EPISTEMOLOGY OF THE ESOTERIC INTERPRETATION OF THE QUR'AN (Study about *Ta'wīl al-Qur'ān)*

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Abstract:

This article is an attempt to explain the episteme setting and the foundations of the diversity of theories about esoteric interpretation of the Qur'an (*ta'wīl al-qurān).* Such studies are important because there is still a misunderstanding of the meaning and truth of *ta'wīl al-qurān*. Through this article, the author wants to map discourse, look for aspects of the similarities and differences in theories about *al-ta'wīl.* Next, analyze the implications of the theory for the application of *ta'wīl al-qurān*. In addition, to exposing differences in theoretical views, this article is also intended to show the meeting point between the views of the interpreters of *the Sunnah* and *Shi'ite*, as well as between the exoteric scholars (*ahl Sharīah*) and esoteric scholars (*ahl Ṭarīqah*) about the nature of *ta'wīl al-qurān*. The discussion begins with a review of the definition and basic meaning of *al-ta'wīl* in terms of etymology and terminology. Then, the author invites the reader to examine the views of the commentators related to the requirements, classification, patterns of relation, methods and steps toward *ta'wīl al-Qurān*. In this article, the author shows the agreement that the exoteric meaning (*ma'nā zhāhir*) as the basic foundation of *ta'wīl*, in addition to the other differents according to how they understand the Qur'an and its nature meaning. It is explained also influence the classification and pattern of relation –chosen by commentators- on how the methods and steps work toward *ta'wīl al-Qurān*.

Keywords: Episteme, Esoteric Interpretation (*Ta'wīl*), Interpretation (*Tafsīr*), Exoteric (*Zhāhir*), Esoteric (*Bāṭin*), Reference Of Verses (*Maṣādīq Al-Āyāt*).

INTRODUCTION

The term of *al-ta'wīl* and the problems related to it have taken the attention of many commentators. Islamic scholars, outside the circle of commentary studie -such as theologians, jurisprudence experts (*fuqahā*), philosophers and Sufis - also use them as one of the important keywords in their respective scientific studies.[1] The word *al-ta'wīl* first appears several times in the Qur'an, in various contexts of the verse.[2] This word is also found in the traditions of the Prophet, both from the path of transmission of the Sunnah and the Shia.[3] Then from that came the diverse opinions and theories of the commentators and Qur'anic experts on the meaning of the word. Furthermore, the discussion of this term continues today, so that we can mention it as the most complicated discussion in the study of interpretation and Qur'anic sciences (*'ulūmul Qur'ān*).

The term of *al-ta'wīl* directly or indirectly will be in contact with important themes in other Qur'anic studies, such as: equivocal and clear verses *(al-muḥkam wa al-mutashābih)*, exoteric and esoteric meanings (*al-zhāhir wa al -bāṭin*), the methods of Islamic interpretation and the esoteric interpretation (*al-tafsīr al-bāṭinī*), hermeneutics, and who is meant as a person who is firmly rooted in science (*al-rāshikhūna fī al-'ilm*). The commentators, usually, do not leave this discussion, and give their individual cues specifically when interpreting the Q.S. Āli Imrān [3]: 7.[4]

From this brief introduction, it becomes very important to conduct a review of the regional epistemology. It is very possible that the difference in the meaning of *al-ta'wīl* is caused by the different epistemology of the reviewer. As mentioned by Abdul Mustaqim in his book that the question of the correctness of interpretation is very dependent on the theory used by the judge. Usually a person's episteme view greatly influences the object of his research.[5] Usually a person's episteme view greatly influences the object of his research. Thus, the assessment of the truth or validity of a theory about *al-ta'wīl* is greatly influenced by the epistemological view held by an evalutor.

This article is not intended to debate and find out which view is most correct regarding *ta'wīl al-qur'ān*. However, it is more directed to provide a re-mapping of

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[1] See: Kautsar Azhari Noer, "Hermeneutika Sufi: Sebuah Kajian atas Pandangan Ibn 'Arabi tentang Takwil Al-Qur'an", *Kanz Philosophia*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (2012): 312. Muhammad Nur, "Takwil dalam Pandangan Mulla Sadra", *Kanz Philosophia,* Vol. 2, No. 2 (2012): 293.

[2] See: *Q.S. Āli 'Imrān/ 3: 7; Q.S. al-Nisā/ 4: 59; Q.S. al-'A'rāf/ 7: 53; Q.S. Yunus/ 10: 39; Q.S. Yūsuf/ 12: 21,23,37, 44, 46, 100, 102; Q.S. al-Isrâ/ 17: 46 dan Q.S. al-Kahf/ 18: 78, 84.*

[3] See: Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qurān al-Aẓīm*, cet. 1, Vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiah, 1419 H), 9. Muḥammad Ibn Mas'ūd al-'Iyāshī, *Tafsīr al-'Iyāshī*, Vol. 1 (Tehran: al-Maṭba'ah al-'Ilmiah), 11.

[4] The terms *al-muḥkam wa al-mutashābih* and *al-rāshikhūna fī al-'ilm*, which are separate studies in the Qur'anic Sciences (*'ulūm al-qur'ān*), are listed in the text of verses that mention the word *al-ta'wīl* in them, especially in the Q.S. Āli Imrān [3]: 7. Likewise, linguists often equate the meaning of esoteric meanings (*al-ma'nā al-bāṭinī*) as well as esoteric interpretations (*al-tafsīr al-bāṭinī*) as *al-ta'wīl* itself.

[5] Abdul Mustaqim, *Epistemologi Tafsir Kontemporer* (Yogyakarta: LkiS Group, 2012), xii; Kerwanto, "Epistemologi Tafsir Mullā Ṣadrā" *Jurnal THEOLOGIA*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (2019)): 23–26.

the discourse around *ta'wīl al-qur'ān*, seeing the strengths and weaknesses of each view, and analyzing the causes and background of the epistemology underlying it. Furthermore, the author will return the assessment to the readers (reviewers) to further carry out the assessment and assessment.

METHOD

This research can be called a qualitative research based on library sources. In this article, the researcher emphasizes the quality and matters relating to the understanding, concepts and values that the author extracts from data (written material) that has been published in the form of books and scientific articles, which are relevant to this field of research.[6] As a research model, this article can also be referred to as a comparative study of thought. That is the author reads the development of discourse around the theme, makes comparisons, and analyzes the thoughts of several figures on the theme of the study.[7]

Associated with research methods, the authors use hermeneutics as a scientific approach. In this context, the hermeneutics that the author refers to is hermeneutics in a broad sense, as a theory of understanding of the text. That is as an effort to understand the content of a text, and interpret (convey) back to the reader (reader).[8]

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Epistemology of *Ta'wil Qur'ān*

To be able to understand the epistemology of *ta'wīl al-Qur'ān*, we must at least understand a number of basic understandings, such as: the origin of the word *al-ta'wīl* along with the development of the terminological meaning. It is not enough there, we must examine the views of commentators on the requirements, classification, methods and steps towards *ta'wīl al-Qur'ān*.

The authors will review and discuss a number of these sub-themes as follows:

a. Etymological Meaning of *al-Ta'wīl*

Etymologically, the word of *al-ta'wīl* comes from the word *al-awwal*, which is returning something to its origin (*al-rujū ilā al-aṣl*).[9] Therefore, it is called *al-ta'wīl* because it returns something to the desired destination. According to Ibn Fāris, *al-ta'wīl* means the beginning and end of an affair, so that Allah Almighty says: "They

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[6] Kaelan, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif Bidang Filsafat: Paradigma Bagi Pengembangan Penelitian Interdisipliner Bidang Filsafat, Budaya, Sosial, Semiotika, Sastra, Hukum dan Seni* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Paradigma, 2005), 5.

[7] Suharsimi Arikunto, *Prosedur Penelitian: Suatu Pendekatan Praktek*, Cet. IX (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta. 1992), 10-11.

[8] An explanation and commentary on "understanding as a scientific method" can be seen in: F. Budi Hardiman, *Seni Memahami: Hermeneutik dari Schleiermacher Sampai Derrida* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit PT Kanisius, 2015), 63-96.

[9] Al-Rāgib al-Aṣfahânî, *Mu'jam Mufradāt alfâḍ al-Qurān*, cet. 4 (Damaskus: Dār al-Qalam, 1430 H/ 2009 M), 99

will not wait unless (the implementation) of *ta'wīl*". That is, the return of all affairs when the truth is realized, when the Day of Resurrection will come".[10]

According to al-Muṣṭafawī, *al-ta'wīl* means to make something in front (forward) and then followed by others. According to him, the term *al-ta'wīl* is used for something that is immaterial (meaning), not only material.[11] Meanwhile According to Fākir Al-Mībadī, linguists use this word (*al-ta'wīl*) for several uses. That is *al-ta'wīl* is interpreted as an effort to return to its destination (*irjā 'al-shai ilā hadfihī*). The destination/ the aim (*al-hadf*) itself, can be divided into two forms, it can be science (*al-'ilm*) and action (*al-fi'il*). As the science (*al-'ilm*), we can see it in Q.S. *Āli 'Imrān* [3]: 7, "Nobody knows his territory but Allah. And those who have deep science say: "We believe in verses that are equivocal (*mutashābihāt)*, all of them from the side of our Lord". Whereas as an action (*al-fi'il*), we can see it in Q.S. *al-'A'rāf* [7]: 53, "They are not waiting except for the (truth) of the Qur'an".

From these two forms, it is known that *al-ta'wīl* can be something that is related to science (scientific affairs) and is useful for eliminating vocabulary problems, and sometimes also in real entities of external existence (*amr khārijā*). Likewise, linguists often equate the meaning of *al-ta'wīl* with *al-tafsīr*. That is an attempt to uncover the intent of something difficult (*mushkīl*); returns one of several possible meanings to its exoteric meaning (*ẓāhir*). From this, it is known that *al-tafsīr* is an attempt to explain the exoteric meaning of words (*lafāẓ*)), while *al-ta'wīl* is an effort to find the suitability of possible meanings based on the meaning of literal text. Some other linguists interpret *al-ta'wīl* as politics (*al-siyāsah*) and the final result or result *('āqibah al-umūr*).[12]

b. The Meaning of *al-Ta'wīl* in Terminology

Furthermore, to be able to understand the meaning of the terminology of *al-ta'wīl*, we must observe how this word (*lafḍ*) is used in the texts of the Qur'an and hadith. It is undeniable that the diversity of the opinions of commentators and Qur'anic Experts on the meaning of *al-ta'wīl* is due to the variety of editors of the Qur'anic verses and the hadith which mentions *al-ta'wīl*'s vocabulary in it.

c. The Meaning of *al-Ta'wīl* in the Qur'anic Terminology

In the text of the Qur'an, at least we can find 15 places that mention this vocabulary. The word *al-ta'wīl* is repeated several times with different meanings according to the context of the verse.[13] In the terminology of the Qur'an, 'Alī al-

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[10] Ibn Fāris ibn Zakariya, *Mu'jam Maqāyis al-Lughah* Vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr. t.th.), 160.

[11] Ḥasan Al-Muṣṭafawī, *al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Qurān al-Karīm*, Vol. 1 (Tehran: Markaz Nashr Ātsār al-'Allāmah al-Muṣṭafawī, cet. 1), 190.

[12] Muḥammad Fākir al-Mībadī, *Qawā'id al-Tafsīr Ladā al-Shīah wa al-Sunnah* (Irān- Tehran: al-Mu'āwaniah al-Thaqafiyah, 2007), 22.

[13] See: Q.S. Āli 'Imrān [3]: 7; Q.S. al-Nisā [4]: 59; Q.S. al-'A'rāf [7]: 53; Q.S. Yunus [10]: 39; Q.S. Yūsuf [12]: 21,23,37, 44, 46, 100, 102; Q.S. al-Isrâ [17]: 46 dan Q.S. al-Kahf [18]: 78, 84.

Riẓā'ī al-Aṣfahanī divides the meaning of *al-ta'wīl* into five types, including the following:

First, is *at-ta'wîl* as *al-tafsīr*. This kind of usage can be seen how some commentators such as al-Ṭabarī[14] interpret the word *al-ta'wīl* in Q.S. *Āli 'Imrān* [3]: 7 as *al-tafsīr*. Meaning of this kind is widespread in the era of classical commentators such as the expressions of al-Ṭabarī in his book '*Jāmi 'al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qurān*'. In his interpretation, he often mentions expressions like this: the *ta'wīl* of the words *al-isti'ādhah* is ...; the *ta'wīl* from the words of *al-basmalah* is ...".[15]

Second, is *at-ta'wîl* as a proof and explanation of equivocal statements (*taujīh al-mutashābih*). This kind of usage can be seen in the verses that explain the story between the prophets Moses and Khidir. Khidhr said in Q.S. *al-Kahf* [18]: 78 as follows: "This is the separation between me and you; I will tell you the *al-ta'wīl* that you cannot be patient with." Al-Aṣfahanī explains that *al-ta'wīl* in the verse is news about secrets that are stored in actions which are endlessly acts without value, then the prophet Khidr as explains their nature.[16] Related to the meaning of the second *ta'wīl*, the Qur'anic Experts agree that the Qur'an contains verses that are *muḥkam* and *mutashābih*. The *mutashābih* verses contain several possible meanings that cause disguising (*shubhah*). Facing verses like this, the commentators are required to direct and lead the *mutashābih* verses to the verses that have been agreed as *muḥkamāt*. For example, the word *yadullah* (Allah's hand) in Q.S. al-Fatḥ [48]: 10, which has a equivocal meaning (*mutashābih*), must be directed to the phrases of the word *laysa kamithlihī shaiun* (there is nothing like Him) in Q.S. *al-Shurā* [42]: 11, which has been agreed as a clear verse (*muḥkamāt*).

Third, is *al-ta'wīl* as a dream interpretation (*ta'bīr al-ru'yā*). This usage can be found in Q.S. *Yusūf* [12]: 6, 21, 36, 37, 44, 45, 100 and 101; *Fourth*, *al-ta'wīl* as the result and end of something (*'āqibah wa khātimah al-shai),* can be found in Q.S. al-Nisa [4]: 59, Q.S. al-A'rāf [7]: 53, *Q.S. al-Isrā* [17]: 35 and Q.S. Yūnus [10]: 39.[17]; Finally (*fifth*), *al-ta'wīl* as the realization of something (*taḥaqquq al-shai*), can be seen in Q.S. al-A'rāf / 7: 53.[18]

This view is a little different from the teacher (his predecessor), Hādī Ma'rifah,[19] who only divides it into 4 types. 3 types are taken from the Qur'an, while the other is the term of scholars for the hadith and interpretation. 3 types from the

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[14] Abū Ja'far Muḥammad Ibn Jarīr al-al-Ṭabarī, known as al-Ṭabarī, is a Sunni Muslim historian and thinker from the 3rd century Persian Hijri. He wrote a commentary entitled *Jāmi 'al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qurān*.

[15] Muḥammad Ibn Jarīr al- al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qurān*, Vol. 1 (Kairo: Dār Hijr, 2001.), 46.

[16] 'Alī al-Riẓā'ī al-Aṣfahanī, "*al-ta'wīl*" dalam *Diktat Kuliah: Ma'rifah al-Mabāni wa al-Qawāid al-Tafsīriah*.

[17] Ma'rifah, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thaubihī al-Qashīb*, Vol. 1, 28.

[18] Al-Aṣfahanī, "*al-ta'wīl*".

[19] Ayatullāh Sheikh Muḥammad Hādī Ma'rifah is a well-known contemporary scholar in the city of Qom-Iran who writes and studies sciences related to the Qur'an.

Qur'an, including: *taujīh al-mutashābih, ta'bîr ar-ru'yā* and *'āqibah al-amr*, as explained by Al-Aṣfahanī. The fourth, the general concept contained in the verse of the Qur'an and the hadith.[20]

Table: 1. Some Meaning of the Word *Al-ta'wīl* in the Qur'an

No.	Example Verses	The Meaning of al-Ta'wīl
1.	Q.S. *āli 'Imrān*/ 3: 7	*al-ta'wīl* as *al-tafsīr*
2.	Q.S. *al-Kahf*/ 18: 78	*al-ta'wīl* as *taujīh al-mutashābih*
3.	Q.S. *Yusūf*/ 12: 6, 21, 36, 37, 44, 45, 100, 101	*al-ta'wīl* as dream interpretation (*ta'bīr al-ru'yā*)
4.	Q.S. *al-Nisā*/ 4: 59, Q.S. al-Isrā/ 17: 35, Q.S. Yūnus/ 10: 39	*al-ta'wīl* as result and end (*'āqibah wa khātimah al-shai*)
5.	Q.S. *al-A'rāf*/ 7: 53	*al-ta'wīl* as realized something (*taḥaqquq al-sh ai*)

d. The Meaning of *al-Ta'wīl* in the Terminology of *Ḥadīth*.

According to scholars of the ahl sunnah, narrations about *al-ta'wīl* are usually associated with the figure of the Prophet friend known as *tarjumūn al-qurān*, Ibn 'Abbās. In the narration, it is mentioned that the Prophet prayed that God taught *al-ta'wīl* to Ibn 'Abbās, "O my Lord, make (Ibn' Abbās) expert in religion, and teach him *al-ta'wīl*",[21] Or, a narration relying on Ibn 'Abbās, who stated that he was a firm person in science (*al-rāsikhūna fi al-'ilm*) and knew *al-ta'wīl*.[22]

The word *al-ta'wīl* in both traditions is often interpreted by the commentator as an aspect of the esoteric meaning of the Qur'an. The esoteric aspect that is only understood by special friends of the Prophet, as it is reported that one day the Caliph Umar ibn Khaṭṭāb gathered the companions and asked Ibn 'Abbās to explain the inner meaning contained in Q.S. *al-Naṣr* [110]: 1, "When Allah's help and victory have come", which is not yet understood by friends in general. If the Companions understand the meaning of the verse as a command to *taḥmīd* and to *istighfār* after

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[20] Muḥammad Hādī Ma'rifah, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fi Thubihī al-Qashīb*, Vol. 1, (al-Jāmi'ah al- Riẓawiyah li al-'Ulūm al-Islāmiyah, t.th.), 27-28.

[21] Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qurān al-Aẓīm*, Vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiah, 1419 H, cet. 1), 9.

[22] Umar Ibn 'Alī al-Jailī, *al-Lubāb fī 'Ulūm al-Kitāb* Vol. 5 (Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiah), 154.

the Muslims have won, whereas Ibn ʿAbbās shows other meanings. The verse is interpreted by Ibn ʿAbbās as a sign of death of the Prophet Muhammad.[23]

Meanwhile, when referring to the literature of Shiite traditions, the word *al-taʾwīl* can at least be divided into parts, they are: the *first*, as the esoteric meaning of the verse. The second, as a verse reference (*maṣādīq al-āyāt*). For example, in the following Hadith: "Al-Fadhīl asked Abū Ja'far about the narration (the hadith):" There is not a single verse except for having exoteric and esoteric. And no one letter except having *ḥad*; And, every *ḥad* has *maṭlā* '"… Abū Ja'far answers: "the exoteric of the Qur'an is its *nuzūl*, and the esoteric is it's *taʾwīl*". "Some of it has happened, and some of it has not yet happened. He is circulating like the circulation of the sun and moon".[24]

In this hadith, it is explained that what is meant as *al-taʾwīl* is the esoteric meaning of the Qur'an. Furthermore, still in the same narration (*hadīth*), some commentators such as Hadi Ma'rifah see it as a verse reference (*maṣādīq al-āyāt*). *Al-Taʾwīl* is considered as a general concept abstracted from a verse, furthermore, the general concept is applied (*inṭibāq*) to different references (*al-maṣādiq*) throughout the ages.[25] Hādī Ma'rifah's view like this is based on the cues contained in the hadith. The sentence "some of it has happened, and some of it has not happened yet. It circulates as the circulation of the Sun and Moon" suggests the word *al-taʾwil* as a verse reference (*maṣādīq al-āyāt*). That is, some referents (*maṣādīq*), then *taʾwīl al-Qurʾān* has been realized in the past, and some will occur in the future as the esoteric meaning of the Qur'an that always lives as the law of the circulation of the Sun and Moon. This principle, according to Ma'rifah, is found in all verses of the Qur'an. He said, "If there was no general concept of this kind, then how many verses of the Koran do not have many rules except for reading (*tilāwah wa tartīl*) alone".[26]

Furthermore, he exemplified the meaning of *al-sabīl* in Q.S. *al-Baqarah* [2]: 195, "And give (your property) in the way of Allah (*sabīlillāh*), and do not throw yourself into destruction", which is understood as follows: This verse comes down in the context of the preparation of jihad and war, in order to guard the stronghold of Muslims. The Muslims were ordered to use some of their assets to pay for war equipment, food and medical equipment. In the next context, the word *al-sabīl* in the verse is not only interpreted as a battle against the Meccan polytheists. However, it can be interpreted with a broader concept, as an effort to elevate religion; upholding

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[23] Muḥammad Ḥusein al-Dhahabī, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn*, Vol. 2, (Kairo: Maktabah Wahabiah, t.th.), 263. Muḥammad Ibn Ismāʾil al-Bukharī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukharī*, Vol. 6 (Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1987 M/ 1407 H), 179.

[24] This hadith originates from the Shiite path, where someone asks one of the Shia priests, Muḥammad al-Bāqir about the esotericmeaning of the Qur'an. See: Muḥammad Ibn Masʿūd al-ʿIyāshī, *Tafsīr al-ʿIyāshī*, Vol. 1 (Tehran: al-Maṭbaʿah al-ʿIlmiah), 11.

[25] Ma'rifah, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thaubihī al-Qashīb*, Vol. 1, 24.

[26] Ma'rifah, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thaubihī al-Qashīb*, Vol. 1, 24.

Islamic law in all its aspects: in the household, community, education, politics and so on.[27]

This explanation of Hādi Ma'rifah can also be referred to as the application of rule '*al-jaryī wa al-inṭibāq*', a rule commonly used in Shi'ah interpretations.[28]

Table: 2. The Meaning of Terma *Al-ta'wīl* in the Hadith

No.	The Meaning of al-Ta'wīl	Landasan Teori
1.	*al-ta'wīl* as esoteric meaning	*Matan* hadith like: ظهره تنزيله و بطنه تأويله
2.	*al-ta'wīl* as referent verse (*maṣâdīq al-āyāt*)	General concepts abstracted from a verse, and subsequently, applied (*inṭibāq*) to different references (*al-maṣādiq*) throughout the ages. Implications of the rules of interpretation: *al-jaryī wa al-inṭibāq*.

The Requirements of *Ta'wīl al-Qurān*

In general, both Scholars, exoteric scholars (*ahl sharīah*) and esoteric scholars (*ahl ṭarīqah*), agreed that exoteric texts (*ẓāhir*) were the basic foundation of *al-ta'wīl*. *Al-ta'wīl* is not allowed to leave, or exclude the literal aspects of the verse. A theosophist (philosopher-Sufi) like Mulla Ṣadrā[29], in his book *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, explains some important principles about *al-ta'wīl.* One of the important principles of true *al-ta'wīl*, according to him, is "*al-ta'wīl* is not to discard or exclude the literal/ exoteric meaning, but to uncover its esoteric meaning, deepen and perfect it". He described it as follows: "What is achieved or will be achieved by people who are firm in science (*al-rāsikhūna fī al-'ilm*) and '*urafā muḥaqqiq* about the secrets of the Qur'an do not contradict its exoteric meaning at all. It is even a refinement and complement

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[27] Ma'rifah, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thaubihī al-Qashīb*, Vol. 1, 25.

[28] In terms of, *al-jaryī* means the application of vocabulary to the verses of the Qur'an in addition to its context of *nuzūl*, whereas *al-inṭibāq* means the application of several individuals to the verses, apart from the individuals mentioned by their context of *nuzūl*. So, the rule of *al-jaryī wa al-inṭibāq*, means: the application of the vocabulary and verses of the Qur'an to new references (*al-maṣādīq*), which is different from the context of *nuzūl*. See: al-Mībadī, *Qawāid Tafsīr Ladā al-Shī'ah wa al-Sunnah*, 301.

[29] Muḥammad ibn Ibrahīm Ibn Yaḥyā al-Qawamī al-Shīrazī (1572-1640 CE), known as Ṣadr al-Muata'āalihīn or Mullā Ṣadrā is the founder of the philosophy of *Ḥikmah al-Muta'āliyah*, a philosophy that combines previous Islamic traditions; philosophy, Sufism and theology.

to the exoteric meaning. *Al-ta'wīl* in the essence moved from the exoteric meaning so that it reached the core of its depth, past the surface to the inner layers and secrets".[30]

Sadrā's opinion is the same as other Sufi views, like Ibn 'Arabī. He stated that, "*Al-ta'wīl* is not allowed to erase the exoteric meaning of the text. A*l-ta'wīl* also cannot deny the commands and prohibitions of *sharīa*.".[31] In contrast to the esoteric scholars (*ahl ṭarīqah/ ahl bāṭin*), usually the exoteric scholars (*ahl sharīah*) provide additional conditions on *al-ta'wīl*, apart from not allowing a person to interpret the implied meaning deviating from the explicit meaning - as agreed by the esoteric scholars (*ahl ṭarīqah/ ahl bāṭin*)-.[32] The exoteric scholars (*ahl sharīah)* added some additional requirements because they defined *al-ta'wīl* as part of *al-tafsīr*. *Al-ta'wīl* is understood as an effort to explain and explore the deeper meaning of interpretation.

In his book al-*Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn*, Al-Dhahabī mentions some of the requirements of *al-ta'wīl* as follows: 1) Do not deny the textual meaning (the textual understanding of the verses of the Qur'an); 2) That interpretation is reinforced by other religious propositions; 3) The interpretation does not conflict with other religious propositions or ratios; and 4) The interpretation does not recognize that only its esoteric interpretation is what God wants.[33] Other commentators from Shi'ite theology schools such as Hadi Ma'rifah add one additional condition, in addition to the requirements mentioned by al-Dhahabī as follows: "The for the connection (*munāsabah),* both words and their meanings in general concept abstraction". Ma'rifah defines *al-ta'wīl* as an abstraction of general concepts from a statement. In his book *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thaubihī al-Qashīb*, Ma'rifah gives an example of the application of "the need for the connection (*munāsabah)* in *al-ta'wīl*". Such an example can be seen when he interprets the word *al-mizān* in Q.S. *al-Raḥmān* [55]: 9.

As the original meaning, the word *al-mizān* in Q.S. *al-Raḥmān* [55]: 9- interpreted as a tool (balance sheet) which has two sides, which functions to measure something. Then, this general meaning is abstracted with several indicators, both rational and textual (*naqliyah*), so we get a new meaning. That is: "everything that is used to measure and weigh something else is called *al-mīzān*".[34] Furthermore, the general concept of the word *al-mizān* is applied (*inṭibāq*) to diverse references, such as: a ruler to measure lines; logic to measure philosophy; rules of Sharia to measure

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[30] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Mafātīh al Ghayb* (Tehran: Cultural Researches Institution, 1982), 82.

[31] Kautsar Azhari Noer, "Hermeneutika Sufi: Sebuah Kajian atas Pandangan Ibn 'Arabi tentang Takwil Al-Qur'an" *Kanz Philosophia*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (2012): 318-319.

[32] In his book *al-Tafsir wa al-Mufassirūn*, Al-Dhahabī describes the additional conditions in *al-ta'wīl*, as follows: Whoever confesses that he knows the secrets of the Qur'an without passing through exoteric meaning (*ẓāhir*), is the same as someone who claims to have arrived in the middle of the house without going through the door first". See: Muḥammad Ḥusein al-Dhahabī: *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn*, Vol. 2 (Mesir: Maktabah Wahabiah, t.th), 281-282; Rosihon Anwar, *Menelusuri Ruang Batin Al-Qur'an: Belajar Tafsir Batini pada 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī* (Jakarta: Erlangga, 2010), 167-168.

[33] Al-Dhahabī, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn*, Vol. 2, 281-282; Anwar, *Menelusuri Ruang Batin Al-Qur'an*, 167-168.

[34] Ma'rifah, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thaubihī al-Qashīb*, Vol. 1, 26-27.

the deeds of worship. This general concept can also be applied to a number of individuals, for example: the self of the Prophet and the pious people mentioned by the hadith (or: the Qur'an) to measure the right path for Muslims, and so on.

Classification of *Ta'wīl Al-Qurān*
a. Classification of *Ta'wīl Al-Qurān* Based on Reality Its Meaning

There is diversity in the views of commentators on *al-ta'wīl*, which the authors can concisely classify into two parts as follows:

First, is *al-ta'wīl* as a conceptual meaning. Explanations which show that "*al-ta'wīl* as a conceptual meaning" we can see it in the definitions put forward by several commentators such as: al-Ṭabrasī, Hādī Ma'rifah and al-Dhahabī. This is the major view of commentators. Al-Ṭabrasī,[35] in his commentary *Majma 'al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qurān*, states that *al-ta'wīl* is an attempt to restore one of the possible meanings to something that is in accordance with its textual (exoteric) meaning (*radda aḥadu al-muḥtamalain ilā mā yuṭābiqu al-ḍāhir*).[36] Hādī Ma'rifah, in his book *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn fī Thaubihī al-Qashīb*, divides the definition of *al-ta'wīl* to have two parts. They are: first, *al-ta'wīl* is interpreted as an effort to eliminate camouflage (*al-shubhah*) in statements and actions. Second, *al-ta'wīl* is equated as inner (esoteric) meaning; as the secondary meaning (*al-ma'nā al-thanawī*) of a statement.[37]

Furthermore, al-Dhahabī, in his book *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn*, defines it as follows: "*al-Ta'wīl* is favoring (*tarjīḥ*) one of the possible meanings of a word (*lafazh*) in the presence of an argument, and relying on the *al-ijtihād* process. To achieve this, science of Arabic and semantic vocabulary is needed". [38] In this case, al-Dhahabī distinguishes between *al-ta'wīl* and *al-tafsīr*. *Al-Tafsīr* is interpreted as an effort to return the meaning of the verse to history (*tafsīr bi al-riwāyah*), while *al-ta'wīl* is interpreted as an effort to return the meaning of the verse to the *ijtihād* process (*tafsīr bi al-dirāyah*). This view suggests that al-Dhahabī regards *al-ta'wīl* as part of *al-tafsīr*. *Al-Ta'wīl* as an in-depth effort from the explanation and disclosure of the meaning of the Qur'an, which commentator (*mufassir*) bases / requires on the *ijtihād* process, does not rely solely on transmission.

Second is *al-ta'wīl* as external existence (*al-wujūd al-khārijī*). Explanations which show that *al-ta'wīl* is an external existence (*al-wujūd al-khārijī*), which is a minor view, we can see it in some expert commentary statements such as those conveyed by Ibn

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[35] Abū ʿAlī al-Faḍl bin Ḥasan al-Ṭabrasī, known as sheikh al-Ṭabrasī, was a 12th-century Persian Shiite scholar who died in 1154 (548 AH). He wrote a commentary entitled *Majma 'al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qurān*.

[36] Al-Faḍl bin Ḥasan al-Ṭabrasī, *Majma' al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qurān*, Vol. 1 (Manshūrāt Nāshir Ḥasrū, 1413 H, Cet. 3.) , 13.

[37] Ma'rifah mentions esoteric meaning as secondary meaning (*al-ma'nā al-thanawī*), while exoteric meaning as primary meaning (*al-ma'nā al-awwalī*). See: Muḥammad Hādī Ma'rifah, *al-Tamhīd fī 'Ulūm al-Qurān*, Vol. 3, cet. 2 (Qum: Manshurāt Dhawī al-Qurbā, 2009), 30.

[38] Muḥammad Ḥusein al-Dhahabī, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn*, Vol. 1 (Kairo: Maktabah Wahabiah, t.th.), 18.

Taimiyah[39], Rashīd Riḍā,[40] dan Ṭabāṭabā'ī.[41] *Al-Ta'wīl*, according to Ibn Taimiyah, is the essence of external existence. Instead, interpretation is interpreted as a conceptual meaning, as opposed to *al-ta'wīl*. He said, "The function of the Qur'an is to be known. Therefore, understanding, thinking and the process of understanding the Qur'an is *al-tafsīr*. In this context, the unknown reality is referred to as *al-ta'wīl* ".[42] Unknown reality-as mentioned in Q.S. *Ālī Imrān* [3]: 7- what is meant by Ibn Taimiyah is the reality of the divine metaphysics, which cannot be perceived with reason, such as the appearance and existence of God, or matters relating to the hereafter.

Other commentators, such as Rashīd Riḍā, followed Ibn Taimiyah's opinion. He states that there is no meaning in the Qur'an that cannot be understood because equivocal (*al-mutashābihāt*) itself is relative. If a verse is equivocal (*tashābuh*) to the weak person (of reason), it is not so to the people who are knowledgeable (*al-rashīkhūna fī al-'ilmī*). So, *al-ta'wīl* which is meant in the statement "Whereas no one knows the *ta'wīl* but Allah (Q.S. *Ālī Imrān* [3]: 7)" is something related to reality itself, such as: what is the nature of God, how does the unseen nature consist of heaven, hell and everything in it.[43] Furthermore, Rashīd Riḍā states: "Hellfire is not like the fire of the world. It is something else, and that is compatible with that nature".[44]

In his commentary *Tafsīr al-Manār*, after explaining the word *al-ta'wīl*, which is contained in several *surah* of the Qur'ān,[45] he concludes as follows: "The word *al-*

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[39] Abul Abbās Taqiyuddīn Aḥmad bin Abdul Salām bin Abdullāh bin Taimiyah al-Harrani, or referred to as Ibn Taimiyah was a thinker and scholar from Harran, Turkey. He died in Damascus on the 22nd of Dhulqa'dah 728 H (September 26, 1328 AD). He mastered a variety of Islamic sciences, and wrote it in many works. He had a great influence on several Islamic thinkers afterwards, especially the Wahhabian theology.

[40] Muḥammad Rashīd bin 'Alī Riẓā bin Shamsuddīn bin Baha'uddīn al-Qalmunī al-Ḥusainī, known as Rashīd Riẓā, was a Muslim intellectual who developed the idea of Islamic modernism, which was previously conceived by Jamaluddīn al-Afghani and his teacher, Muḥammad 'Abduh. He was born in Lebanon on September 23, 1865, and died in Egypt on August 22, 1953.

[41] Sayyed Muḥammad Ḥusein Ṭabātabā'ī (16 March 1902-15 November 1981) was one of the main figures of Islamic philosophy, as well as a contemporary thinker of Shi'ite Madhab. He is also known as the author of the interpretation book '*Tafsir al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qurān*', the commentary which emphasizes the method of interpretation of the *qurān bi al-qurān*.

[42] Ibn Taimiyah, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, Vol. 2, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiah, t.th.), 108-109. Ibn Taymiyya considered external existence (*al-wujūd al-khārijī*) to be a statement as *al-ta'wīl*. In short, according to him, everything has four existences, that is: external existence (*wujūd khārijī*), existence of the mind (*wujūd dhihnī*), existence of words (*wujūd lafḍī*) and the existence of writing (*wujūd katbī*). Furthermore, what is meant as *al-ta'wīl* is external existence (*wujūd khārijī*). *Al-ta'wīl*, according to him, is the essence of external existence. See: Ibn Taimiyah, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, Vol. 2, 108-109.

[43] Rashīd Riẓā, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, cet. 3), Vol. 3 (Mesir: Dār al-Manār, 1367 H), 172.

[44] Rashīd Riẓā, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, Vol. 3, 172.

[45] Rashīd Riẓā explains the word *al-ta'wīl* in seven letters in the Qur'an: Q.S. Āli Imrān [3]: 7, al-Nisā [4]: 59, al-'arāf [7]: 52-53, Yūnus [10]: 39, Yūsuf [12]: 6, 36, 37, 44, 45, 100, 101, and al-Isrā [17]: 35. For example, the word *al-ta'wīl* in Q.S. al-Nisā / 4: 59 is interpreted by Mujāhid and Qotādah as

ta'wīl in the Qur'ān is not intended except as an end (*al-ma'āl*), as retification (*taṣdīq*) for news, dreams, or occult acts that occur in the future. *Al-ta'wīl* is not a semantic issue of words, but an external reality which is the foundation of a statement (*al-kalām*). *Al-ta'wīl* is not limited to only the equivocal verses (*mutashābihāt*), but applies to all verses of the Qur'ān.[46] Likewise, Ṭabāṭabā'ī, such as Ibn Taimiyah and Rashīd Riḍā, argue that *al-ta'wīl* is not the concept of the meaning of a word (*lafaẓ*), but that it is external entities (*al-umūr al-khārijiah al-'ainiyah*). Elsewhere, he said: "*al-ta'wīl*, as what the Qur'an wants is the essence of the verse to be referred to and used as a foundation. *Al-ta'wīl* of dream means its expression, *al-ta'wīl* of law means its essence, *al-ta'wīl* of an action means benefit and ultimate purpose, and *al-ta'wīl* of an event means the causes of the event".[47]

Thus, Ṭabāṭabā'ī agrees with Ibn Taimiyah's opinion, that *al-ta'wīl* includes all verses of the Qur'an, not just equivocal verses (*al-mutashābihāt*) alone. However, furthermore, he rejected the opinion that *al-ta'wīl* was only an external entity. He also disagrees with the view, the meaning of the word *al-ta'wīl* whose esoteric interpretation is unkown (in Q.S. *Ālī Imrān* [3]: 7) is only limited to verses about the attributes of God and verses about the Day of Judgment".[48] So, even though Ṭabāṭabā'ī agrees with Ibn Taimiyah and Rashīd Riḍā on the one hand, but on the other hand he disagrees with both. Ṭabāṭabā'ī criticized the interpretation of Ibn Taimiyah and considered it to have been misinterpreted. For Ṭabāṭabā'ī, the intention of *al-ta'wīl* is not any external entity that is bound by the content of the statement. According to him, the historical reality of the news that happened in the past or the future is not as *al-ta'wīl* from the narrative text of the Qur'an as believed by Ibn Taimiyah and Rashīd Riḍā. [49]

For Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-ta'wīl* is a real reality (*al-qaqīqah al-waqi'iyyah*) that relies on it for all the explanations of the Qur'an, whether in the form of law, advice (*mau'iḍah*) or wisdom (*ḥikmah*). For him, *al-ta'wīl* is found in all verses of the Qur'an, both in clear verses (*muḥkamāt*) and equivocal ones (*mutashābihāt*).[50] In addition, he also explained that: "*Al-ta'wīl* is not a semantic issue of the word,[51] but is a high supernatural entity (*al-'umūr al-ghaibiah al-muta'āliyah*) which covers the entire al-Qur'an vocabulary network. According to him, God limits the nature of the word limits (*alfāḍ*) so that the minds of ordinary people are able to understand it. These

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rewarding (al-*thawāb wa al-jazā*), whereas Ibn Zaid, Ibn Qutaibah and al-Juzāz interpreted it as a result (*al-'āqibah*). The two interpretations have the same meaning, the end (*al-ma'āl*).

[46] Rashīd Riẓā, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, Vol. 3, 172

[47] Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qurān*, Vol. 13, 349.

[48] Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qurān*, Vol. 3, 48.

[49] Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qurān*, Vol. 3, 48.

[50] Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qurān*, Vol. 3, 27.

[51] Muḥammad Ḥusein Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Shī'ah fī al-Islām*, (Beirut: Bait al-Kātib lī al-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Nashr, 1999), 85.

words are like parables (*al-amthāl*) given to bring the goals closer (*al-maqāṣīd*), and explain something that is adapted to the listener's understanding".[52]

Thus, the relation between *al-ta'wīl* and the message of the verse to be conveyed, according to Ṭabāṭabā'ī, "Like what is likened (*al-mumaththal*) to its parable (*al-mathal*); between the inner and the outer; between the spirit and the body". "The whole insight into the Qur'an science is the parables (*al-amthāl*) of *al-ta'wīl* which are the authority of God (as implied in Q.S. Āli Imrān [3]: 7)".[53] Likewise, Ṭabāṭabā'ī in his commentary explains the meaning of the word *khazāin* as recorded *in Q.S. al-Ḥijr* [15]: 21, "And there is nothing but on Our side is the treasure". The treasure (*khazāin*) is propped up against God with a connector (*qarīnah*) of the word "*indanā*". He explained that the treasure (*khazāin*) is something that is permanent, not lost and unchanging because it is on the Lord's side (word: *'indanā*). What is on the side of the creature will disappear, while what is on the side of God remains eternal.[54] (Q.S. al-Naḥl [16]: 96). The treasure (*khazāin*) [55] is certainly not in the material realm that we can sense, because the nature of the material nature is always changing and destroyed.[56]

Overall, Ṭabāṭabā'ī's view of *al-ta'wīl* resembles the views of the Sufis (theosophists). So, through this kind of view, *al-ta'wīl* is not obtained through the process of thinking directly, and is not clear by itself through words (*alfāḍ*). The only way to reach *al-ta'wīl* is through direct witness (*mushāhadah*) and soul cleansing process (*tazkiyah al-nafs*).[57]

Table 3: The Classifivation of al-Ta'wīl Based on Reality Its Meaning

	THE MEANING OF AT-TA'WÎL	FIGURES OF INITIATOR
MAJOR VIEW	*al-Ta'wīl* as a Conceptual Meaning.	al-Ṭabrasī, Hādi Ma'rifah, al-Dhahabī, dll.
MINOR VIEW	*al-ta'wīl* as external existence	Ibn Taimiyah, Rashīd Riḍā, Ṭabāṭabā'ī, dll.

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[52] Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qurān*, Vol. 3, 49.

[53] Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qurān*, Vol. 3, 52; Kamāl al-Ḥaidarī, *Ta'wīl al-Qurān: al-Naḍariah wa al-Mu'ṭiah* (Qum- Irān: Dār al- Farāqid, 2006), 59.

[54] Some verses of the Qur'an that explain the eternal and permanent content of the Qur'an can be seen in Q.S. al-Ra'd [13]: 39, Q.S. al-Burūj [85]: 22 dan Q.S. Qāf [50]: 4.

[55] Ṭabāṭabā'ī explain that al-khazāin is of the following nature: it is eternal (existent) in the sight of God, cannot be measured and there are no boundaries that limit it. However, when it is revealed, there will be an increase in limits and a reduction in perfection (as an implication when it is revealed to the material nature). See: Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qurān*, Vol. 7, 127.

[56] Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qurān*, Vol. 12, 140-142; Kamāl al-Ḥaidarī, *Ta'wīl al-Qurān*, 47, 51-52.

[57] Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Shī'ah fī al-Islām*, 85.

(*al-wujūd al-Khārijī*).

From some of the information above, it can be concluded that *al-ta'wīl* - as the term used by commentators and researchers of Qur'anic sciences - is closely related to how they understand the Qur'an and the nature of its contents. Thus, the term *al-ta'wīl* has a closeness of meaning to the term *al-tafsīr*, although it has several differences in several aspects, including:

First, if *al-ta'wīl* is understood as *al-tafsīr*, then the term *al-ta'wīl* is used to show a deeper interpretation than *al-tafsīr* itself; *Second*, if *al-tafsīr* is understood as an explanation of exoteric meaning, then *al-ta'wīl* is an explanation of its esoteric meaning. In this context, *al-ta'wīl* cannot be separated from mere word problems (*lafazh*). So, in this case, *al-ta'wīl* is included in the section on *dilālah iltizāmiah ghairu bayyinah*[58], semantic meaning that is not spoken in a statement; *Third*, as in the statements of Ṭabāīabā'ī and Ibn Taimiyah, then *al-ta'wīl* is not the conceptual meaning of the word, but the nature of external existence. Some commentators have the view that *al-ta'wīl* like this comes out out of the domain of discussion of *al-tafsir*. Therefore, Hādī Ma'rifah, in his book *al-Tamhīd fī 'Ulūm al-Qurān*, mentions the views of Ibn Taimiyah and Ṭabāṭabā'ī about *al-ta'wīl* as minor views (*al-shādhah*).[59]

b. Classification of *al-Ta'wīl* Based on Method Validity

In addition to the division as above, *al-ta'wīl* can also be divided into 2 other forms, such as: first, *al-ta'wīl* that is justified (*al-ta'wīl al-ḥaq*), and second, *al-ta'wīl* that is not justified (*al-ta 'wīl al-bāṭil*). The figure who shares this is Ḥaidar al-Āmulī.[60] In the *Tafsīr al-Muḥīṭ al-'A'ḍam*, Al-Āmulī defines *al-ta'wīl al-Ḥaq* as *al-ta'wīl* carried out by people who are firmly rooted in science (*al-rāshikhūna fī al-'ilmī*).[61] Meanwhile, *al-ta'wīl al-bāṭil* is *al-ta'wīl* performed by people whose hearts are inclined towards error, which only takes equivocal verses (*al-mutashabihāt*) - without returning to clear verses (*muḥkamāt*) -, and institutionalize based on their opinions,[62] forcing the verses of the Qur'an to fit the point of view of the commentator.

Furthermore, Al-Āmulī subdivides *al-ta'wîl al-ḥaq* into two typologies, they are: the first typology, they are exoteric scholars (*arbāb al-zhāhir* or *ahl sharī'ah)*, while the

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[58] *Dilālah iltizāmiah* can be called an implication of new meaning that can be understood through linguistic analysis, which is not mentioned directly in a statement. For example, there is news that states that "Zaid is on fire". This statement brought new information about "Death of Zaid". This is based on habit, if someone burns bad enough it will cause death

[59] Ma'rifah, *al-Tamhīd fī 'Ulūm al-Qurān*, Vol. 3, 28-31.

[60] Sayyid Ḥaidar Āmulī is one of the Sufi (theosophical) Persian lands. He is also known as the most famous commentator on the teachings of Ibn 'Arabī in the 14th century. He wrote many works related to Islamic esoterism.

[61] Ḥaidar al-Āmulī, *Tafsīr al-Muḥīṭ al-'A'ḍam wa al-Baḥr al-Khaḍm*, Vol. 1 (Tehran: Muassasah al-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Nashr fī Wizārah al-Irshād al-Islāmī, 1422 H, cet. 3), 238.

[62] al-Āmulī, *Tafsīr al-Muḥīṭ al-'A'ḍam wa al-Baḥr al-Khaḍm*, Vol. 1, 238.

second is esoteric scholars (*arbāb al-ṭarīqah* or *ahl bāṭin*).[63] *Al-ta'wīl* according to exoteric scholars (*ahl Sharī'ah*) is to associate verses with meanings in accordance with the preceding and after verses. *Al-ta'wīl*, in this context, must not contradict the Qur'an, nor the Sunnah. Thus, exoteric scholars (*ahl Sharī'ah*) when mentioning *al-ta'wīl* then what is meant is to return (*al-rujū'*) one of the possible meanings, which are in harmony and not in conflict with the meaning of exoteric (*ẓāhir*). Or, return equivocal verses (*al-mutashābihāt*) to clear verses (*al-muḥkamāt*) based on the provisions applicable in other sciences, such as: basic sciences, both rational ('*aqliyah*) and reliable hadith (*naqliyah*).[64]

In contrast to exoteric scholars (*ahl Sharī'ah*), then *al-ta'wîl* according to esoteric scholars (*ahl bāṭin*), is to apply (*al-taṭbīq*) the reality of the Qur'an (*al-kitāb al-qurānī*) to two other natural realities that is cosmos (*al-āfaqī*) and the human soul (*al-anfusī*).[65] Through studying the verses of the Qur'an, a Sufi can recognize the nature of the cosmos (*al-āfaqī*) and the human soul (*al-anfusī*). Thus, the three realities - both: the cosmos (*al-âfaqî*), the human soul (*al-anfusī*) and the Qur'an (*al-qurānī*) - are images of God, as manifestations (*tajallī*) of the essence (*Dhât*) of God, names (*asmā*) and His attributes.[66] The vocabularies of the Qur'an, it can be said, are codes and symbols that refer to the reality of the human self and the reality of the universe.

Al-Āmulī 's opinion, seems to have been adopted from previous theosophists, like Ibn 'Arabi. Ibn 'Arabi states: "The Qur'an is a guide to language and word expressions that indicate an existence (*al-wujūd*) at all levels. The Qur'an becomes a symbol for an existence (*al-wujūd*) symbolized by it".[67] Ibn 'Arabi anologized the position of nature (cosmos) with its purpose. The purpose of nature and humans created so that humans know God. He states: "Whoever knows the mysteries of God, and then he knows his purpose".[68] In the same context, other Muslim philosophers such as Mulla Ṣadrā state: "Perfect human beings (*al-insān al-kamil*) cover all aspects of the cosmos's reality, and on the other hand, including the reality of the Qur'an. The Qur'an, through its two wrapping layers, also reflects the level of perfect human beings and the nature of existence".[69]

Those different concepts and theories about *al-ta'wīl* cause different methods and steps towards the esoteric interpretation of the Qur'an (*ta'wīl al-Qur'ān*). According to Al-Āmulī and Al-Gazhāli, the only step towards *al-ta'wīl* (in the view of esoteric scholars) is through the process of spiritual disclosure (*kashf* and *shuhūd*

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[63] al-Āmulī, *Tafsīr al-Muḥīṭ al-'A'ḍam wa al-Baḥr al-Khaḍm*, Vol. 1, 238

[64] al-Āmulī, *Tafsīr al-Muḥīṭ al-'A'ḍam wa al-Baḥr al-Khaḍm*, Vol. 1, 239-240.

[65] al-Āmulī, *Tafsīr al-Muḥīṭ al-'A'ḍam wa al-Baḥr al-Khaḍm*, Vol. 1, 240.

[66] al-Āmulī, *Tafsīr al-Muḥīṭ al-'A'ḍam wa al-Baḥr al-Khaḍm*, Vol. 1, 247.

[67] Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd, *Falsafal al-Ta'wīl: Dirāsah fī Ta'wīl Al-Qur'an Inda Muḥyiddīn Ibn 'Arabī* (al-Markaz al-Thaqafī al-'Arabī, 1998), 260.

[68] Muḥyiddīn Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futuḥāt al-Makkiyah*, Vol. 1, (Beirūt: Dār al-Ṣādir, t.th., cet. 1), 174.

[69] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr al-Qurān al-Karīm*, Vol. 5, (Qum: Intishārāt Bidār, 1344 H), 377.

ruhānī).[70] Al-Gazhāli,[71] Al-Gazhāli, in *Iḥyā 'Ulumuddīn*, states, "Revelation of the reality and secrets behind the vocabulary, then there is no key to unlocking it except by the efforts of the *mujāhadah*, curbing lust (*sahwah*), clearing the mind of all debates. This is the grace of God given to what He wants according to the readiness and purity of heart...".[72] According to him, the nature of the interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an is stored in the ocean of spiritual revelation (*mukāshafah*).[73]

Based on such provisions, it is known that, the views of al-Ṭabrasī, Ma'rifah, al-Dhahabī and the majority of other commentators - who understand *al-ta'wīl* as conceptual meaning - fall into the typology category of *ta'wīl* in the view of the exoteric scholars *(ahl sharīah)*. Whereas, the views of most of the Sufis and theosophists, such as al-Gazhāli, Ibn 'Arabī, Mullā Ṣadrā and Ṭabā'abā'ī- who understand *al-ta'wīl* as external beings, fall into the category of *ta'wīl* in the view of esoteric scholars (*ahl bāṭin*).

Table 4: the Classification of *al-Ta'wīl* Based on Method Validity

The Type of *al-Ta'wīl*		Methods and Steps of *al-Ta'wīl*
Not Justified Esoteric Interpretation *(Al-ta'wīl al-bāṭil)*: that is, an esoteric interpretation carried out by people whose hearts are inclined toward error, forcing the verse to conform to the commentator's view.		
Justified Esoteric Interpretation *(Al-ta'wīl Al-ḥaq)*	Exoteric Scholars *(Arbāb al-zhāhir/ ahl sharī'ah)*	- Returns the meaning *mutashābihāt* to *muḥkamāt* - Using the methods and epistemology of interpretation commenly used (*mu'tabar*).
	Esoteric Scholars *(arbāb al-ṭarīqah/ ahl bāṭin)*	- Applying (*al-taṭbīq*) the reality of the Qur'an (*al-kitāb al-qurānī*) to two other natural realities (that is: the cosmos (*al-āfaqī*) and the human soul (*al-anfusī*) - *Tazkiyah al-nafs*, *kashf* and *shuhūd ruhānī*

From this brief explanation (see: Table 4), it is known that if what is meant by *al-ta'wīl* is to return the meaning of *mutashābihāt* to *muḥkamāt*; interpret the verse to another verse, then it is enough for us to use the rules and methods of interpretation

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[70] Al-Āmulī, *Tafsīr al-Muḥīṭ al-'A'ẓam*, Vol. 1, 248.

[71] Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazalī (1058-1111) was a Persian Sufi, philosopher and theologian. He wrote magnum opus in the field of Sufism, *Iḥyā 'Ulumuddīn*. His teachings of Sufism are known as Sunni Sufism, as opposed to philosophical Sufism

[72] Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazalī, *Iḥyā 'Ulumuddīn*, Vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1402 H), 99.

[73] al-Ghazalī, *Iḥyā 'Ulumuddīn*, Vol. 1, 289.

that already exist (*mu'tabar*). Meanwhile, if what is meant by *al-ta'wīl* is the esoteric meaning of the verse, that is the hidden nature of a verse, then the rules and methods of interpretation are not sufficient. Thus, this second type of *al-ta'wīl* requires a special criterion that is different from *al-tafsir*. Other devices are needed, such as purity and breadth of the soul. The domain of people referred to by the Qur'an as people who are firmly rooted in science (*al-rāsikhūna fī al-'ilm*), the domain of people who are specialized.

Relation between *al-Ta'wīl* and *al-Tafsīr*

From the explanations of some of the experts, at least we can arrange the pattern of relations between *al-ta'wīl* and *al-tafsīr* into three (3) forms as follows:

Firstly, the meaning of the word *al-ta'wīl* is a synonym of the meaning of the word *al-tafsīr*. This is the opinion of classical commentators such as al-Ṭabarī and al-Ṭabrasī. In this case, the words *al-ta'wīl* and *al-tafsīr* are considered to have the same meaning. So, when the exegete mentions the word *al-ta'wīl*, in his commentary, what is meant is the meaning of the word *al-tafsīr* itself.

Secondly, the meaning of the word *al-ta'wīl* is the opposite of the word (antonym) from the meaning of the word *al-tafsīr*. In this case, the meaning of the word *al-ta'wīl* is considered a thing that is different from the meaning of the word *al-tafsīr*. This is the opinion of some commentators who deny the existence of a unity of meaning between the two, such as: Ibn Taimiyah, Ṭabāṭabā'ī and Ḥaidar al-Āmulī. They argue that the nature of *al-ta'wīl* is existential that exists in external reality (*al-wujūdiah*). Meanwhile, the nature of *al-tafsīr* is conceptual in the human mind (*al-mafhūmiah*). Thus, *al-ta'wīl* is assumed to be the domain of esoteric scholars (*ahl bātin wa mukāshafah*), people who are firmly rooted in science (*al-rāshikhūna fī al-'ilm*), not the domain of linguists, those who are rooted firmly in linguistics (*al-rāsikhūna fī al-lughah*).

So, based on this second form, *al-ta'wīl* and *al-tafsīr* are different types of science, as explained by Kamâl al-Ḥaidarî in his book *Ta'wîl al-Qurān*, as follows: "*al-tafsīr* is the science of revelation and explanation of vocabulary and language semantics. Meanwhile, *al-ta'wīl* is the process of disclosing meaning. *Al-ta'wīl* is not a semantic relation of words, but the nature (reality) behind the word that rests on the explanation of the vocabulary (of the Qur'an)".[74] Therefore, a Sufi like al-Kashshānī [75] states in the introduction to Ibn 'Arabī interpretation, as follows: "*al-ta'wīl*, is not fixed, so it depends on the conditions (*aḥwāl*), according to the level and degree of

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[74] Ṭalāl al-Ḥasan, *Ma'rifaullāh: Abḥāth Ayatullāh al-Sayyid Kamāl al-Ḥaidarī* (Qum: Dār Farāqid, 1428 H, cet. 1), Vol. 2, 154-155; Kamāl al-Ḥaidarī, *Ta'wīl al-Qurīn: al-Naḍariah wa al-Mu'ṭiyāt* (Iran: Dār Farāqid, 2005 M/ 1426 H, cet. 1), 57-72.
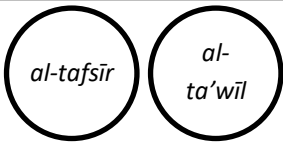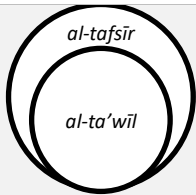
[75] Abdul Razzāq al-Kashshanī is known as a figure who spreads the ideas of *wahdah al-wujūd* Ibn 'Arabi. He wrote a commentary on *Ta'wīlāt Al-Qurān*, which was based on Ibn 'Arabi, hereinafter the book of interpretation is referred to as *Tafsīr Ibn' Arabī*.

mysticism (*sālik*). As each level rises, new understanding and meaning are revealed."[76]

Thirdly, the meaning of the word *al-ta'wīl* is part of the meaning of the word *al-tafsīr*. Thus, the meaning of the word *al-tafsīr* is general, while the meaning of the word *al-ta'wīl* is special. This division as mentioned by Hadi Ma'rifah and al-Dhahabī, the meaning of the word *al-ta'wīl* is an attempt to explain the Qur'an more deeply when compared with the meaning of the word *al-tafsīr*. *Al-tafsīr* is an explanation of the exoteric meaning (*ẓāhir*), while *al-ta'wīl* is an explanation of esoteric meaning (*bāṭin*). In this case, the discussion on *al-ta'wīl* is not far from the vocabulary context. It is conceptual (*al-mafhūmī*), not as mentioned earlier. It belongs to the category of *al-dilālāt al-iltizāmiah gairu al-bayyinah*;[77] semantic meaning that is not spoken in a statement.

To clarify the three forms of this relation, we can look at the following table:

Table: 5. The Patterns of Relationship Meaning between the Word *Al-ta'wīl* and the Word *Al-tafsīr*.

No.	The Patterns of Relationship	Characteristics	The Originator of the Idea
1.	al-tafsīr = al-ta'wīl	*al-tafsīr & al-ta'wīl =* Conceptual (*mafhūmī*)	al-Ṭabrasī dan al-Ṭabarī
2.	al-tafsīr al-ta'wīl	*al-tafsīr=* Conceptual (*mafhūmī*) *al-ta'wīl =* existencial (*wujūdī*)	Ibn Taimiyah, Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Ḥaidar al-Āmulī, dll.
3.	al-tafsīr al-ta'wīl	*al-tafsīr & al-ta'wīl =* Conceptual (*mafhūmī*)	Hādī Ma'rifah, al-Dhahabī, dll.

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[76] Abdul Razzāq al-Kashshanī, *Ta'wîlāt al-Kashshanī (Tafsīr Ibn 'Arabī)*, Vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 2001), 6.

[77] Muḥammad Hādī Ma'rifah, *al-Ta'wīl fī Mukhtalaf al-Madhāhib wa al-Ārā*, cet. 1 (Tehran: al-Majma' al-Ālamī li al-Taqrīb baina al-Madhāhib al-Islāmiah, 2006,), 61-62.

The classification and variety of patterns of this relation (see: Table 5) will affect the method, the rules and many things related to both. If *al-ta'wīl* is assumed to be different from *al-tafsīr*, then automatically it is clear that the methods, rules, criteria and rules that apply between the two are different. This assumption certainly implies that a set of interpretive methods commonly used by a commentator is insufficient to go to the esoteric interpretation of the Qur'an. Therefore, *al-ta'wīl* needs a special criterion that is different from *al-tafsīr*. The Sufis call it *shuhūd* or *mukāshafah*, a science that can be called the science of "giving" because of piety, God says: "If you fear Allah, surely He will give you a differentiator (*furqān*) (*Q.S. al-Anfāl*/ 8: 29).

Conversely, if there are similarities between *al-tafsīr* and *al-ta'wīl* then a commentator is sufficient to use the methods of legal interpretation (*mu'tabar*) on *al-ta'wīl*, because there is a unity of objects and discussion. For the author, behind the debate on the relationship between *al-tafsīr* and *al-ta'wīl*, whatever the name suggests, the interpretation effort should use the rules and interpretation methods that have been recognized, so that it can be understood by the public. Although, in the process of extracting and uncovering the meaning is obtained through *shuhūd* or *mukāshafah*, but when reviewed and delivered into a commentary work it is necessary to use the epistemology of justified interpretations. The claims of spiritual disclosure (*mukashāfah*) of a Sufi in order to be understood by commentators outside their circle must be explained using rational indicators (*'aqlī*) or *naqlī* (the Qur'an and the Sunnah).

CONCLUTION

The conclusions about the epistemology of esoteric interpretation of the Qur'an (*ta'wīl al-Qur'ān*) are as follows: Judging from the verses of the Qur'an and the hadith, at least *al-ta'wīl* can be interpreted as two things: the *first*, as the esoteric meaning of the Qur'an, the meaning implied, not explicit. *Secondly*, as a general concept abstracted from a verse, furthermore, the general concept is applied (*inṭibāq*) to different individual references (*al-maṣādiq*) throughout the ages. The description of *al-ta'wīl* is also closely related to *al-tafsīr* so as to form several relationship patterns. Some equate *al-ta'wīl* as *al-tafsīr* itself. Some of them consider *al-ta'wīl* as the opposite of *al-tafsīr*. There is also a more moderate view, regarding *al-ta'wīl* as one part of *al-tafsīr*.

Some of the sets of knowledge (episteme) possessed by the commentator take part in giving its own color in defining the definition of *al-ta'wīl*. Some define *al-ta'wīl* as conceptual meaning. Some define it as an external being (*al-wujūd al-khārijī*). The *first* is the view of the major, Arabic language experts and exoteric scholars (*ahl sharīah*). Wherea the *second* is a minor view, the rationalists and the esoteric scholars (*ahl ṭarīqah*). This difference in definition has implications for how to step and the way to the esoteric interpretation of the Qur'an (*ta'wīl al-qurān*). If *al-ta'wīl* is considered a conceptual meaning, the way to *al-ta'wīl* is as it applies in the rational

interpretation (*tafsīr ijtihādī*). *Al-ta'wīl* is considered as a way of revealing the meaning of the Qur'an in depth, where the commentator does not only rely on the textual arguments (*naqlī*), but also requires the rational arguments ('*aqlī*). Meanwhile, if considered as an external form (*al-wujūd al-Khārijī*) then there is no other way to *al-ta'wīl* except through the process of purification of the soul (*tazkiyah al-nafs*).

Although different in some respects, the reviewers with various streams of theology and thought agreed to place the literal side of the text (*ẓāhir*) as the basic foundation for the esoteric interpretation of the Qur'an (*ta'wīl al-qurān*). *Al-ta'wīl* is not allowed to leave or resolve the exoteric meaning; of course, in addition to other additional requirements. This brief description of the epistemology of the esoteric interpretation of the Qur'an (*ta'wīl al-qurān*) is expected to provide a general description of the episteme background and theoretical foundations for *ta'wīl al-qurān*. This is also expected to be an initial step in mapping the discourse, which can be further explored by subsequent reviewers.

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