Qushairi contended that the esoteric meaning of the two oceans (*baḥrain*) in the verse is the ocean of fear (*khauf*) and the ocean of hope (*rajā'*) in which pearls and coral, namely *ahwāl al-ṣūfiyah* and *al-laṭā'if al-mutawaliyah*, are found. Between the two is a barrier (*barẓakh*) that cannot be transgressed, namely the guidance of God. In principle, *qiyas ir'fāni* is aimed at contextualizing a textual meaning of a text with a knowledge attained through the unveiling experience (*kashf*). In other words, it draws analogies between the invisible and the visible (*qiyas al-ghāib alā al-shāhid*).⁶³

Adonis criticized the *ir'fāni* epistemology. In his view, it is not authoritative, because it is very subjective and more prone to mysticism. Besides, it uses myths excessively and regards them as the highest

⁶² Darat, *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān fī Tarjamat Kalām Mālik al-Dayyān*, 1, p. 396.

⁶³ al-Jābirī, *Bunyāt al-'Aql al-'Arābi: Dirāsāt Tablīliyat Naqdīyyat li-Nuẓūm al-Ma'rīfat fī Thaqaḥat al-'Arābiyyah*, pp. 305–6.

truth, not as a subject of anthropology.⁶⁴ In some ways, this criticism can be accepted, for the subjectivity of the *ir'fāni* can result arbitrary interpretations. However, Adonis' criticism is irrelevant for understanding Ṣāliḥ Darat's *ir'fāni* epistemology as used in his *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān*, because Ṣāliḥ Darat does not rely on myths or claim that the esoteric meaning is the highest truth. He insists that interpreters of the Qur'an should focus on both analysing its textual meanings, and revealing its esoteric meanings. Accordingly, Ṣāliḥ Darat always presents the inner meaning of the Qur'an in his exegesis. This is the characteristic of the tradition of *al-tafsīr al-ishari* (esoteric interpretation).

Ṣāliḥ Darat's interpretations cannot be separated from the influence of the Islamic mysticism he learned in Mecca. His interpretations rely on those of traditional exegetes, such as al-Ghazālī. He contended that the textual interpretation should precede the esoteric interpretation. But, he never explicitly mentioned which of al-Ghazālī's works he referred to.⁶⁵ Presumably, he referred to *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* and *Jawābir al-Qur'ān*, all of which address esoteric meanings of the Qur'an.

Sociologically, it is clear that Ṣāliḥ Darat's esoteric interpretation was embedded within the context in which Islamic-mystical tradition developed in Java at the time. It was said at that time that understanding Islam from the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence was viewed as too rigid and dry. Thus, the esoteric interpretation of the Qur'an provides a deeper understanding of Islam. From the perspective of the sociology of knowledge, a Qur'anic exegesis doesn't dissociate from a particular socio-historical context of its interpreter. In other words, a Qur'anic exegesis is always embedded in a social context in which the interpreter lives. By employing the *ir'fāni* reason that produces the esoteric-Qur'anic interpretation, Ṣāliḥ Darat attempted to bridge the epistemic polemics between Muslim jurists who were seen as too formalistic and Sufi philosophers who emphasized the essence of *sharia* and sometimes neglected its formal dimension. In Ṣāliḥ Darat's view, the polemic could be overcome by acknowledging both the textual and inner meaning of the Qur'an.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Adonis, *Arkeologi Sejarah Pemikiran Arab-Islam* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2009), p. xxi.

⁶⁵ Darat, *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān fī Tarjamat Kalām Mālik al-Dayyān*, 1, pp. 1–2.

⁶⁶ Compare with al-Dhahabī, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn*, 2, pp. 352–4.

The tradition of esoteric-Qur'anic interpretation emerged in the second and third century AH. It was aimed to overcome the stagnation of the epistemology of Qur'anic interpretation which had been constructed through a formalistic framework introduced by Muslim jurists, theologians, and philosophers. The esoteric interpretation has contributed to developing the idea that the Qur'an has a deeper and more inward meaning that can only be revealed by those who undergo the mystical experience (*ma'rifah*).⁶⁷

5. *The Sources and Methods of Fayḍ al-Raḥmān*

One of important issues in the discourse of the epistemology of Qur'anic interpretation concerns the sources of interpretation or the roots of thought on which a text like *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* is based. In this regard, *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* is based on two categories of sources: primary and secondary. Its primary source is, of course, the Qur'an itself. The Qur'an's coherence then should be taken into account. Ṣāliḥ Darat frequently interprets one verse on the basis of another, particularly if adjacent. For example, in interpreting Qur'an, 2: 2 ("this the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah")⁶⁸, Ṣāliḥ Darat links it with the next verse: Qur'an, 2: 3 that who fear Allah (*muttaqīn*) is those who believe in the unseen (*ghāib*), performing prayers, and spending out of prosperity that God has provided for them.⁶⁹

Generally, many *ulamas* contend that the concept of *muttaqīn* in the conventional sense means those who keep themselves from God's punishments, obey His commands, and avoid His prohibitions. But, Ṣāliḥ Darat further elucidates that there are three levels of *muttaqīn*. First, the *'awām*, are those who keep themselves from idolatry and anything that can lead them to eternal punishment hell. Second, the *keḥanwās*, those who avoid any kind of sin and obey God's commands inwardly and outwardly. Third, *keḥanwās al-keḥanwās*, those who clean their heart and *sirr*⁷⁰ from

⁶⁷ Farid Esack, *The Qur'an: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2002), p. 134.

⁶⁸ Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'ān*, p. 2.

⁶⁹ Darat, *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān fī Tarjamat Kalām Mālik al-Dayyān*, 1, p. 17.

⁷⁰ According to Abdul Qāsim al-Qushairy, *sirr* is a part of heart, one of media to attain the gnostic experience of divinity (*ma'rifah*). There are three media to attain

anything that causes ignorance to God.⁷¹ In my viewpoint, Ṣāliḥ Darat's mode of thinking resembles that of al-Ghazālī. This reflects a sociological perspective in the sense that he attempts to contextualize the concept of *muttaqīn* in accordance with his contemporary. He realizes that Muslims have various degrees in terms of obeying God's commands, depending on the degree of their respective faith and spirituality.

Another primary source of *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* is the Prophet's ḥadīth. For example, in interpreting Qur'an, 2: 110, Ṣāliḥ Darat contends that people of faith (*mu'min*) should perform prayers and zakat. They should do righteous deeds before they pass away, such as *ṣadaqah* (giving) and *waqf*. According to Ṣāliḥ Darat, the real wealth of a faithful person is wealth that has been distributed in the way of God, while the rest is for his/her heirs.⁷² In this regard, Ṣāliḥ Darat quotes the following ḥadīth:

قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَتَيْكُمْ مَالٌ وَارِثُهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ مَالِهِ قَالُوا
يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا مِنَّا أَحَدٌ إِلَّا مَالُهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ فَإِنَّ مَالَهُ مَا قَدَّمَ وَمَالٌ وَارِثُهُ
مَا أَخَّرَ.⁷³

The Prophet asks, "Who among you love your heir's wealth more than yours?" They (the prophet's companions) answers, "all of us love our wealth more". The Prophet the says, "a faithful person's wealth is something that has been distributed in the way of God, while his/ her heir's wealth is something that hasn't". (Narrated by Bukhārī).

Meanwhile, the secondary sources of *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* beyond the Qur'an and ḥadīth include the opinions of the Prophet's companions, successors, and traditional Muslim exegetes. Ṣāliḥ Darat preserves the traditional method of transmitting and transforming Islamic knowledge (*isnād*) in the field of Qur'anic exegesis. He still refers to traditional-

ma'rifah. First, qalb (hearth) which is for knowing God's attributes. Second, ruh (soul) which is for loving God. Third, sirr which is for "seeing" God. See: 'Abd al-Karim ibn Hawazin Qushayri, *al-Risālah al-Qushairiyah fī 'Ilmi al-Taṣawwuf* (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-'Asriyah, 2001); Harun Nasution, *Falsafat dan Mistisisme dalam Islam* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1999).

⁷¹ Ṣāliḥ Darat, *Hidāyat al-Raḥmān fī Tarjamat Tafṣīr al-Qur'ān ilā al-Lughah al-Jānīyah al-Muqtaṭaf min Tafṣīr Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* (Egypt: Maṭba'ah Muṣṭafa al-Bab al-Ḥalabi, 1935), p. 17.

⁷² Darat, *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān fī Tarjamat Kalām Mālik al-Dayyān*, 1, p. 228.

⁷³ See: al-Bukhārī, "Ṣāḥīḥ Bukhārī", *al-Maktabah al-Shāmilah*, vol. XX, 2nd edition (Riyadh: Mu'assasat al-Maktabah al-Shāmilah, 2011), p. 72.

Qur'anic exegesis, such as *Mafāṭiḥ al-Ghāib* by Fakhrud-dīn al-Rāzī⁷⁴, *Jalālain* by al-Maḥallī and al-Suyūṭī⁷⁵, al-Ghazālī's interpretations⁷⁶, *Lubāb al-Ta'wīl* by al-Khāzin.⁷⁷ But, Ṣāliḥ Darat does not explicitly mention those sources.

Ṣāliḥ Darat concedes that his *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* does not only represent his interpretations, but also provides traditional Muslim exegetes' interpretations. In my viewpoint, this signifies two important things of the tradition of Nusantara-Qur'anic exegesis. First, it shows the academic integrity of writing on Qur'anic exegesis. Second, it reflects the humble attitude that is one of the main aspects of the character of Muslim *ulama*. *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* also reflects a transformation of knowledge reflecting elements of Javanese culture.

In terms of content, it is true that *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* does not interpret the Qur'an completely. But, to refer to a work as a Qur'anic-exegetical work does not necessarily mean that the whole Qur'an is interpreted. The Prophet himself even did not interpret the Qur'an in its entirety.⁷⁸ In this regard, Ṣāliḥ Darat only finished his exegesis of several parts of the Qur'an, from al-Fāṭiḥah to al-Nisā' and he died before finishing more.

⁷⁴ He is Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad Ibn 'Umar Ibn al-Ḥasan Ibn Husain al-Taimy. He is a medieval-Sunni theologian who wrote numerous books on theology, Qur'anic exegesis, and philosophy. See: Fakhrud-dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafāṭiḥ al-Ghāib* (Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath, 2010).

⁷⁵ *Jalālain* is very popular at many Indonesia pesantrens. It can be categorized as a global interpretation (ijmālī) in terms of its method and a rational interpretation (al-ra'y) in terms of its source of interpretation. It provides accounts of the Prophet, companions, successors, and pre-Islamic religions (*isrā'iliyyat*). See: Jalaluddin al-Mahalli and Jalaluddin al-Suyuti, *Jalālain* (Cairo: Dar al-Ḥadith, 2000).

⁷⁶ Al-Ghazālī's interpretations can be seen in some of his works such as, *Iḥyā' Ulūm al-Dīn*, *Mukāshafah al-Qulūb*, and *Jawharat al-Qur'ān*. Abdurrahman al-Jami in his *Nafaḥat al-Uns* contended that a manuscript entitled *Yaqūṭ al-Ta'wīl* that refers to Al-Ghazālī's interpretations have been found. It consists of forty volumes. Abdul Qādir al-Idrūsi in his *Ta'rīf al-Iḥyā' bi Faḍā'il al-Iḥyā'* contended that the title of al-Ghazālī's Qur'anic-exegetical book is *Yaqūṭ al-Ta'wīl fī al-Tafsīr*. For further information, see Muḥammad Rayhan, *Tafsīr al-Imām al-Ghazālī* (Egypt: Dar al-Salām bi al-Ta'awūn ma'a Mu'assasat al-Buḥūth wa al-Dirāsāt al-Ilmiyyah, 2009).

⁷⁷ Its complete title is *Lubāb al-Ta'wīl fī Ma'āni al-Tanzīl*. See: 'Alauddīn 'Alī Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Ibrāhīm, *Lubāb al-ta'wīl fī ma'ānī al-tanzīl* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutūb al-Ilmiyyah, 1994).

⁷⁸ Muḥammad Ḥusain al-Dhahabi, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1976), p. 51.

Many Muslim scholars have also done the same thing, i.e. interpreting the Qur'an incompletely, such as *Tafsīr Juz 'Amma* by Muḥammad Abduh, *Tafsīr Sūrat al-Kahfi* by Hamzah al-Fansuri, *Tafsīr Sūrat Yāsin* by Bisri Mustofa, and *Tafsīr Juz 'Amma for Kids* by Abdul Mustaqim.⁷⁹

Furthermore, the method Ṣāliḥ Darat employed in writing his *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* is the analytical method (*taḥlīlī*). He analyses various aspects of Qur'anic verses: linguistic structure, the occasion of revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), coherence (*munāsabah*), wisdom, moral ideals, laws, and inner meanings. From the perspective of traditional-Qur'anic hermeneutics, there are four types of method for interpreting the Qur'an.⁸⁰ First, *ijmālī* (the global method) explains Qur'anic verses globally. It only explains major messages of Qur'anic verses and does not interpret them in technical terms, as in the science of Qur'an (*ulūm al-Qur'ān*). Second, *taḥlīlī* (the analytical method) interprets the Qur'an analytically. It analyses some aspects of Qur'anic verses, such as the occasion of revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), coherence (*munāsabah*), and rhetoric (*balāghah*). Third, in *muqārīn* (the comparative method), Qur'anic verses are interpreted by inter-textually comparing the Qur'an and ḥadīth, the Qur'an and other scriptures, and some Qur'anic interpretations. Fourth, *maḥḍū'i* (the thematic method) interprets the Qur'an by pointing out a particular theme, collecting relational verses, and then explaining them semantically. It is aimed at comprehensively understanding a Qur'anic worldview on a particular issue.

In detail, the following are the analytical and technical methods of interpretation used by Ṣāliḥ Darat in *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān*:

- Ṣāliḥ Darat presents an introduction to each Qur'anic chapter in which he explains the period of Qur'anic revelation: those revealed in Mecca (*makkīyah*) and those revealed in Medina (*madāniyyah*). In this regard, he employs the traditional theory of Qur'anic revelation period based on the Islamic *ḥijrah*, to determine in what period a particular Qur'anic chapter should be classified. Ṣāliḥ Darat also explains the general content of each chapter.
- Ṣāliḥ Darat interprets verses one by one, without mentioning the

⁷⁹ Abdul Mustaqim, *Tafsīr Juz 'Amma for Kids* (Yogyakarta: Madania Kids, 2010).

⁸⁰ Abdul Mustaqim, *Metode Penelitian al-Qur'an dan Tafsīr* (Yogyakarta: Idea Press, 2014).

number. Each Qur'anic verse is written within a striped box.

- Şāliḥ Darat subsequently explains his interpretations below the interpreted verse in Javanese and sometimes in Arabic. All of his interpretations are written in Arabic-*pegon* script.
- In his interpretations, Şāliḥ Darat sometimes explains the occasion of Qur'anic revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), Qur'anic coherence (*munāsabah*), and opinions of traditional Muslim exegetes, though he doesn't mention their names.
- Finally, Şāliḥ Darat explains the esoteric meaning (*al-ma'nā al-ishārī*) of Qur'anic verses.

For example, in interpreting Qur'an, 2: 219, by taking into consideration its socio-historical context, Şāliḥ Darat acknowledges that alcoholic drinks (*khamr*) is forbidden in Islam. Though *khamr* might be beneficial to some extents, its harm is much more than its benefit.⁸¹ Şāliḥ Darat subsequently explains the esoteric meaning of the verse. According to Şāliḥ Darat, the term *khamr* in the verse has two meanings. First, physically, *khamr* is a drink made of liquid derived from grapes or date palms. Second, esoterically, *khamr* refers to desire, lust, ignorance, and hedonism. Şāliḥ Darat argues that like the physical *khamr*, the esoteric *khamr* is forbidden (*harām*), because both share the similar characteristic, *i.e.* if the former makes a person drunk, the latter is a barrier to reaching God (*nuṣūl*).⁸²

6. The Benchmark of Validity of Interpretation

How can an esoteric interpretation be verified? How knowledge gained from the spiritual experience is justified? Some Muslim scholars oppose the esoteric interpretation, particularly Sufis' interpretation, as it is subjective and highly immeasurable. Besides, in practice, some Sufi esoteric interpretations are viewed as ideological and/or deviant. Accordingly, traditional Muslim scholars establish benchmarks from which the esoteric interpretation is verified. First, the esoteric interpretation must not contrary to the textual meaning (*al-ma'nā al-ẓāhir*) of Qur'anic verse. Second, its meaning must be inherently justifiable. Third, the relation between textual and esoteric meaning of a particular

⁸¹ Darat, *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān fī Tarjamat Kalām Mālik al-Dayyān*, 1, p. 394.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 1, p. 396.

Qur'anic word has to be maintained.⁸³ Forth, it is not justifiable to neglect the textual meaning of the Qur'an and claim that the esoteric meaning is the only meaning intended by God. Fifth, the esoteric interpretation must not in contrary with sharia and rationality. Sixth, it has to be supported by other Islamic arguments.⁸⁴

Nevertheless, I would argue that those benchmarks are irrelevant for measuring the validity of Ṣāliḥ Darat's esoteric interpretations. Ṣāliḥ Darat himself was well-known as a Muslim jurist (*fāqih*) who was deeply rooted in Shafite School of law. Besides, as explained above, he insists that an interpreter should acknowledge the textual meaning before explaining the esoteric meaning. According to Ṣāliḥ Darat, it is insufficient to interpret the Qur'an if one just focuses on discerning its textual meaning. One should also reveal its esoteric meaning to reach a deeper understanding. But, the esoteric meaning should not be in contrary with the textual meaning. Hence, Ṣāliḥ Darat's esoteric interpretations are not in contrary with those benchmarks.

For example, in interpreting Qur'an, 5: 6 on the Islamic prayer (*ṣalāt*), Ṣāliḥ Darat acknowledges its legal meaning from the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence, but he further explains its deeper meaning. According to Ṣāliḥ Darat, there are two typologies of people performing prayers: 'ābidīn (worshippers) who perform prayers based on the Islamic law and 'arīfīn (Gnostics) who grasp the prayer's moral messages and inner dimension of sharia. When a Muslim performs prayer, for example, he/she has to bow down, while realizing his/her weakness before God, the Almighty.⁸⁵ This signifies a moral message that one is not allowed to be arrogant, on one hand, and demanded to be humble, on the other hand.

D. Concluding Remarks

Having explained the epistemology of Ṣāliḥ Darat's *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān*, we can conclude with the following remarks. Not only does *Fayḍ al-*

⁸³ Mannā Khalīl al-Qaṭṭān, *Mabāḥiṭh fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1974), pp. 307–8.

⁸⁴ Khālid Abdurrahmān al-'Ak, *Uṣūl al-Taḥsīn wa Qawā'iduhū* (Beirut: Dar al-Nafā'is, 1986), p. 208.

⁸⁵ Ṣāliḥ Darat, *Laṭā'if al-Ṭahārah wa Asrār al-Ṣalāh* (Semarang: Toha Putra, 1893), pp. 22–3.

Raḥmān acknowledge the textual meaning of the Qur'an, it also discerns its esoteric meaning in favour of gaining inner meanings of the text. This is based on the assumption that the Qur'an contains both outward (*al-ma'nā al-ẓāhir*) and inward meaning (*al-ma'nā al-bāṭin*). Written in the Arabic-*pegon* script, Ṣāliḥ Darat's *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* is a manifestation of vernacularizing the Qur'an that reflects Javanese cultural elements. On one hand, the use of Arabic-*pegon* script reflects the spirit of opposition to Dutch colonialism which required the use of the Latin alphabet. On the other hand, this shows Ṣāliḥ Darat's self-confident attitude that a Qur'anic-exegetical work need not necessarily be written in Arabic. Considering Ṣāliḥ Darat's Javanese cultural basis, *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* is relevant to its contemporaries, as its objective is that the Javanese could comprehend the meaning of the Qur'an.

The basic structure of *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān*'s epistemology can be seen from its sources and methods of interpretation. In terms of the sources of interpretation, Ṣāliḥ Darat refers to the traditional sources of interpretations: interpreting the Qur'an through the Qur'an, *ḥadīth*, and opinions of the traditional exegetes, such as al-Ghazālī, al-Suyūṭī, and al-Khāzin—though Ṣāliḥ Darat does not mention their names. In terms of the method of interpretation, Ṣāliḥ Darat employs the traditional-analytical method (*taḥlīl*) in interpreting the Qur'an, which takes into account the Qur'anic coherence (*munāsabah*), rhetoric (*balaghah*), linguistic structure, and the context of revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*). Distinguishably, Ṣāliḥ Darat explains the esoteric meaning (*al-ma'nā al-ishārī*) of Qur'anic verses by analogizing it with the textual meaning (*qiyas 'irfānī*).

Ṣāliḥ Darat's *Fayḍ al-Raḥmān* can be verified from the traditional benchmarks of esoteric interpretation (*al-tafsīr al-ishārī*). First, there is no claim that the esoteric meaning is the only meaning intended by God. Second, in Ṣāliḥ Darat's view, both the textual and esoteric meaning are not positioned in a binary opposition. Accordingly, he insists that an interpreter should acknowledge the textual meaning before revealing the esoteric meaning. Third, there is no any indication that Ṣāliḥ Darat's interpretations are against the Islamic law (*sharia*). By contrast, Ṣāliḥ Darat attempts to bridge between the outer (*sharia*) and inner (*ḥaqīqah*) dimension of Islam. This signifies that he is influenced by al-Ghazālī's thoughts.

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