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## Constructing Spiritual Meaning in *Kawniyyah* Verses: A Sufistic Hermeneutical Study of *Haqā'iqu at-Tafsīr*

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### Abstract

The interpretation of *Kawniyyah* verses in *Haqā'iqu at-Tafsīr* by Abu 'Abdirrahmān as-Sulamī highlights the dialogue between modern scientific approaches and the Sufistic-Isyārī style. This study employs a qualitative library research method, with content analysis and a thematic approach, to examine verses concerning the sun, moon, earth, mountains, rivers, and stars. Primary data were obtained from the text of *Haqā'iqu at-Tafsīr*, while secondary data came from literature on Isyārī tafsīr and scientific interpretation of *Kawniyyah* verses. The findings show that as-Sulamī interprets cosmic phenomena not only as physical realities but also as spiritual symbols: the sun as *al-ma'rifa* illuminating bodily faculties, the moon as *al-uns* purifying intentions, mountains as saints stabilising the soul, rivers as organs of remembrance, and stars as lights guiding the heart. This interpretation is presented in the form of parables, thus not negating the *ḡhābir* meaning nor falling into the blameworthy *tafsīr bi al-ra'y*. The study identifies a research gap: previous works tend to separate Isyārī from scientific tafsīr. In contrast, this research offers a dialogical reading that places Sufī cosmology alongside modern scientific discourse on *Kawniyyah* verses. The novelty of this study lies in its systematic mapping of *Kawniyyah* verse interpretations in *Haqā'iqu at-Tafsīr* and in its demonstration of the potential for developing contemporary tafsīr studies that integrate revelation, spirituality, and scientific knowledge.

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### Introduction

The approach to *kawniyyah* verses in the treasures of Qur'anic commentary reveals the intricate interplay between scientific and sufistic-Isyārī tendencies, as modern science evolved and the religious experience of Sufis. On one hand, there is an 'ilmī interpretation that establishes a connection between the verses of nature and the findings of contemporary science, thereby affirming the relevance and miracles of the Qur'an in the face of modern civilisation. On the other hand, the Isyārī-sufistic tradition of tafsīr endeavours to unveil the inner meaning of the verse through symbolic representations, spiritual cues, and kashf experiences, as exemplified in classical works such as *Haqā'iq al-Tafsīr* by Abu Abdirrahmān as-Sulamī. The tension and dialogue between these two approaches are evident in the interpretation of the verses *kawniyyah*, which simultaneously speak of the structure of the cosmos and the depth of the human soul. (Rusydi, 2018).

The Qur'an contains many verses that direct humans to reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth, the rotation of day and night, and other natural phenomena as signs of the power and oneness of Allah. Some verses describe the cosmos and the process of creation globally, such as Ali Imran verse 190 and ath-Thalaq verse 12. In contrast, others hint in detail at certain phenomena that later became the object of modern scientific study. In the midst of the development of astronomy, geology, and cosmology, there was a tendency to connect these verses with scientific data as an effort to show the harmony between revelation and nature. Historically, however, the Sufi interpretation of the *kawniyyah* verse emphasises the dimensions of *taẓkiyah al-nafs* and the spiritual journey, so that nature is understood as a mirror of the inner state and a spiritual maqām. (Rusydi, 2018).

The interpretation of as-Sulamī in *Haqā'iq al-Tafsir* occupies an important position in the Isyārī-Sufistic interpretation tradition because it shifts the focus from empirical descriptions of nature to spiritual symbolism, without completely denying the verse's meaning. For example, the sun and moon are not only understood as celestial bodies with specific physical characteristics, but also as metaphors for *al-ma'rīfah* and *al-uns*, which illuminate the limbs and reveal the darkness of intention. Likewise, the earth, mountains, and rivers are considered as souls, guardians, and organs of dhikr that support human spiritual stability, while still recognising their cosmological function in maintaining the balance of the earth. This pattern confirms that Isyārī's interpretation of the *kawniyyah* verse aims to integrate cosmology and spiritual anthropology in a single horizon of meaning. (Salamah et al., 2025).

Previous studies on *kawniyyah* verses generally fall in two major currents: science-oriented scholarly interpretations and Isyārīc interpretations that focus on Sufi symbols. Research on *kawniyyah* verses in scholarly interpretations, such as works that examine the scholarly nature of Zaghul al-Najjar or the thematic interpretations of kauniyah verses, further highlights the scientific construction and function of *i'jāz ilmi* as a reinforcer of the truth of the Qur'an through modern scientific data. (Amhar & Nisa, 2024; Mustikasari, 2021). On the other hand, the study of the interpretation of Isyārī—for example, the analysis of the interpretation of Imam al-Qusyairi or the general study of the interpretation of Isyārī's according to al-Ghazali—emphasises more on the legitimacy, conditions of acceptance, and characteristics of symbolic methods in revealing the inner meaning of verses. (Wahid, 2010). The special research on *Haqā'iq al-Tafsir* by as-Sulamī has been carried out in the form of an analysis of the characteristics of Sufi interpretation, the Isyārī's method, and the sources cited by Sufi figures. However, it has not been directed in a focused way on the cluster of *kawniyyah* verses as a thematic study unit that dialogues with science. (Taher, 2014).

The research gap is evident in the lack of studies that specifically examine the interpretation of *kawniyyah* verses in *Haqā'iq al-Tafsir*, comparing them critically with the approach of modern scientific interpretation. Previous research tends to separate the study of scientific interpretation from Isyārī interpretation, so that few have placed as-Sulamī on the axis of dialogue between Sufistic cosmology and contemporary scientific readings of *kawniyyah* verses. Moreover, the epistemological dimension—such as the limits of the Isyārī interpretation so as not to slip into the reprehensible tafsir *bi al-ra'y*, as well as its possible relevance for the strengthening of faith in the age of science—has not been elaborated comparatively along with the criticism of the exaggerated interpretation of science (Mustikasari, 2021).

Departing from this context, this study aims *first* to systematically describe the forms of as-Sulamī's interpretation of the verses of *kawniyyah*, especially those related to the sun, moon, earth, mountains, rivers, and star clusters. *Second*, analysing the epistemological framework of the

interpretation of isyārī as-Sulamī and its implications for the understanding of *kawniyyah* verses in the midst of the development of modern scientific interpretation. *Third*, identify the meeting points, tensions, and possible dialogues between the Sufistic interpretation of *Haqā'iq al-Tafsir* and the pattern of scholarly interpretation of the *kawniyyah* verses, so that it makes a unique contribution to the development of contemporary interpretation studies. (Setiawan, 2025). Thus, the novelty of this research lies in the effort to integrate the thematic reading of the *kawniyyah* verses in *Haqā'iq al-Tafsir* with the discourse map of modern scientific interpretation, thus offering a new perspective on how natural verses can be read at the same time cosmologically, spiritually, and scientifically within the framework of Qur'anic interpretation.

## Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach to library research with descriptive-analytical and comparative properties, which is considered the most relevant to examine the interpretation of *kawniyyah* verses in *Haqā'iq al-Tafsir* by Abu 'Abdirrahmān as-Sulamī in depth. The main approach used is thematic interpretation (*maudhu'i*), with a procedure: first, inventory all *kawniyyah* verses in the Qur'an, then set a focus criterion on verses that explicitly address the structure and phenomena of the cosmos (the creation of the earth's sky, celestial bodies, and geological-hydrological elements). Second, from the list, one thematic cluster was selected that became the main material—namely six cosmic objects: the sun, moon, earth, mountains, rivers, and stars—with the following considerations: (1) all of them have a fairly representative portion of interpretation in *Haqā'iq al-Tafsir*, (2) represent the three layers of the cosmos (space: sun–moon–stars; biosphere–lithosphere: earth–mountain–river), and (3) are often the locus of modern scientific readings of *kawniyyah* verses. Third, for selected verses, a systematic reading of the original text of *Haqā'iq al-Tafsir* is carried out to identify the pattern of isyārī-sufistic takwil – for example, the symbolisation of the sun as *al-ma'rifah* that illuminates the limbs and mountains as guardians who stabilise the soul—which is then compared with contemporary cosmological and scientific descriptions in order to see the common points and boundaries of dialogue between Sufistic interpretation and modern scientific approaches.

Secondary data include classical isyārī tafsir literature (such as the works of al-Qusyairi and al-Ghazali) as well as modern 'ilmī tafsir patterns from Hanafi Ahmad, Zaghul al-Najjar, and Quraish Shihab (Yusufpati, 2023), collected through systematic documentation techniques to build an epistemological comparative horizon.

Data analysis is carried out by content analysis, whose unit of analysis is in the form of interpretive fragments in *Haqā'iq al-Tafsir* (key pronunciations, sentences, or whole units of meaning) that are directly related to six cosmic objects (sun, moon, earth, mountains, rivers, and stars). The procedure includes: (1) identifying and marking each fragment of as-Sulamī's interpretation of the verses, (2) grouping the fragments into thematic categories (e.g., *ma'rifah* symbols, *uns* concepts, guardian positions, heart structure), and (3) arranging patterns of relationships between categories to formulate the general character of their isyārī-sufistic patterns. The Sufistic approach is used to interpret the spiritual cues behind the cosmic symbol by considering the context of classical Sufism and the Sufi references used by as-Sulamī.

The comparative analysis is carried out by juxtaposing the spiritual interpretation of *Haqā'iq al-Tafsir* with the interpretation of 'ilmī and Quran-scientific literature in several measurable aspects: (1) the purpose of interpretation (*tazkiyah* and *ma'rifah* vs *i'jāz ilmi* and the harmonisation of science), (2) the way to utilise cosmological facts (spiritual symbols vs empirical descriptions), and (3) the

limits of interpretation of the text (sufistic parables vs scientific claims literally). Through this comparative standard, it is possible to see the common ground and the point of difference between the isyārī as-Sulamī pattern and the modern scientific approach to *kawniyyah* verses. This methodology ensures that the research not only describes the pattern of isyārī interpretation but also explores the novelty of its dialogue with modern science in thereby strengthening the contemporary understanding of natural verses as mirrors of revelation and creation.

### Findings

This study found that the interpretation of *kawniyyah* verses in as-Sulamī's *Haqā'iqu at-Tafsīr* follows a consistent pattern of two layers of meaning: *zhāhir* (cosmological) and *bāṭin* (spiritual) through sufistic *tasybīh*. The six main cosmic objects—the sun (*al-ma'rifab* which illuminates the limbs for solemnity), the moon (*al-uns* which purifies the intention towards *tafīd*), the earth (the soul/*an-nafs*), the mountains (the guardians as a support for spiritual stability), the river (the organs of *dhikr*: tongue, eyes, ears), and the stars (the light of the heart)—become symbolic mediums for *tazkiyah al-nafs*, not just a physical description.

Epistemologically, *tafsir as-Sulamī* includes a style of authentic isyārī that retains the meaning of the *zhāhir* of the verse, then adds inner meaning through *qiyās* and references to Sufī authorities (Ibn Athā', al-Qusyairi, al-Ghazali), thus avoiding *tafsir bi al-ra'y* or absolute *bathinī* that breaks the relationship with the text. The interpretation is presented as a parable (*tashbīh*), for example, a physical mountain that stabilises the earth is analogous to a guardian that stabilises the soul, while still recognising empirical functions (tectonics, hydrology, astronomy).

Comparative analysis shows a common point and tension with modern 'ilmī interpretations: both agree on *kawniyyah* verses as a sign of Allah's greatness, but 'ilmī *tafsir* emphasises empirical *i'jāz* (the structure of the sun, lunar orbit, mountain isolation), while as-Sulamī focuses on spiritual transformation (*ma'rifab*, *uns*, *qalb* position). These findings confirm that the sufistic interpretation complements the 'ilmī interpretation without contradiction, forming a model of cosmology–spiritual anthropological dialogue.

The fourth finding is the filling of the research gap of the thematic study of *kawniyyah* verses in *Haqā'iqu at-Tafsīr*, with the contribution of an integrative reading model: natural verses as a structure of the cosmos (science), a mirror of spiritual conditions (Sufī), and the revelation of *tauhidīk* (Qur'an).

This study found that as-Sulamī's interpretation of the *kawniyyah* verse forms a consistent two-layered pattern of meaning: *zhāhir* (cosmological) and *bāṭin* (spiritual) through sufistic *tasybīh*. The following is a systematic mapping by theme that compares the spiritual orientation of *Haqā'iqu at-Tafsīr* with the modern interpretation of 'ilmī.

Cosmic Objects	Main Verses	Tafsir as-Sulamī (Isyārī)	Tafsir' Ilmī Modern	Meeting/Tension Point
Sun-Moon	Yūnus: 5	Sun = <i>al-ma'rifab</i> (light of service), moon = <i>al-uns</i> (purification of intentions)	Energy source (H 69.5%), 29-day orbit (Shihab, 2015)	Meeting Point: a sign of Allah's greatness; Tension: spiritual symbols vs empirical facts
Earth-Mountains	ar-Ra'd: 3	Earth = soul, mountain = stabilizer	Tectonic isolation (Lajnah, 2010)	Meeting point: stabilisation function; Tension: spiritual anthropology vs geology

Rivers	an-Naml: 61	Dhikr organs (tongue, eyes, ears)	Hydrology (rainfall, infiltration) (Najjar, 2005)	Meeting point: Divine Grace; Tension: symbolic vs hydrological
Stars	al-Ḥijr: 16	The Light of the Heart/ <i>Ma'rifah</i>	Night navigation (al-Ghazālī, n.d.)	Meeting point: instructions; Tension: heart vs astronomy

Epistemologically, tafsir as-Sulamī is a valid *isyārī* that maintains *z̤ābīr* through *qiyās* (e.g., physical mountains → spiritual guardians), cites Sufi authority, and avoids *absolute bi al-ra'y* or *bathinī*, as Ibn Taymiyyah allows by analogy.

Comparatively, the tafsir 'ilmī (Zaghlul al-Najjar, Hanafi Aḥmad) emphasises empirical *i'jāz* for apologetics, while as-Sulamī focuses on *tazkiyah/ma'rifah*. Title: A Tale of Self-Sacrifice as a Way of Self-Sacrifice. Tension: empirical-apologetic vs. transformational. This dialogue model offers an integrative reading: natural verse = structure of the cosmos (science) + map of the soul (Sufi) + revelation (Quran).

## Discussion

### Interpretation of the *Kawniyyah* Verses in Haqaiqu a-Tafsir

The following are some examples of interpretations found in the tafsir as-sulamī regarding the verses of *kawniyyah*.

#### 1. Sun and Moon

The Sun is the largest celestial body in the solar system. The Sun is a star that emits light and has a diameter of about 1,392,429 km. The distance between the Earth and the centre of the Sun is estimated to be 39 million miles. The Sun contains 69.5% hydrogen gas and 28% Celsius, which can emit light. The Sun is the most important source of light in the survival of living things. (Shihab, 2015, p. 32).

Allah says in Surah Yūnus (10) verse 5:

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الشَّمْسُ ضِيَاءً وَالْقَمَرَ نُورًا وَقَدَرَهُ مَنَازِلَ لِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

In the tafsir as-sulamī, it is stated that there are various suns. The sun *will* radiate on the limbs, thereby decorating them for service. The month of longing (*al-uns*) will purify the intention with the light of monotheism, thus placing it in the position of *tafrīd*. (as-Sulamī, 2001, p. 295) *Tafrīd* is to separate oneself from all material, and to please Allah in every action. Thus, all his actions lack a specific purpose or a sure reward (Kalabadzi, 1994, p. 111).

The above interpretation of as-sulamī describes the other side of the sun. The sun is not only limited to the planets that shine on the earth, from which light is sourced, but also the *marifah*. If a person has *marifah*, then the light will radiate on all the limbs, so that all the limbs of the body will always serve Allah. Imam al-Qusyairī (d. 465 H) explained that *al-Marifah* is a quality to know Allah in accordance with His names and attributes, to establish a true muamalah with Allah, to stay away from reprehensible morals, to stay away from the temptation of lust, and to guard the heart from

whispers other than Allah. (A. al-Q. A. al-K. bin H. al-Qusyairī, 1993, p. 472). Like the moon that illuminates the night, the nature of *al-uns* can also purify the intention with the cahaha of monotheism. In the view of Imam al-Ghazālī (d. 505 H), the nature of *al-uns* is one of the influences that arise from love. A person who experiences the joy of the heart because of his closeness to Allah and his presence, and who never turns to others, has reached the level of *Uns*. (Al-Ghazali, 2005, p. 339).

In modern science, the moon is described as a spherical satellite that orbits the Earth at an estimated distance of 3,654,334 km. The time it takes to go around the Earth is 29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes, and 2.8 seconds. The moon affects the tides and ebbs of the ocean surface. The light from the moon is the reflection of the sun's rays, and its illumination is perfect when the moon is in contact with the sun and the Earth is in the middle. (Shihab, 2015, p. 37)

If it is related to the interpretation of *as-sulamī*, a person who has reached the level of *al-uns* will direct his intention of worship to Allah alone. The interpretation of *as-sulamī* above compares the sun that shines and decorates the earth with *al-marīfah* that shines on the limbs so that they always serve Allah. While the moon that illuminates the darkness of the night is likened to *al-uns*, which illuminates the "darkness of intention". A person who always longs for Allah, because of his closeness to Him, will repay all his solemnities and deeds to Allah, without expecting any particular reward.

*As-Sulamī* mentions the Sun as *al-ma'rifah* (Divine knowledge that illuminates the limbs for solemnity) and the moon as *al-uns* (longing that purifies the intention towards *tafrīd*), presented as Sufistic *tasybīh*. *Tafsīr' ilmī* (Shihab, 2015): The sun as a source of energy (69.5% hydrogen), the moon as a light-reflecting satellite (29-day orbit), the focus is empirical *i'jāz*. The Sufis added a transformative dimension (spiritual light) to scientific facts, and both agreed that the celestial phenomenon was a sign of *tauhīd*.

The legitimacy of the interpretation of *isyārī as-Sulamī* on the *kawniyyah* verse, if it is based on *qiyās* (analogy) of the meaning of *zhāhir*, is in line with the findings of the research that the interpretation of the sun-moon as *ma'rifah-uns* and mountains as guardians is a parable that does not violate *zhāhir*. (Mairizal, 2024).

## 2. Earth, Mountains, and Rivers

Allah says in surah ar-Rad (13) verse 3:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَدَّ الْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْهَارًا وَمِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ جَعَلَ فِيهَا رِجَالًا لَّيْسَ فِيهَا مِنْهَا رِجَالٌ مُّسَبِّحِينَ بِحَمْدِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

God has stretched out the earth and set upon it pillars His guardians, and the leaders of His servants. To them is a refuge, and to them is to ask for help. The person who walks towards the guardians will be lucky. On the other hand, whoever does not work for them will lose (*as-Sulamī*, 2001, p. 326).

The above verse clearly states that Allah has made the mountains stand upright against the earth that He has stretched out. This is because the mountain serves as a pillar to maintain the earth's balance, as mentioned in Surah an-Naba (78:7). Mountains are formed as a result of the collision process between plates that can lift materials that have been deposited for a long time. The piles

of material that make up the mountains are arranged along the plate boundary. The position of the mountain at the confluence of earthquake-prone plates can serve as ballast, dampening plate vibrations during earthquakes. This is because the mountain's large mass has roots proportional to its height (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, 2010, pp. 16, 40).

The above interpretation of *as-sulamī* seems to give a parable that if a mountain —an unreasonable object- is used as a pillar to maintain the balance of the earth, then in the interpretation of *as-sulamī* - Allah makes the saints —intelligent creatures- as pillars to maintain the balance of the earth's inhabitants.

Regarding the status of human beings as guardians of Allah, in the hadith *qudsī*, it is stated:(al-Bukhari, 2015, Chapter 84 No. 6137)

عن أبي هريرة قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: إن الله قال من عادى لي وليا فقد آذنته بالحرب وما تقرب إلي عبدي بشيء أحب إلي مما افترضت عليه وما يزال عبدي يتقرب إلي بالنوافل حتى أحبه فإذا أحببته كنت سمعه الذي يسمع به وبصره الذي يبصر به ويده التي يبطش بها ورجله التي يمشي بها وإن سألني لأعطينه ولئن استعاذني لأعيذنه وما ترددت عن شيء أنا فاعله ترددي عن نفس المؤمن يكره الموت وأنا أكره مساءته

*Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah's Apostle said, "Allah said, 'I will declare war against him who shows hostility to a pious worshipper of Mine. Moreover, the most beloved things with which My slave comes nearer to Me, is what I have enjoined upon him; and My slave keeps on coming closer to Me through performing Nawafil (praying or doing extra deeds besides what is obligatory) till I love him, so I become his sense of hearing with which he hears, and his sense of sight with which he sees, and his hand with which he grips, and his leg with which he walks; and if he asks Me, I will give him, and if he asks My protection (Refuge), I will protect him; (i.e. give him My Refuge) and I do not hesitate to do anything as I hesitate to take the soul of the believer, for he hates death, and I hate to disappoint him."*

From the aforementioned hadith, it is evident that a person who harbours hostility towards the one whom Allah cherishes (*wali*) signifies a defiance of Allah. Whoever challenges Allah will face His threats, and whoever He threatens will ultimately be destroyed. Conversely, the individual who loves the guardian of Allah and seeks His guidance will be fortunate, as Allah will reciprocate their love. Perseverance in performing *sunnah* worship to draw closer to Allah is one of the defining characteristics of a *wali*. This closeness is the reason behind the blessings mentioned in the continuation of the hadith.

Therefore, the interpretation of *as-sulamī* embodies reciprocity and respect for the guardians. If the assistance in question pertains to outward aid, such as providing support to fellow humans, and is directed towards them with the intention of acquiring knowledge, it is not considered problematic. This is because they are obedient individuals who worship Allah with complete knowledge.

Another example can be seen when *as-Sulamī* interprets verse 61 in surah *an-Naml* (27):



أَمَّنْ جَعَلَ الْأَرْضَ قَرَارًا وَجَعَلَ خَلْقَهَا أَنْهْرًا وَجَعَلَ لَهَا رَوَاسِي وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ حَاجِزًا ؕ إِنَّهُ مَعَ  
اللَّهِ بِئَلَّ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۝

In interpreting the verse, as-Sulamī refers to Ibn Athā (d. 309 H). According to him, the earth (الأرض), which is meant in the verse, is the soul (النفس). Allah named the soul the earth because the soul was created from the earth (earth), and the soul is always around the earth at the time of life or death. As if the verse asks: *Who has made for the soul a dwelling place when praying in a narrow time, and who has made rivers in its gaps, the tongue that is always dhikr, the eyes that see with learning, and the ears that hear with awareness, and who makes for these souls mountains to strengthen that is, the guardians as a reference in the time of deviation, then return it to the right path, and make a separation between the two seas, namely in the time of remembrance (Allah) and in the time of negligence. Is there a God besides Allah who can do this kind of gentleness?* (as-Sulamī, 2001, p. 326).

Scholars of tafsir zhāhir interpret the word الأرض in the verse as referring to the earth. Earth, one of the planets in this realm on which its existence depends, can stand firmly without the slightest wavering, even though most of the Earth consists of water. Allah also made the mountains to support the earth, and on the earth there is also a tight separation so that there is no mixture between the salty sea and the salty sea. Such a situation shows the vastness of God's creation that any other god cannot create.

The Earth's spherical shape, due to its immense size, can give the impression of a flat surface. Experts estimate the Earth's average radius at approximately 6,371 kilometres, while the equatorial radius is slightly larger at approximately 6,378 kilometres. The Earth's surface area is approximately 510 million square kilometres. Its composition is primarily composed of 71% ocean and 29% land. Given its radius, the Earth's rotational speed is approximately 1,600 kilometres per hour. (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, 2010, p. 35).

The river is a large freshwater stream that empties into the ocean or a lake. Rivers flow from rainwater or from springs at higher elevations than sea level. In certain regions, it can come from melting ice. On the other hand, river water can be reduced by evaporation or seepage in the soil. The amount of water the river receives and absorbs affects the sustainability of its flow (Najjar, 2005, p. 258).

The interpretation put forward by as-Sulamī above illustrates the parable's context. By His mercy, Allah makes man calm to pray in times of narrowness, and makes for man organs for specific purposes, and makes guardians as a support in times of man straying, and warns between the time of remembrance of Allah and the time of neglect of Him. If the above interpretation is understood in the context of the parable, then the interpretation is acceptable. Of course, the word "river" in the verse—and its continuation—cannot be interpreted with tongue, eyes, or ears. In fact, Ibn Athā interprets the word "earth" with "soul". The word *al-Ardh* means something low. The earth we live on is called *al-Ardh* because it is the lowest part of the human body. There is also the word *an-Nafs*, which basically means *ar-Rūb* (az-Zumar: 39 verse 42). In addition to *ar-Rūb*, *an-Nafs* also means blood because the soul comes out with the outflow of blood. In addition, *an-Nafs* also means possession (al-Māidah: 5 verse 116), brother (an-Nūr: 24 verse 61), and can also mean human beings as a whole (az-Zumar: 39 verse 56). Presumably, this last meaning is what Ibn Athā is referring to, namely human beings physically and non-physically. This meaning can be understood if the word *an-Nafs* is associated with verse 1 in Surah an-Nisā (4) that Allah created all

humankind from one person, namely the Prophet Adam, and the Prophet Adam was created from the ground (al-Hijr: 15 ayat 26).

In short, the earth is the same as the soul (*an-nafs*), the mountains are the same as the guardians (the buffer of spiritual stability), the river is the same as the organs of dhikr (tongue, eyes, ears), Ibn Athā's analogy. Mountains act as tectonic insulation, while rivers act as hydrological cycles; the Earth, which has 71% of its surface covered by oceans, demonstrates the order of creation. In other words, this Sufistic parable completes the empirical description: the mountain, as a physical stabiliser, stabilises the earth, which, as the guardian, stabilises the soul, without denying zhāhir.

### 3. Star Cluster

When interpreting verse 16 in surah al-Hijr (15):

وَلَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا وَزَيَّنَّاهَا لِلنَّاظِرِينَ

Traditionally, the verse clearly states that Allah adorned the heavens with stars and made them a sign to travel by land and sea in darkness. The verse also indicates that Allah has adorned the heart with various lights to serve as a guide in attaining *al-marifab*. Only those who open their hearts can take these signs as a guide. (as-Sulamī, 2001, p. 351)

The above interpretation of as-Sulamī is clearly illustrated in the context of the parable. Verbs from السماء is يسمو — سما, which means high (علا — ارتفع). السماء is something tall or the roof of something. Heaven is named السماء because it became a roof for the earth. (Ibnu Manzbur, 2016, p. 397)

If Allah makes the stars in the sky as decorations, and also as guides in man's journey (al-Nahl, 16:16), the same applies to man. It is undeniable that the heart has a high position for man, even though it is not the highest part of the human body. Imam al-Ghazālī declared that the heart is king over the other limbs, and equated the obedience of the limbs to the heart with the angelic obedience to Allah, which cannot be violated. However, the obedience of angels to Allah must be proper; while the obedience of the limbs to the heart can be proper, it can also be wrong. (Al-Ghazali, 2005, p. 5 Jil. 3) In fact, the Apostle gave an ultimatum that the good or bad of a person depends on the heart.

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: إن الحلال بين وإن الحرام بين وبينهما مشتميات لا يعلمهن كثير من الناس فمن اتقى الشبهات استبرأ لدينه وعرضه ومن وقع في الشبهات وقع في الحرام كالراعي يرعى حول الحمى يوشك أن يرتع فيه ألا وإن لكل ملك حمى ألا وإن حمى الله محارمه ألا وإن في الجسد مضغة إذا صلحت صلح الجسد كله وإذا فسدت فسد الجسد كله ألا وهي القلب

*The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "Indeed, the halal (permissible) is clear, and the haram (forbidden) is clear, and between them are doubtful matters which many people do not know. So whoever guards against the doubtful, saves his religion and his honor, and whoever falls into the doubtful falls into the haram, like a shepherd who grazes around a protected area, he is likely to enter it. Verily, every king has a protected area, and verily Allah's protected area is His prohibitions. Verily, in the body there is a morsel of flesh, if it is*

*sound, the whole body is sound, and if it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt. Verily, it is the heart.* (M. bin al-H. al-Qusyairi, 2000, Chapter 22 No. 1599)

The star is a decoration/guide to the heart (*al-marifah*); the analogy is that the sky is like the roof of the cosmos, and the qalb is like the king of the limbs (Al-Ghazali, 2005). The stars as navigation and decoration of the cosmos (al-Nahl: 16), the astronomical evidence of the Qur'an. The Sufists extended the function of the stars from physical navigation to spiritual directions, both emphasising the *kawniyyah* verse as *āyat li al-nāzirīn*. Tafsir as-Sulamī consistently maintains the cosmological zhāhir, then adds bāṭin through Sufistic qiyās, so that it is compatible with the tafsir' ilmī as an empirical layer that complements each other in the function of the guidance of tauhīd.

Apart from being a decoration, the lights that Allah emits in the heart also serve as a guide to know Him better through the intermediary of His attributes, as well as to reconcile with Him, as understood by *al-marifah* according to Sufi scholars.

### **The Perspective of the Zhāhir Scholar on the Kawniyyah Verse**

One of the da'wah methods used by the Quran to invite people to believe in Allah, and believe in prophethood, and the day of resurrection is to invite them to pay attention to this nature. In fact, many verses of the Quran invite humans to know Allah by paying attention to the universe and its contents. However, a different interpretation is seen in this book. For this reason, this theme is used as an example of the interpretation of as-sulamī.

The *kawniyyah* verses in question describe the creation of nature and urge humans to pay attention to the secrets and wisdom behind it. Some of these *kawniyyah* verses tell about how Allah created His creation and how to take care of it, as seen in Surah Thahā (20) verse 50: [*Musa*] said, "Our Lord is He who gave each thing its form and then guided [it]. There are also verses of *kawniyyah* that speak in detail about His creations, without mentioning their attributes, as in Surah Ali Imran (3) verse 190: *Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding.* While others speak in detail about the various kinds of His creations, and explain the characteristics and specificities of these creations, as in surah ath-Thalaq (65) verse 12: *It is Allah who has created seven heavens and of the earth, the like of them. [His] command descends among them so you may know that Allah is over all things competent and that Allah has encompassed all things in knowledge* (Ahmad, 1960, p. 34).

The interpretation of *kawniyyah* verses using modern scientific approaches or patterns elicits varied responses from Qur'anic scholars. Some reject the model's interpretation, others justify it, and some take a middle ground, acknowledging certain limitations. *First*, those who reject the interpretation with the approach of modern science argue that the interpretation falls into the category of *interpretation of bi ar-ra'y*, which the Prophet does not justify. *Second*, they accept this approach's interpretation because they argue that the *kawniyyah* verses in the Qur'an are intended to provide specific scientific facts in order to guide the reader. For them, the Qur'an is a book that gathers all knowledge, and to achieve a complete understanding, it must be interpreted with a scientific approach as well. Although it is excessive to establish that all scientific discoveries have been encapsulated in the Qur'an (al-An'am: 38). *Third*, the group that considers that the Qur'an is a book of da'wah that contains religious guidance in life. So the verses of *Kawniyyah* in the Qur'an are a reminder of the power and oneness of Allah in His creation. Therefore, Muslim scholars must study these verses by utilising various sciences in order to strengthen their faith in Allah.

Several main things must be considered when interpreting verses with a modern scientific approach, quoting from the book *Ushul ad-Dakhil fi al-Tafsir Ay al-Tanzil* (al-Najjar, 2007) and *Ad-Dakhil fi al-Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Karim* (Fayid, 1980):

**1. Maintaining the purity of the source and avoiding "ad-dakhil."**

Jamal Musthafa 'Abd al-Hamid emphasised that *ad-dakhil fi al-tafsir* is any form of interpretation that does not rely on authentic sources (the Qur'an, sahih hadith, atsar of the companions, tabi'in) or does not meet the conditions of acceptance, nor wrong opinions. Therefore, the scientific interpretation of the *kawniyyah* verse should not impose a weak, controversial, or unestablished scientific theory, thus including an element of "infiltration" (ad-dakhil) that undermines the authority of interpretation. (Qomariyah & Ilyas, 2023)

**2. Not making the theory of science the primary basis of the meaning of the sentence**

Jamal Musthafa emphasises the importance of *ashbalat al-mashdar* (authenticity of sources): the primary meaning of the verse must be derived from Arabic, the verse's context (siyāq), and the rules of ushul tafsir, while science serves only as a secondary reinforcement or explainer, not a determinant of meaning (Akhdiat, 2024). Attaching the meaning of the verse entirely to a specific scientific theory risks making the Qur'an "dependent" on theories that may change, so that when the theory collapses, the interpretation also falters and falls into the category of ad-dakhil. (Ride & Riyadi, 2022)

**3. Distinguishing between scientific facts and hypotheses**

In the framework of *Ushul ad-Dakhil fi Tafsir Ay at-Tanzil*, a distinction is made between truly *tsabit* (established) data and scientific conjecture, including a hypothesis, as the exact meaning of the verse is a weak form of ra'yi interpretation (Ride & Riyadi, 2022). The scientific interpretation of the *kawniyyah* verse should use strong findings (e.g., the earth's basic structure, the earth's rotation, the water cycle), and still be redacted with ihtiyāth (prudence), not theological certainty. (Amirudin, 2023)

**4. Avoiding excessive bleaching of i'jāz ilmī.**

Jamal Musthafa criticises the tendency of some scientific interpretations to impose i'jāz ilmī on almost every verse. He claims that all scientific discoveries are already written in detail in the Qur'an. This attitude is considered to go beyond the limits of postulation and is an interpretation pattern that needs to be criticised in the study of ad-dakhil. I'jāz ilmī should be placed as a possible cue, not an absolute claim that closes the space of other meanings, lest interpretation turn into narrow scientific justification. (Qomariyah & Ilyas, 2023)

**5. Defending the purpose of guidance, not making the Qur'an a science book**

Both Jamal Musthafa and the discussion of ad-dakhil affirm that the Qur'an is a book of guidance, not an encyclopedic manual of science; The main orientation of the interpretation of the verses of *kawniyyah* is the strengthening of monotheism, tadabbur, and ethics, while scientific exposition is only a means of support. If the scientific interpretation deviates from the purpose of hidayah and only pursues spectacular compatibility with the theory of science, then the aspect of value (hidāyah) is covered, and the interpretation is prone to fall into the category of ad-dakhil (Ride & Riyadi, 2022).

## 6. Definition of *ad-dakhil* according to 'Abd al-Wahhāb Fāyid

'Abd al-Wahhāb Fāyid defines *ad-dakhil fi al-tafsir* as an interpretation of the Qur'an that is not based on the validity of sources such as the Qur'an, authentic hadith, the views of companions and *tabi'in*, as well as "common sense" that meets the prerequisites of *ijtihad*. (Fayid, 1980)

In the context of scientific interpretation, this means:

- a. It is not permissible to make speculative theories of science as the "postulate" of religion.
- b. Not to use words far from the meaning of language in order to adapt the verse to scientific formulations; This kind of deviation of language and thought by Fāyid is classified as a form of *ad-dakhil* that must be criticised. (Fayid, 1980)

According to Jamal Musthafa and 'Abd al-Wahhāb Fāyid, the interpretation of *kawniyyah* verses with the approach of modern science must maintain the purity of the source, be careful of *ad-dakhil* (infiltration of meaning), not absolutise theories, do not force *i'jāz ilmī*, and still place the Qur'an as a book of guidance that can be strengthened by science, but not totally dependent on it.

## The Perspective of the Sufi Scholars on the *Kawniyyah* verse

Classical Sufi scholars such as al-Ghazali accept the scientific interpretation of *kawniyyah* verses as an aid to the understanding of *zhāhir*, as long as they do not contradict the *nash syar'i* and still lead to the Divine *ma'rifah*, as in *Jawābir al-Qur'an*, he elaborates on the principles of scientific interpretation that are in harmony with revelation. Ibn 'Arabī views the universe (verse *kauniyah*) as a manifestation of *wahdat al-wujūd*, in which modern scientific phenomena, such as the regeneration of the cosmos (*kawn wa fusād*), confirm the dynamics of God's continuous creation, not a contradiction with the inner interpretation (Rosyid, 2023).

Quraish Shihab argued: "Understanding the Qur'an's conception of modern science... It must be seen whether the verses of the Qur'an or the soul of its verses stand in the way of knowledge... The Qur'an is not the Book of Science, but *tibyān likulli syay'in* (QS. an-Nahl: 89) means the subject of instruction, not the scientific details." Contemporary Sufis tend to reject *i'jāz ilmī* excessively, prioritising the function of *kawniyyah* verses for *tafakkur tauhīd*, rather than absolute scientific evidence (Admin, 2020; Arifin et al., 2019).

## Conclusion

This study concludes that the interpretation of *kawniyyah* verses in as-Sulamī's *Haqā'iqi at-Tafsir* constitutes a unique construction of spiritual meaning through cosmic-spiritual symbolism—the sun as *al-ma'rifah*, the moon as *al-uns*, mountains as guardians, and stars as the guidance of the heart—which are presented as parables without denying the meaning of *zhāhir* or slipping into *tafsir bi al-ra'y*, thus complementing the modern *tafsir* of 'ilmī with the dimension of *tazkiyah al-nafs*. The most important proposition is that the *kawniyyah* verse doubles as a cosmological sign and a spiritual mirror, thereby practically strengthening the faith of the *ummah* in the age of science through an integrative dialogue among revelation, science, and knowledge. This work advances the study of *tafsir* by filling a gap in the Sufistic thematic study of *kawniyyah* verses, offering a holistic comparative model of *isyārī-'ilmī*. Future research is suggested to explore the application of these symbols in contemporary Islamic education and to compare them with other *isyārī* interpretations, such as al-Qusyairi.

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