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Sufism Discourse On Imam Al Shatibi's Maqashid Reasoning Paradigm

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Abstract

Sufism as the spiritual treasure of Islam is often debated regarding its understanding within the framework of sharia. The maqasid (objectives) paradigm of rational thought by Imam Al-Shatibi, which emphasizes the purposes and wisdom behind Islamic laws, provides a valuable perspective. The purpose of this writing is to explore Sufism through the maqasid paradigm to ensure its conformity with the principles of sharia. The method used is a literature review and critical analysis of Sufi principles such as makrifat (gnosis), tazkiyat an-nafs (self-purification), and zuhd (asceticism) through the lens of maqasid. The research results show that maqasid serves as a solid foundation for Sufism to provide profound substantive meaning and prevent deviations. Maqasid also provides a framework for evaluating Sufi practices and their contextualization in modern life without sacrificing its core values. In conclusion, Al-Shatibi's maqasid paradigm ensures that Sufism is not only a profound spiritual practice but is also in line with Islamic sharia, enriching the spiritual dimension, and addressing the modern human need for authentic spirituality with a way of life in accordance with the objectives of sharia.

Keywords: *Sufism, Maqashid Syari'ah , Imam Al Shatibi , Spirituality, Contextualization*

Abstrak

Sufisme sebagai khazanah spiritual Islam seringkali menjadi perdebatan terkait pemahamannya dalam kerangka syariat. Paradigma nalar maqashid Imam Al Shatibi yang menekankan tujuan dan hikmah di balik hukum Islam memberikan perspektif berharga. Tujuan penulisan ini adalah mengeksplorasi sufisme dalam paradigma maqashid untuk memastikan kesesuaiannya dengan prinsip syariat. Metode yang digunakan adalah kajian literatur dan analisis kritis terhadap prinsip-prinsip sufisme seperti makrifat, tazkiyat an-nafs, dan zuhud dengan menggunakan kacamata maqashid. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa maqashid menjadi pijakan kokoh bagi sufisme untuk memberi makna mendalam secara substantif dan mencegah penyimpangan. Maqashid juga memberikan kerangka evaluasi praktik sufisme dan kontekstualisasinya dalam kehidupan modern tanpa mengorbankan nilai utamanya. Kesimpulannya, paradigma maqashid Al Shatibi memastikan sufisme tidak hanya praktik spiritual mendalam tetapi sejalan dengan syariat Islam, memperkaya dimensi spiritualitas, dan menjawab kebutuhan manusia modern akan spiritualitas autentik dengan pedoman hidup sesuai tujuan syariat.

Kata Kunci: *Sufisme, Maqashid Syari'ah , Imam Al Shatibi , Spiritualitas, Kontekstualisasi*

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مستخلص

يُعدّ التصوف، بوصفه كنزاً روحياً للإسلام، موضوعَ جدلٍ متكرر فيما يتعلق بفهمه ضمن إطار الشريعة. ويقدم نموذج العقل المقاصدي للإمام الشاطبي، الذي يركز على الغاية والحكمة وراء الشريعة الإسلامية، منظوراً قيّماً في هذا الصدد. يهدف هذا البحث إلى استكشاف التصوف في إطار النموذج المقاصدي لضمان توافقه مع مبادئ الشريعة. المنهجية المستخدمة هي مراجعة الأدبيات والتحليل النقدي لمبادئ التصوف مثل المعرفة وتزكية النفس والزهد باستخدام عدسة المقاصد. تُظهر نتائج الدراسة أن المقاصد تشكل قاعدة صلبة للتصوف لإعطائه معنى عميقاً جوهرياً ومنع الانحرافات. كما توفر المقاصد إطاراً لتقييم ممارسة التصوف وتأصيله في الحياة المعاصرة دون التضحية بقيمه الأساسية. في الختام، يضمن نموذج مقاصد الشاطبي أن التصوف ليس مجرد ممارسة روحية عميقة فحسب، بل يتماشى مع الشريعة الإسلامية، ويُثري البُعد الروحي، ويلبي احتياجات الإنسان المعاصر للروحانية الأصيلة مع إرشادات للعيش وفقاً لأهداف الشريعة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التصوف، مقاصد الشريعة، الإمام الشاطبي، الروحانية، التأصيل

Introduction

Since its inception, Islam has not only offered normative teachings, but also provided ample space for the development of the spiritual dimension and Sufism(Samad dkk., 2024). Sufism has become one of the important elements in the Islamic intellectual treasury(Oakley, 2022). However, over time, debates and discourses have emerged around how to understand and practice Sufism within the framework of the actual Islamic law.

One of the leading figures who made significant contributions in interpreting and harmonizing Sufism with the principles of Islamic Shari'ah was Imam Al Shatibi(2004, حسين). A great scholar of the 8th century Hijri, Al Shatibi is known for his concept of maqashid shari'ah, which emphasizes the importance of understanding the purpose and wisdom behind Islamic law. There is no doubt that Imam Al Shatibi, who is characterized by his vision of a comprehensive, multidimensional and purposeful Sufism discourse, has based his vision on a foundation that will provide him with adequate knowledge and confidence in the study of Sufism discourse analysis and the reconstruction of its unstable structures. As such, he actually has sufficient knowledge and confidence to analyze the discourse of Sufism, sort out its fundamental elements, and revise some of its rules that are claimed to be factually arbitrary. More important than that is how Islamic ethics can be perfectly realized so as to

be able to give birth to a contemporary consciousness entity that contributes to the reformulation of Islamic religiosity and spirituality that is compatible with ongoing social changes. That is why aspects of religious experience must continue to be enriched through spirituality(Suraiya dkk., 2019). Only the packaging pattern needs to be touched by creative imagination that makes contemporary religious needs and shari'a standards as a reference. This is because there is a kind of materialistic relationship today that is so hegemonic and is the only hedonism factor that is dominant among modern society. The result is a decrease in the level of religious commitment and excessive degradation of morality. So this research wants to assess the extent to which the main pillars of Imam Al Shatibi's thesis on sorting out the discourse of Sufism, in relation to criticism of the origins of theoretical origins and practical implementation, which seems still very much needed to oversee ethical consistency in modern life.

So in that context, a contestative debate arose between various circles of fuqaha and Sufism practitioners, giving birth to pejorative assessments and stigmas against Sufism practices which were often considered contrary to the principles of shari'a which were claimed to be deviant(2023, إبراهيم& مقدسي). But on the other hand, Sufism also has a deep spiritual dimension and offers a more substantive approach in understanding and practicing Islamic teachings. Therefore, the study of how the practice of Sufism is understood by the maqashid ushuly framework of reasoning that raises the discipline of fiqh in the context of Imam Al Shatibi's perspective becomes very relevant to be examined in depth. Of course, by understanding the purpose and wisdom behind Islamic law, the red thread between Sufism and the principles of sharia which actually complement and enrich each other will be easily engineered and mapped.

In addition to examining Sufism in the traditional context, this research will also look at the growing phenomenon of modern mysticism in contemporary society. This modern mysticism is a manifestation of the human need for spirituality and the search for meaning in an increasingly complex and dynamic life(Azizah & Jannah, 2022). This phenomenon of modern mysticism can be found in various forms, such as new spiritual movements, meditation practices, self-development, and the search for life wisdom through non-conventional paths(Hammer, 2020). While some of these may look different from traditional Sufism, they essentially share the commonality of seeking a closer relationship with the Almighty and finding inner peace.

In this regard, Imam Al Shatibi's maqashid principles can provide a valuable perspective in understanding and evaluating this phenomenon of modern mysticism. By

examining the purpose and wisdom behind Islamic law, the positive and negative aspects of modern mysticism (read: neo-sufism) can be identified easily, and can even be transformed into offering alternative solutions that are more authentic and in accordance with the true teachings of Islam.

Departing from the above reality, this research tries to propose several problem formulations that will be thoroughly studied. First, how is the discourse of Sufism in Imam Al Shatibi's maqashid paradigm? Second, how does Al Shatibi criticize Sufism? Third, Why is Imam Al Shatibi's maqashid paradigm relevant to the construction of modern Sufism? Thus, the entire search for adequate answers will be fully pursued to analyze the deepest meaning of all possible answers as a solution offer.

Through an inductive approach, this research will empirically observe the phenomenon of modern mysticism, then analyze it using Imam Al Shatibi's maqashid framework. In this way, a deeper understanding of how Sufism can be an authentic solution and in accordance with the principles of Islamic law in answering the spiritual needs of modern humans can be obtained.

Research Methodology

This research shall explore how the Sufi approach grounded in Imam Al-Shatibi's maqashid reasoning can serve as a bridge connecting the spiritual needs of modern humanity with the eternal teachings of Islam. Thus, we can provide more comprehensive and relevant responses for contemporary society seeking meaning and spirituality in their lives.

Through an inductive approach, this research will empirically observe the phenomenon of modern mysticism, subsequently analysing it through the framework of Imam Al-Shatibi's maqashid reasoning. In this manner, a deeper understanding can be obtained regarding how Sufism might serve as an authentic solution that aligns with the principles of Islamic law in addressing the spiritual needs of modern humanity.

This research will employ an inductive approach, commencing with the observation of Sufi phenomena and practices developing within society, then analysing them through the lens of Imam Al-Shatibi's maqashid reasoning. The expectation is the emergence of a more comprehensive understanding of how Sufism can be harmoniously and sustainably integrated with the principles of Islamic law.

Result and Discussion

A. Sufism Discourse in Imam Al Shatibi's Maqashid Reasoning Paradigm

Sufism is one of the problems categorized by Al Shatibi as an important part of his brilliant work of thought. This can be seen from the quantity of discussions that are quite frequent, although many are scattered in various studies. The urgency of Sufism for Al Shatibi, at least, rests on several factors; first, little Al Shatibi was once very familiar with the teachings of Sufism obtained from his grandfather who was known as a muqri' kabir, through his contact with the Shadziliyyah order which then inherited a fairly deep knowledge of a Sufistic work entitled "*al haqaiq wa al raqaiq fi al tasawwuf*" (*فقه التصوف.pdf*, t.t.). This intersection seems to have a significant impact in the context of Al Shatibi's attitude towards the Sufi religious experience. That is why Al Shatibi in his two works, *Al Muwafaqat* and *Al I'tisham*, positions the study of Sufism specifically. More than that, Al Shatibi did not hesitate to defend the early generation Sufi figures with their various ideas about ethical systems, suluk, education and ta'dib. In addition, he also considers that only Sunni Sufism is truly representative of offering the truth in its manhaj and practice. That is why Al Shatibi dismissed the bathiniyyah group from the framework of Islamic Sufism. Third, for Al Shatibi, the discourse of Sufism is more or less exactly the discourse of fiqh whose plus or minus indicators are returned to the practical context. So as the character of implementation, wrong or right is a matter of course, in accordance with the provisions that apply to all categories of practice-worship that is born from a mukallaf. From this it can be asserted that the similarity between fiqh and Sufism lies in the system of professional and proportional governance of human potential faculties; the former manages the outward potential, while the latter takes care of the inner potential. In the end, all display a good and correct way of religion, in accordance with the methods and understandings that are possible (read: fiqh). Fourth, while the stressing of Al Shatibi's thought is centered on the theoretical and conceptual work of shari'a, the actual theory and/or concept built in Sufism is similar to the theoretical discourse that applies to the discipline of fiqh with various facts of differences of opinion and the flow behind it. Therefore, the centrist role of Sufism in influencing a large group of people should not be underestimated. Its manifestation is found in the spread of a number of mu'tabarah tariqahs that have established their power in the context of the practice of inner worship. That is why as far as the discourse of Sufism intersects with the study of abstract thought, it will intrinsically be part of Al Shatibi's attention.

Even though the discourse of sufism is similar to fiqh, which in fact began to form its scientific pillars in line with the development of Muslim societies that are increasingly progressive, it is actually never devoid of criticism that sues. So as a start, it is necessary to project the sikan of this ummah towards Sufism in general, as follows(المالكي, t.t.); first, the

traditional-extreme who claims Sufism as the only path of goodness that represents the best and true path of guidance. Therefore, those who take this path are classified as the most typical class of human beings. This is due to his one-sided claim that recognizes the existence of a special shari'at whose maqam is higher than the general shari'a intended for the general public (*ummah*). Second, conservative-radicals who accuse Sufism, with all the various meanings it contains, of being heretic. Therefore, it needs to be torn down. The reason is, Sufism from the point of view of manhaj, is considered a deviation from the shari'a. For Al Shatibi, the position of the two groups is quite risky, being on the outer line of objectivity which sometimes has the potential to remove it from a moderate religious attitude. Most importantly, it is not a matter of claiming over the outside that can sometimes be positive or negative, but it is precisely the problem of interpretation (*tafsir*) and understanding (*fiqh*) that is developed in it (essence and expression) that is more urgent, that to what extent it is in accordance with the manhaj shari'at, that should then be used as a reference to control good or bad, right or wrong, and so on. Third, the moderate-eclectic group that tries to place the discourse of Sufism on the scales of shara'. Thus, pejorative claims over something absolutely (without being accompanied by adequate objective analysis) are not part of wisdom. Moreover, the harm will be greater than the benefits. That is why scientific studies are needed to examine everything, starting from the real reality. This is where Al Shatibi's significance finds its vitality. He, as a figure who from an early age received a touch of Sufism learning, is often considered a pioneer in the context of these studies. For this reason, his analysis in some of his research records is scattered between acceptance, rejection, criticism, appreciation, and even defense of the principles of Sufism, its understanding and teachings, as well as its figures and schools. Simply put, Al Shatibi assumes that the discourse of Sufism is a complexity of values that cannot be assessed simply through a partial approach in the form of one-sided rejection - as is done by some other groups -, without conducting a reconstructive study of the foundations, methods, and substance of Sufism which implies symbols of goodness that should be partitioned from the opposite situation. Therefore, the reference-value standard built by Al Shatibi is built on the basis of two things; first, the preference of shara', both binding universal values (*al kulliyyah*) and partial values (*al juziyyah*), where according to him, no matter how sophisticated the discourse of Sufism must be fenced by the limits of sharia scales which are the only arbitration tool to determine the reference of al haq from al bathil. Second, maqashid shari'ah which can be likened to the legal substance of the concept of shari'ah in general. So any value system that is implemented

into legal culture, its conformity with the basis of its legal substance must have high validity that can be verified as representing goodness, beauty, and truth.

From here it can be seen that the discourse of Sufism in the map of Al Shatibi's study occupies one of the important pillars that he considers as an implementative religious pattern of shari'ah. Therefore, its position will be similar to other religious means, where it applies to the claim of objective assessment on behalf of the substance of shari'ah. Except that, when Sufism becomes one of the ways to translate the discourse of shari'ah, then it becomes a key element in Al-Shatibi's theorization project that seeks the safest way to rehabilitate the discourse of Sufism by establishing its legitimacy and eliminating suspicion against it, which can only be achieved after uniting it with the substance of shari'ah and warning the beginning of Sufism's slippage towards the path of heresy that has limited shari'ah. So what are the pillars on which Al-Shatibi's thesis is based to revitalize the Sufi experience?

B. Revitalization of Positive Sufistic Experience in Al Shatibi's Ideas

Of course, Al Shatibi with the idea of revitalizing his sufistic experience is not initiating a new school of Sufism like what has been done by Al Bustami, Ibn Araby and Al Hallaj, or the opposite possibility, is deconstructing the teachings of Sufism by tearing down the principle building, but only just shifting a few grains of dust that are attached unnaturally to the first piece of Sufi experience. Because for him, Sufism historically rowed its preliminary authority precisely in the early episodes of its brilliant development. That is why Al Shatibi in his ideas tries to seek a new reinterpretation of the main views of genuine Sunni Sufism. More than that, he also tried to spread his invitation to renew the system of theoretical thinking and praxis, so that from there it was hoped that a kind of original Sufistic awareness would emerge that was completely free from heretic values in all its aspects. Therefore, his idea is founded on several fundamental concepts, as follows:

The first is that Sufism derives its legitimacy and most important foundations from the revelation of the Qur'an and Sunnah(Ridha, 2021), as well as the experiences of the Companions, and the theories of the early Sufis, especially those of the Taj al-Arifin figure, Imam al-Junayd, whose teachings are characterized by the following core principles:

a. The call to trust and good deeds. Therefore, the Sufism defended by Al Shatibi is a practical, ethical, educative Sufism, and not a hired Sufism (*irtizaqy*), which is based on dhikr, mujahadah, good deeds, and tawakkal, and away from theosophical theories that are too abstract(Murtaza dkk., 2022).

b. Encouraging the human spirit to be moderate and objective, which means not indulging in irrational cults and/or worship that leads to monasticism (*ar rahbaniyyah*), or absolute disregard for shari'ah obligations.
c. Strive to ensure that any law is deduced ijtihadi from the Qur'an and Sunnah. Therefore, the theory of revelation (*al mukasyafah*) and *karamah* should not be taken into account as a major consideration in the process of determining shari'ah law, especially in aspects related to the categories of forbidden or unlawful. This is because it would offer an absurd legitimization of the deictic legitimacy of the mediator. This kind of belief is usually accompanied by a cultic process guaranteed by the theory of holiness and infallibility (*ishmah*) which increasingly leads him to innovate in the context of speech and actions that exceed the provisions of shari'ah.

In this regard Al Shatibi often quotes the statements of the early generation Sufis who relied on the Qur'an and Sunnah for their inspiration. There are more than forty-nine texts that he quotes in al-I'tisam, including some of the following(2007, الشاطبي):

Imam Al-Junaid said: "Whoever does not memorize the Qur'an and write traditions should not be followed in this matter because our knowledge is bound to the Qur'an and Sunnah." Ibrahim bin Adham said: "The fact that a supplication is not accepted may be due to one's detachment from the Qur'an and Sunnah." Dzun Nun al-Misri said: "There are six reasons why people become corrupt, one of which is because they reject the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)." Abu Ali Al-Juzjani also said: "Some of the signs of a servant's happiness are ease in performing obedience, conforming to the Sunnah, associating with the righteous, behaving well towards others, doing good to the creatures, caring for the people, and always paying attention to time." Abu Al-Husain Al-Warraq quotes that: "A servant will not attain (the pleasure of) Allah except through Allah, and in accordance with Allah's beloved in His laws." And Abu Umar Az-Zujaji said: "A sound mind is one that likes what it likes and hates what is prescribed by sharee'ah." Sahl Al-Tustari also commented that: "Our principles consist of seven things: adhering to the Book of Allah, following the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah, eating lawful food, refraining from harming others, avoiding sin, repenting, and fulfilling all rights." Then Abu Al-Husayn Al-Nuri chimed in to say that: "If you see someone who claims to have a special relationship with Allah beyond the limits of the Shari'ah, then do not approach him." Abu Bakr Al-Tamastani said: "This path is clear, and the Book and Sunnah are among us, and the superiority of the Companions (ra) is known because of their superiority in Hijrah and

accompanying the Messenger of Allah (saws).” Then Abu Al-Qasim Al-Nasrabadhi quoted that: “The basic principle of Sufism is adherence to the Book and the Sunnah, and abandoning lust and innovation.”

Except that, there are still many other texts that confirm that the source of law used by the early Sufis was the Book and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad. So Al Shatibi is often considered part of a group of scholars who seek to revitalize Islamic values that have been distorted. In a statement, he said: “Allah has made a group of His servants to explore the content of the Shari'ah laws in the Book and the Sunnah, in accordance with what was done by the early people who not only rejected heresy but criticized the arguments of the devotees of lust so that it became clear which are the true defenders of truth from the downloaders of lust(2007, الشاطبي).”

The second landscape is spiritual education. The goal of Sufism is oriented towards spiritual strengthening, purification of the soul (*tazkiyah*) (Subandi dkk., 2022), self-restraint from being overly ambitious in worldly matters, and cleansing of the heart (*tashfiah*). This is achieved partly by abandoning bad morality, avoiding the urges of lust, and fulfilling all obligations to Allah and His Messenger. Thus, Sufism is essentially a teaching about the willingness to serve God in the context of fulfilling noble character traits.

Moreover, Sufism also presupposes a significant sacrifice to prioritize the benefits of the afterlife over worldly interests by performing many good deeds, seeking forgiveness, engaging in dhikr (remembrance of God), praying, fasting, and supplicating. Inwardly, moral concepts such as patience, steadfastness, hope, asceticism, repentance, accountability, sacrifice, and forgiveness should be intrinsically possessed by the salik (spiritual wayfarer). The instruments may vary, but the essence refers to the context of purifying the soul by relying on self-maturity in humbling all worldly adornments and luxuries, accompanied by a high level of asceticism in managing the realities of pleasure, wealth, and position. Above all is the orientation of worship and self-devotion to God within the framework of excellent service (*khidmah*).

It appears that the aspects of education, purification, and character plus spiritual development in Al-Shatibi's idea of revitalizing Sufi ethics are very prominent. This is because he truly recognizes the urgent need for the moral system of the earlier Sufis in improving the behavior of the community(Jamhari, 2019), especially after the emergence of foreign views that actually distanced it from its initial orientation. The ethics of the Sufis are then reflected in the behavior of the general public and to this day remain the most superior moral reference.

The third landscape is an evaluative foundation; that the Sufi experience is an ideal application model of Sharia discourse, where its practitioners have the possibility of being right and/or wrong equally, as with other application models of fiqh and hadith discourse. That's why if both are similar in the context of applied modeling, then - just as the pattern of fiqh application has been infected with fanaticism, stagnation, and heretical behavior throughout its history - the Sufi experience can also be exposed to similar diseases. Therefore, it is necessary to select Sufi religious experiences when they begin to show many deviations from the goals of purification, education, nurturing, and service that should be.

So, filtering Sufi experiences as done by Al-Shatibi is actually a kind of criticism based on the pattern of reconstruction and adaptation after negating foreign elements that have infiltrated and derailed Sufism from its initial functionality. This approach is clearly seen in Al-Shatibi's interactive method with the experiences of both early and later Sufi figures. Regarding this, Al-Shatibi asserts: 'Indeed, the Sufis are recognized by their extraordinarily high commitment in emulating the behavior of the righteous predecessors (*salafus shalih*) in their words and deeds fully, although of course in its subsequent development it has experienced many unnecessary distortions of thought.'

The fourth landscape is a methodological foundation. Al-Shatibi's work in critiquing the Sufi experience is essentially reconciliatory and corrective, much like Imam Malik's work in Medina. Al-Shatibi disagrees with the view that rejects Sufism and considers it a foreign doctrine rooted in Buddhism, Neoplatonism, or various other illumination philosophies. However, he also criticizes the extremist opinions within Sufi discourse that daringly elevate saints to positions higher than prophets in some cases. Instead, Al-Shatibi acknowledges Sufism as one of the paths to draw closer to Allah, similar to other paths, acceptable as long as it doesn't deviate from Sharia principles (oriented towards soul purification, educating the heart, and character formation in the context of devotion to Allah) (Farhan & Arafat, 2021).

This is why Sufism fills the void related to methods of purifying the soul, educating it, and improving its quality so that it can free itself from various destructive inner flaws such as pride, ostentation, envy, spite, disbelief, and excessive love for worldly pleasures. At the same time, the human soul is capable of attaining true knowledge of Allah (*ma'rifah*). This is where Sufism converges with the context of inner improvement - just as fiqh discourse fills other gaps related to external improvement. Ultimately, both meet in a common purpose: responsibly guiding a Muslim to achieve happiness in this world and the hereafter. Zarruq Al-Fassi affirms: "Fiqh and Sufism are like two siblings representing

Allah's laws and rights, having similar potential in terms of perfection and shortcomings. Therefore, neither is more important than the other. Instead, these two discourses should coexist, complement each other, and harmonize, rather than contradict, despite differences in subject and/or practice."

The fifth landscape is a theological orientation focusing on the systemic dimensions in Al-Shatibi's thesis on Sufi experience, including:

First, the dimension of monotheism. Al-Shatibi emphasizes the monotheistic identity of Sufis, which he believes doesn't conclusively base the process of approaching Allah through an intermediary activated by claiming authority over the short communication channel between God and His creation. Thus, Sufi practices like dhikr, wird, khalwat, and even social interactions sufficiently project the process of purifying external and internal aspects of humans to a level of consciousness that constantly turns the soul away from the ephemerality of creation (Abdullah, 2018).

This theological dimension, affirming God's holiness and oneness, greatly influences Al-Shatibi's thesis in evaluating and revitalizing the direction of Sufi religious experience. Therefore, Sufis fundamentally share the same beliefs as Ahlus Sunnah in the context of monotheism and its consequences(Arafat, 2017), rejecting concepts of infallibility and infinity of creatures that might interfere with Allah's holiness and oneness in creation, worship, and legislation. Al-Qushayri reinforces this: "Our sheikhs have built the principles of monotheism on a correct foundation, safeguarding their beliefs from heretical thoughts and behaviors. Thus, what they practice regarding monotheism, found in the salaf as-salih group, contains neither *tashbih* (anthropomorphism) nor ta'til (negation of Allah's attributes)."

Second, the ethical dimension with educational nuances, presenting a practical framework for the overall concept of Sufism as "behaving with noble morals while freeing the soul from every bond of bad morals," highlighting the centrality of Quranic moral values in the Sufi manifesto. Therefore, Sufis are known for their high levels of honesty, trustworthiness, piety, patience, reliance on God, perseverance, love, compassion, forgiveness, loyalty, and contentment in all their beliefs and practices. Without these, they would be no more special than other groups. If morality is lost in Sufis, the path of the spiritual wayfarer to God is also lost(Falach & Assya’bani, 2022). It's no wonder that Al-Shatibi continuously strives to defend Sufis from reprehensible behavior due to their elevated status.

Third, the critical evaluative dimension. Al-Shatibi's thesis generally contains a critical view of the entire main text of Sufism. Thus, the assumption of the spread of heretical behavior, which is claimed to have infiltrated (parts of) the Sufi method, can be evaluated and reformed, so that the Sufi discourse offered becomes neutral and can again perfectly fulfill its educational and ethical functions.

From this aim, Abu Ishaq directs his criticism towards the theses and data sources of Sufis, including the justification arguments used to negate accusations of being anti-Sunnah. Despite the bad image manifested in Sufi behavior during Al-Shatibi's time, usually embodied in various layers of widespread dogmatic indoctrination in Morocco and Andalusia, such as over-cultism, karamah-centrism, anti-social reality, fatalism, negative asceticism, alienation oriented towards individual ecstasy achievement, lazy asceticism, overly extreme disciplinary practices, and so on(Bellver, 2023). Al-Shatibi then positions this as an object of criticism, hoping to purify the Sufi system of conduct from fabricated uploads that have long obscured the originality of Sufi tradition that should be based on the Quran and Sunnah. Moreover, this effort implies an ongoing reconciliation between the beliefs of Ahl as-Sunnah wal Jama'ah and Sufi discourse, as well as encouraging the birth of taqrib instruments to bridge the gap between jurists and Sufis.

Fourth, the fundamental dimension that characterizes his entire thesis. Al-Shatibi seems less interested in detailed studies of debatable furu'iyyah issues. In contrast, he chooses to focus on critical studies of basic principles as the underlying framework. This approach is certainly not without purpose, but rather attempts to establish general principled references that can be used to analyze specific problems, resulting in a network of reasoned and valid arguments. Therefore, his view on Sufi discourse combs through the deepest parts of the doctrinal foundations and ethical principles of Sufism. From here, it can be understood why Al-Shatibi's resistance movement is almost entirely directed at nullifying all forms of irrelevant Sufi practices that he considers "deviant." Following Sharia rules is the main key to reaping truth and happiness(Hafiz Muhammad Masood Ahmad dkk., 2023).

In general, it can be said that the five main landscapes above are key elements used by Al-Shatibi to build his argument about the discourse of renewal towards Sufism, both in the context of thought structure and practical implementation. These foundations seem to have helped Al-Shatibi reinvest his understanding of maqasid al-shari'ah into Sufi discourse and unravel various structured complexities within it, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of religious thought mechanisms in the world of mysticism(Acim, 2022).

C. The Significance of Sufism in Imam Al-Shatibi's Maqasid-Based Reasoning for Contemporary Sufism

The renewal of Sufism, as conceived above, must certainly originate from and be rooted in Al-Shatibi's own text, in the context of reformulating contemporary Islamic views on this discourse. In essence, the map of religiosity encompasses various models of spirituality that are more or less inspired by Sufi discourse, which is one of the most integral forms of religiosity with Sharia. However, throughout its historical development, Sufi discourse has been exposed to many imbalances and deviations that have also befallen other forms of religiosity, such as the viruses of stagnation, fanaticism, over-heretical behavior, and so on. So the question that arises in Al-Shatibi's mind is: Should we allow this practice to remain in its distorted form forever? How can we transform it into a means of otherworldly investment for the benefit of Islamic da'wah?

Undoubtedly, Islam contains universal values rich in moral content that embody mercy for all creation. Therefore, this message will always interact openly with the wider society to create a flexible civilizational image for Islam. From this perspective, the introduction to Islam must focus on three main foundational concepts that support it(Saepullah, 2021): Islam, Iman, and Ihsan, which essentially describe who humans truly are, what mission they are currently carrying, for what purpose, how, and so on. That is why these three pillars of religion, especially the maqam of Ihsan, can in practice represent the most beautiful pinnacle of the noblest Islamic morals in its creed and Sharia. There are at least three underlying reasons for this:

First: One can be said to have achieved these three pillars consistently when God makes them an indicator of the perfection of one's religiosity. Second, this then guarantees its practitioner can be granted eternal happiness, both in this world and the hereafter. Third, Realizing love for Allah can be obtained by obeying His commands and prohibitions, hoping in Him, being content with His decrees and destiny, spreading goodness to His servants, loving them because of love for Him, striving hard for istiqamah (steadfastness), and cleansing the soul from the impurities of evil, ostentation, envy, arrogance, pride, and various other diseases of the heart. It is only Ihsan, which is the station of vigilance (al-muraqabah) and witnessing (al-mushahadah), that can connect the human heart to Allah with a very strong attachment, so that the soul is no longer able to struggle to commit sins, due to fear and love in one breath for Him.

When someone introduces themselves to others with this awareness, the practical effect will give birth to an extraordinary attitude of respect that sometimes has the potential

to encourage a more intense process of introducing Islam. This reasonableness especially applies because today's world is experiencing acute spiritual drought that can only be filled by Islamic spirituality. Although Sharia in its essence and expression intersects with positive law in many ways, the superiority of Sharia mainly appears in the impression of idealism that elevates legal awareness to another, more unique level, related to ethical legislation, where a Muslim is responsible for their moral behavior and obliged to realize it, as a form of worship to create balance in the universe(2023, الحمداوي). So actually, it is this principle of balance that is missing in other doctrines, thus encouraging Islam to become a civilizational demand that can save humanity.

So for the sake of this salvation mission, every Muslim citizen is required to be at a level of piety that makes them worthy of receiving this task in the context of a Sufi group with a new identity as a civilizational entity that always glorifies Sharia, follows the Sunnah, is not negligent of the etiquettes of both, and represents a group of people farthest from heretical behavior, and so on. Besides that, they are also part of the category of practicing subjects who have experienced Sufi discourse equivalently with various (moderate) Sharia arguments. Simply put, the need for Sufis now is exactly like human needs for logistical matters such as food, drink, and so on. From here, we can see how Sufis hold a very important role and social-developmental function in several aspects, as follows(Suhandi dkk., 2023):

First, as a catalyst for balance and harmony that is in line with human existential nature. Furthermore, it also functions as a provider that provides various answers to complex problems faced by humans, the majority of whom are trapped in confusion, anxiety, emptiness, and psychological obsessions that are no longer able to understand the essence of their existence and purpose in life in this world. It is not surprising that this decade is a symbolization of the victory of lust against the dominance of a good moral system. That is why its pace must be immediately confronted with efforts to re-empower noble spiritual values, so that its pattern can adorn the human soul with high spiritual purity and moral perfection.

Second, its status as a confronter has the noble task of fighting against infiltrations that have the potential to damage the consistency of Sufism, usually in the form of misleading deviations and even cornering Sufism on various ideas that are felt to be quite foreign, such as the concept of wahdatul wujud (unity of existence), the concept of hulul (incarnation), and the concept of ittihad (union). Moreover, sometimes Sufi discourse is only functioned as an outer skin that covers real evil; the practice of selling verses in the name of

worldly interests, deception coded as spiritual healing, to exploiting its worshippers to reap a little material gain through the practice of dervishism.

Third, as an agent of change that has the obligation to educate the ummah, one of which is by giving life lectures oriented towards strengthening social co-existence, appreciation for the right to be different, respect for multiculturalism culture which actually tests human leadership to be able to recognize, care for, and love each other. Moreover, the significance of Sufis is also found in several points of convergence that are linked to the interests of human resource development that necessitates dialogue instruments as its patron. Thus, the intellectual horizon of the ummah gets enough enlightenment space that helps secure itself from the arbitrary entrapment of science even against humanity, which is individualistic, positivistic, and neglectful of the philosophy of khudi (soul awareness).

So Sufism, which is presented as the savior of human civilization - as Al-Shatibi previously intended - is not something that is merely functioned as a mask for extracting worldly benefits such as power, money, prestige, and so on. Besides that, its essence and expression are also not something distortive so that it camouflages into a form of pseudo-Sufism spiritual exercise that actually increasingly drowns students in fanaticism, ignorance, dervishism, negativity, dependence, weakness, extreme powerlessness. Indeed, all such manifestos will never be able to save humanity from materialistic civilizational entities, because true Sufism must patent its originality, both in its theoretical and implementative patterns, consistently in the provisions of Sharia(Kurnaz, 2023). And unfortunately, this can only be represented by the teachings of practical Sufism that are more applicable, where its substance encourages the creation of human soul nobility, balance, and moderation of attitude that tries as much as possible to minimize the negative effects of material pleasure factors, sectarian disasters, the noise of illumination philosophy, and the sad lamentations of dervishes. This typology of Sufism is needed because in essence it is realizing a superior religious system that moves humans within the circle of responsible common sense reasoning and awakens them towards moral perfection in the context of a simple belief, easy to understand, easy to apply, and far from unclear theoretical debates. That's why a pattern of simplicity is always a picture of true belief.

Conclusion

Al-Shatibi, through his critique of the applied practices of later Sufi mystics, essentially aims to prevent misinterpretation of Sharia so that it does not fall into pseudo-deistic power that would very easily change, add, subtract, eliminate, reject, even forbid,

and/or permit the law of everything based on mere subjective views. Because if that happens, the spectrum of interpretative knowledge becomes very biased and open to anyone, for all possible genres of understanding. The impact is quite risky that the originality of a rule and its finality - as formulated by the companions and the scholars who are the heirs of the prophets - will feel blurred and sink by itself. Therefore, Al-Shatibi uploads an important postulate that can never be ignored that every action must be in harmony with the rules and provisions of Sharia.

It must also be understood that Al-Shatibi's criticism does not mean an absolute opposition to the category of Sufi experience (*al-tajribah al-sufiyyah*) as one of the ijtihadi approaches that can be valuable or otherwise, but rather limited to analyzing its essence objectively, then accepting and/or rejecting its expression as long as it does not contradict Sharia. Therefore, Al-Shatibi seems to be loyal to his reconciliatory approach; something that distinguishes his method from any critics, past or later. Moreover, Imam Al-Shatibi actually admires and even supports the discourse of Sufism, especially in its first historical development phase while calling for emulating these great Sufi figures whom he claims as "God's chosen people." But on the contrary, he also does not hesitate to strongly criticize inconsistent Sufistic practices that are enlivened by later Sufi figures which are actually claimed by their users as the most intimate means of drawing closer to Allah.

For Al-Shatibi, the centrality of Sufis is seen as quite important to fill the void of latent and manifest roles that have escaped the serious management of other experts from among fiqh scholars and theologians. So when the latter group focuses more on improving the external aspects and transcendent beliefs, the Sufis play a significant role as accomplished reformers on the no less urgent inner aspects. Although there were deviations here and there that occurred later, Al-Shatibi did not reject them outright, nor could he remain silent adopting them as taken for granted, but tried as hard as possible to improve them objectively. This becomes Al-Shatibi's priority because for him, improvement in the context of Sufi discourse means indirect improvement of the behavior of the ummah. His idea is to integrate the act of fiqh behavior into Sufi spirituality so that the movement of one's motives and intentions are well synthesized and therefore acceptable in the presence of Sharia(Anshori & Hayat, 2023). The dimension of flexibility in the application of law also depends entirely on perfect understanding, and this can only be achieved after successfully suppressing the dominance of lust so that it is more educated in the presence of Allah's commands.

So, this is Al-Shatibi's hope, connecting the moral ethos of Sufism with the firmness dimension of fiqh as its pattern. Exactly like what Imam Malik practiced in his ijtihad. Besides that, the comprehensiveness of fiqh in the perspective of Imam Hanafi, it seems, needs to be revitalized so that its essence and expression encompass all aspects of a Muslim's personality, both outward and inward, so that there is no dichotomous separation between Sharia law (fiqh) and moral ethos as its outward appearance.

Thus, the significance of modern human life's need today for Sufi experience (*al-tajribah al-sufiyyah*) according to Al-Shatibi's perspective can be accumulated into the following important points:

A. The process of purification and purification of the soul through teaching (*tarbiyah wa ta'lim*), dhikr, awrad, reading the Qur'an (*tafakkur and tadabbur*), and various other forms of worship to defeat lust is absolutely necessary, especially at a time when the spirit of materialism dominates human behavior;

B. Moral degradation (individual and social) on the factual side of human life today is really worrying, something that can only be thoroughly and clearly treated by strengthening the practice of Islamic morals as conceptualized by moderate Sufi discourse.

C. The mystical flow of Gnosticism (*kebatinan*) whose spread is massive and confusing today has made the ummah's understanding fall into blind fanaticism and/or extreme permissiveness. It is rather difficult then to simply be able to distinguish SIMPATIK Sufism from fragile pseudo-Sufism schools; something that presupposes efforts to revitalize the discourse of moderate Sufism becomes a necessity.

D. The core of Al-Shatibi's idea is the extent to which his methodology can be used to deal with the problems contained in Sufi discourse, so that the hope is to be able to bring a spiritual wayfarer to migrate continuously from one station to another higher station. That is why only through the path of Sufism, all these hopes can possibly be realized after finding their perfect convergence.

Allah knows best.

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