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Al-Dakhil in Al-Futuhat al-Makkiyyah: Ibn 'Arabi's Analysis of Surah Al-Fatihah

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Abstract

The study of *al-dakhil* in Quranic exegesis serves as an important instrument for evaluating the validity of sources and the authority of interpretation, particularly in Sufi exegetical works that frequently incorporate symbolic (*ishari*) and metaphysical interpretations. One of the most prominent works within this tradition is *Al-Futuhat al-Makkiyyah* by Ibn 'Arabī, whose interpretation of Surah Al-Fatihah reflects a strong orientation toward philosophical Sufism. This article aims to identify the forms of *al-dakhīl* in Ibn 'Arabī's interpretation of Surah Al-Fatiḥah and to analyze the factors underlying their emergence. Employing a qualitative approach with content analysis, the study utilizes *Al-Futūhāt al-Makkiyyah* as its primary source, while secondary data are drawn from relevant literature on *al-dakhil*, Sufi exegesis, and Ibn 'Arabī's intellectual thought. The analysis is conducted using 'Abd al-Wahhab Fāyed's theory of *al-dakhil*, alongside the criteria of *al-aṣīl* in Sufi exegesis, namely conformity with Arabic linguistic principles and consistency with Islamic legal teachings. The findings reveal six instances of *al-dakhīl* in the interpretation of Surah Al-Fātihah, consisting of one fabricated ḥadīth categorized as *al-dakhil al-ma'thūr dakhlan shadidan*, two *ishari* interpretations classified as *al-dakhil al-ishari dakhlan shadidan*, and three *ishari* interpretations categorized as *al-dakhil al-ishari dakhlan yasiran*. These findings indicate that Ibn 'Arabī's philosophical-Sufi orientation constitutes the dominant factor behind the emergence of *al-dakhil*, while also underscoring the importance of critically evaluating the validity of Sufi exegesis within contemporary Quranic studies.

INTRODUCTION

Quranic exegesis, as a product of human *ijtihad*, cannot be completely separated from the exegete's intellectual background, ideological leanings, or social environment (Hasbiyallah, 2018). These factors have led to the emergence of various interpretive approaches that reflect the scholarly orientations of individual exegetes. In some cases, these tendencies have the potential to produce interpretations that are not entirely based on valid and accountable sources. This phenomenon is known in

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the study of ulum Quran as *al-dakhīl fī al-tafsīr* (Ulinnuha, 2019). According to Fāyed, al-dakhīl refers to an interpretation that lacks a sound scientific foundation, whether from the Quran, authentic hadith, the opinions of the Companions, the opinions of the *Tabi'in,* the rules of the Arabic language, or reasoning that meets the criteria of *ijtihad* (Abrori & Rukhuz, 2024). Therefore, the study of al-dakhīl serves as a crucial tool for assessing the validity, authority, and credibility of an exegetical work.

Within its theoretical framework, *al-dakhīl* can emerge through three main pathways: the pathway of transmission (*al-ma'ŝūr*), the pathway of *ijtihad* (*al-ra'yi*), and the pathway of intuition or indication (*al-isyārah*). Among these three pathways, Sufi exegesis stands out as one of the most intriguing subjects for study because it often relies on inner dimensions, spiritual symbolism, and intuitive experiences that cannot always be verified through the methodological tools of conventional exegesis (Muttaqin, 2025). From Fāyed's perspective, some *isyārī* interpretations can be categorized as al-dakhīl if they disregard the zahir meaning of the verse or lack adequate arguments to support the proposed interpretation (Ulinnuha, 2019). Thus, the study of Sufi exegesis is important not only for understanding the construction of the inner meanings of the Quran but also for testing the limits of the validity of the interpretations it produces (Assa'diyah, 2026).

Nevertheless, the tradition of Sufi exegesis has strong epistemological roots in the intellectual history of Islam. Sufis generally believe that the Quran possesses both an outward (*ẓahir*) and an inward (*batin*) dimension of meaning that must be understood in a balanced manner. Al-Ghazālī emphasizes that an understanding of the outward meaning is a prerequisite before one can uncover the inward dimension of the Quran (al-Tustarī, 2004; Wahyudi, 2018). Over time, Sufi exegetes have presented a variety of different approaches. Al-Qusyairī sought to harmonize the literal and inner meanings in a balanced manner, while Al-Ālūsī, in Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī, maintained the primacy of the literal meaning while allowing room for spiritual allusions (Al-Qusyari, 2007). On the other hand, Sahl al-Tustarī placed greater emphasis on *isyārī* exegesis, whereas Ibn 'Arabī developed a far more complex metaphysical and symbolic approach to understanding the verses of the Quran (Ulinnuha, 2019).

Among Ibn 'Arabī's works, Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah holds a very important place in the tradition of Islamic Sufism. This encyclopedic work not only addresses spiritual and metaphysical issues but also offers interpretations of various verses of the Quran through symbols, philosophical analogies, and complex esoteric meanings (Faiziya, 2025). This uniqueness has made Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah one of the works that has received the most attention from both Muslim scholars and Orientalists. The various concepts presented in this work are seen as offering a new perspective on understanding the Quran while simultaneously sparking debate regarding the validity of Sufi exegesis within the Islamic scholarly tradition (Assa'diyah, 2026; Chittick, 2010; Knysh, 2022).

One of the most fascinating sections of Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah is the interpretation of Surah Al-Fatihah. In explaining this surah, Ibn 'Arabī not only elaborates on the general meaning of the verses but also provides symbolic interpretations of each letter, punctuation mark, and accompanying linguistic element. For example, the letter *bā'* in the phrase bism is interpreted as a symbol of *'ālam al-malakūt*, the dot beneath it as *'ālam al-jabarūt*, and its vowel mark as *'ālam al-mulk* (Mandzur, 1999). This interpretive approach demonstrates the dominance of a metaphysical perspective that transcends conventional linguistic analysis. Therefore, the interpretation of Surah Al-Fātihah in *Al-Futūhāt al-Makkiyyah* provides a relevant framework for identifying and evaluating the potential presence of *al-dakhīl* elements in Sufi exegesis.

A number of previous studies have examined various aspects of Ibn 'Arabī's

thought and interpretation. Baharuddin et al., (2026) highlight the characteristics of symbolism in Ibn ‘Arabī’s interpretation. Zamzami, (2017) discusses Ibn ‘Arabī’s position within the Islamic Sufi tradition, while (Arzaqi et al., 2025) examine his intellectual and spiritual development. Taufiq, (2025) examines the relationship between mystical experience and Ibn ‘Arabī’s epistemological constructs. In the field of *al-dakhīl*, (Ulinnuha, 2019) developed a theoretical framework for analyzing the validity of exegesis, while Alhikam, (2026) classified forms of al-dakhīl based on their sources of origin. Another study by Rahman et al., (2026) discusses methodology and issues of validity in Sufi exegesis. Nevertheless, research that specifically applies Fāyed’s theory of *al-dakhīl* to analyze the interpretation of Surah Al-Fātihah in Al-Futūhāt al-Makkiyyah remains very limited.

Previous research has generally focused on the aspects of metaphysics, Sufism, epistemology, symbolism, and the concept of waḥdat al-wujūd in the thought of Ibn ‘Arabī. Meanwhile, studies of al-dakhīl have been applied more extensively to *tafsīr bi al-ma’ṡūr*, *israiliyyat*, and methodological issues in exegesis in general. There has been little research specifically examining the validity of the interpretation of Surah Al-Fātiḥah in Al-Futūhāt al-Makkiyyah using Fāyed’s theory of *al-dakhīl*. Consequently, the position of Ibn ‘Arabī’s *isyārī* interpretation within the categories of *al-aṣīl* and al-dakhīl has not yet received a comprehensive evaluation.

Based on a search of the Scopus database for studies on Al-Dakhil in exegesis, 83 documents were found from 2012 to 2025. This analysis clearly shows that not a single study has been found related to Ibn ‘Arabi’s analysis of Surah Al-Fatihah. Below is a visualization of the VOSviewer bibliometric analysis based on the themes of Al-Dakhil, Islam, and Sufi exegesis.

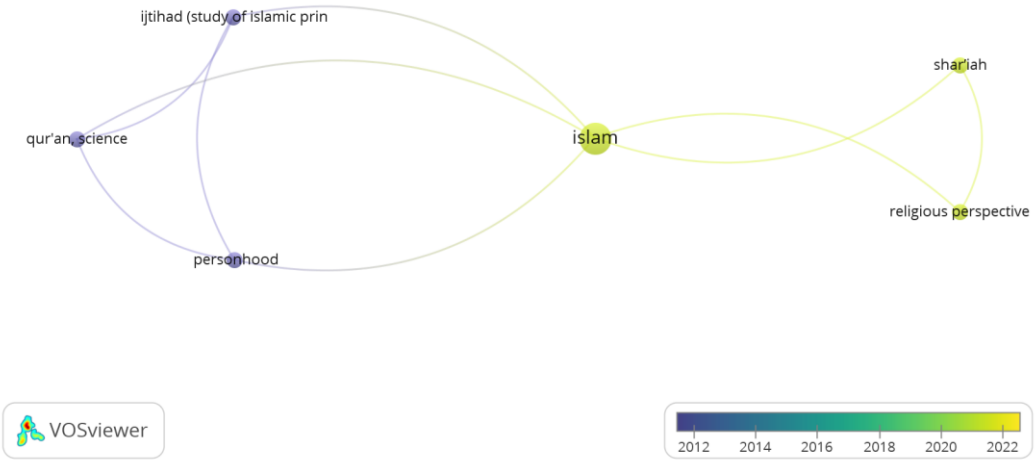


Fig 1. Vosviewer visualization analysis related to the study of Al-Dakhil in exegesis based on the keywords Al-dakhil, Islam, and Sufi exegesis (Scopus database, 2012–2025)

The novelty of this article lies in the application of Fāyed’s theory of *al-dakhīl* as the primary analytical framework for examining the exegesis of Surah Al-Fātiḥah in Al-Futūhāt al-Makkiyyah. Unlike previous studies, which have tended to emphasize the aspects of Sufism, philosophy, and spirituality in Ibn ‘Arabi’s work, this article combines the study of Sufi exegesis with a critical analysis of the validity of interpretation. Thus, this study offers a new perspective on assessing the legitimacy of *isyārī* interpretation based on the parameter of *al-aṣīl* in exegetical studies.

Theoretically, this article expands the application of the al-dakhīl theory to the field of Sufi exegesis, which has been relatively under-researched. Academically, the findings of this study can contribute to the development of critical exegetical methodology and enrich the discourse on the validity of esoteric interpretation in contemporary Quranic studies. Practically, this research helps researchers, lecturers,

students, and those interested in Quranic studies to understand the boundary between Sufi interpretations that are still methodologically acceptable and those that contain elements of al-dakhīl, thereby encouraging a more critical, balanced, and scientifically grounded reading of the Quran.

METHODS

This article was written using a qualitative approach, specifically content analysis, to examine the forms of *al-dakhīl* in the interpretation of Surah Al-Fātihah in Ibn 'Arabī's Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah. This approach was chosen because it allows the author to conduct an in-depth reading of the exegetical text to uncover the construction of meaning, the basis of argumentation, and the validity of the interpretation developed by the exegete. The article-writing process was carried out in several stages, namely data identification, data collection, data classification based on *al-dakhīl* categories, data analysis using 'Abd al-Wahhāb Fāyed's theory of *al-dakhīl*, interpretation of findings, and drawing conclusions. These steps were chosen because they align with the nature of textual research, which is oriented toward the critical examination of documents and scholarly literature (Creswell, 2018; Efendi et al., 2026; Engkizar et al., 2026; Kaema & Ulwi, 2025; Krippendorff, 2022).

Methods and Types

This article employs a qualitative approach using content analysis. Content analysis was chosen because it allows for a systematic and in-depth exploration of the meanings, symbols, and interpretive constructs contained within the text. This approach is relevant for identifying forms of *al-dakhīl* and analyzing their relationship with the philosophical Sufi tradition that underlies Ibn 'Arabī's interpretation. Furthermore, content analysis is effective for examining religious texts rich in conceptual and symbolic content (Engkizar et al., 2025; Hidayanti & Ikhsan, 2024; Krippendorff, 2022).

Data Sources

The data sources in this article consist of primary and secondary data. The primary data is sourced from Ibn 'Arabī's Al-Futūhāt al-Makkiyyah, specifically the section containing the exegesis of Surah Al-Fātihah (Engkizar et al., 2024; Mandzur, 1999). The selection of this source is based on its status as one of the major works in the Sufi exegetical tradition, which contains metaphysical, symbolic, and *isyārī* interpretations. Secondary data was obtained from various sources related to the theory of *al-dakhīl*, Sufi exegesis, exegetical methodology, the thought of Ibn 'Arabī, and studies in philosophical Sufism, such as the works of Fāyed (1980), al-Sulamī (2001), al-Qusyairī (2007), al-Qurṭubī (2006), Anwar and Solihin (2000), Hasyim (2009), Hadariansyah (2009), Noer (1995), Muliati (2016), and Sundari (2010). The use of these various sources aims to strengthen the analysis and broaden the interpretive framework of the study.

Instrument

The primary instrument in this article is the author (the human instrument), who plays a role in determining the focus of the study, selecting data sources, identifying forms of *al-dakhīl*, interpreting the data, and drawing conclusions. In qualitative research, the author serves as the primary instrument because they possess the ability to understand the context, grasp the meaning contained in the text, and relate it to the theoretical framework used (Fawaid, 2025). To aid the analysis process, the author uses 'Abd al-Wahhāb Fāyed's theory of *al-dakhīl* as a conceptual tool for categorizing and evaluating the validity of interpretations.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through documentation techniques by examining, critically reading, recording, and classifying all data related to the interpretation of Surah Al-Fātihah in Al-Futūhāt al-Makkiyyah. The documentation technique was chosen

because all research data consists of written documents that require a systematic process of identification and categorization. Through this technique, every interpretation that potentially contains elements of *al-dakhīl* is compiled and grouped according to the focus of the study, thereby facilitating the analysis process in the next stage (Bowen, 2009).

Data Analysis Tool

The analytical tool used in this article is the *al-dakhīl* theory developed by 'Abd al-Wahhāb Fāyed. This theory is used to identify and classify forms of *al-dakhīl* based on the categories of *al-dakhīl al-ma'ṡūr* and *al-dakhīl al-isyārah*. The analysis also refers to the parameters of *al-aṣīl* in Sufi exegesis, namely conformity with the rules of the Arabic language, non-contradiction with the principles of Sharia, and non-negation of the apparent meaning of the verse (Fāyed., 1980). The use of this theory is considered appropriate because it is specifically designed to test the validity and authority of an interpretation.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted in several stages. First, data reduction by selecting all interpretations of Surah Al-Fātihah relevant to the focus of the study. Second, data classification based on the typology of *al-dakhīl*, which includes *al-dakhīl al-ma'ṡūr* and *al-dakhīl al-isyārah*. Third, a comparison is made with the interpretations of other scholars both Sufi and non-Sufi exegetes to determine the degree to which Ibn 'Arabī's interpretation aligns with the parameters of *al-aṣīl*. Fourth, the data is interpreted to identify the factors underlying the emergence of *al-dakhīl*. The final stage involves drawing conclusions based on the patterns of findings obtained during the analysis process (Krippendorff, 2022).

Data Validity

Data validity in this article is ensured through source triangulation by comparing primary data from Al-Futūhāt al-Makkiyyah with various relevant secondary sources. In addition, the analysis process was conducted through repeated reading to ensure consistency in interpretation and accuracy in data categorization. This step was taken to ensure that the analysis results possess an adequate level of credibility, reliability, and confirmability in accordance with qualitative research standards (Machado-da-Silva, 2003). Thus, the resulting findings not only have a strong textual foundation but are also academically defensible.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

First, Ibn `Arabī's interpretation of the omission of the root letter alif after the letter *bā'* so that it is written as bismillāh rather than *bi ismi Allāh* reflects various views among the scholars. Al-Qurṭubī (d. 1273 CE), in his exegesis al-Jāmī` li Ahkām al-Qurān, argues that the omission of the alif before the word *ism* is merely a matter of Arabic linguistic elegance, as the omitted alif creates a more concise and readable impression. Az-Zarkasyi (d. 794 AH), in his Kitab al-Burhān, put forward a principle whose essence is that the omission of the alif signifies that there is something within the sequence of words that is beyond the reach of the five senses. Rasyad Khalifah (d. 1990 CE) argues that the omission of the alif in the *basmalah* is intended to ensure that the total number of letters in this verse is nineteen, not twenty. This is because the number 19 holds a secret related to the Quran. In the Quran, the names Allah, al-Rahmān, and al-Rahīm have a total number of letters that is divisible by 19 (Shihab, 2002).

In contrast to Ibn `Arabī's esoteric interpretation, which states that the letter *bā'*, representing the universe, serves as a substitute (*badal*) for the *hamzah al-waṣl* that is, Qudrah Azali (God's Power) the vowel of the letter alif becomes the vowel of the letter *bā'* as a symbol of the bestowal of existence. The letter alif represents the Essence, while the letter *bā'* represents the attributes. Therefore, in terms of the act

of bestowing existence, the letter *bā'* is more tangible than the alif due to the dot beneath it. That dot represents the existing entities (*al-mawjūdāt*) (`Arabī, pp. 158–159).

`Abd al-Qādir al-Jailānī (d. 1166), a Sufi who authored Tafsīr al-Jailānī, shares a similar view with Ibn `Arabī's interpretation. Al-Jailānī states that the letter bā' signifies that the existence of the entire universe is due to Me (Allah the Exalted), and there is no true existence other than Me (Allah the Exalted). This means that everything in this world everything other than Allah possesses only a nominal and metaphorical existence, not a true or essential one. Some people say, "*I see nothing unless I see Allah within it*," or "*I do not look at anything unless I see Allah first before seeing it*" (Al-Jailānī, 2010).

Both Sufis believed that the universe is a manifestation or appearance of the essence of *al-haqq*, namely Allah the Almighty. Ibn `Arabī and al-Jailānī viewed the universe not as a self-existent entity, but as a radiance of the Divine essence (Irawan, 2016). In other words, even though humans say that the universe exists, that humans exist, and that the creatures around humans exist, none of these things exist by virtue of their own existence. They do exist, but their existence depends on the Almighty Creator. However, this does not imply that Allah's existence is known merely because He has manifested Himself to His creation, for Allah is not dependent on anything (Nuruddin, 2021).

If one understands the intent behind the statements of the Sufis mentioned above, it becomes clear that their conception of the universe as a manifestation (*tajallī*) of Allah does not contradict Islamic law. When a person is immersed in the pinnacle of deep faith, it is not impossible for them to view everything other than Allah as metaphorical. For indeed, the only true existence is that of Allah the Almighty. Their testimony to Allah's majesty leads them to view the universe as transient.

From the perspective of *al-dakhīl* Fayed whose criterion for *al-aṣīl* is linguistic consistency and non-contradiction with sharia the researcher concludes that Ibn `Arabī's Sufi interpretation in this regard is, in fact, not contrary to sharia. However, there is an expansion of meaning, and his interpretation is overly forced in order to support his ideology of *wahdah al-wujūd* by using the letter alif as a metaphor for the Essence of Allah and the letter *bā'* as a metaphor for the manifestation of Allah's attributes. Thus, it can be concluded that Ibn `Arabī's interpretation regarding the omission of the core letter alif after the letter *bā'* so that it is written as *bismillāh* rather than *bi ismi Allāh* is categorized as *al-dakhīl al-isyārah dakhlan yasīran*, and his interpretation is *mauqūf*.

Second, the interpretation regarding the three parts of the letter "*bā'*" (shape, dot, and vowel) and the multiples of three in the letters *bā'*, *mīm*, and *sīn* as representations of the three realms (*Malakūt, Jabarūt,* and *Mulk*). The concepts of the realms of *Malakūt* (the spiritual realm), *Jabarūt* (the intermediate realm), and *Mulk* (the physical realm) are indeed known in Sufi literature, but their connection to the elements of the letters is a distinctive elaboration by Ibn `Arabī. Sahl al-Tustari, al-Ghazālī, and Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā did not go very far in interpreting the esoteric meanings of the letters of the Qur'an, including the letters *bā'*, mīm, and *sīn* in the *basmalah*.

Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā's (d. 1221 CE) interpretation of the phrase "*bismi*" in the Kitab al-Ta'wīlāt al-Nujumiyyah fī Tafsīr Isyāri wa al-Ṣūfī also emphasizes the inner meaning behind its letters. Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā (d. 1221 CE) adopted the view of Shaykh Ruzbihān al-Baqliy, who stated that the letter *bā'* in *bismillāh* symbolizes the eternity (*baqā'*) and glory (*bahā'*) of Allah, the letter sīn represents the light (*sanā'*) of Allah, and the letter *mīm* represents the glory (*majd*) of Allah. Later, Sahl al-Tustari (d. 896 CE) stated that the letter *bā'* represents the glory (*bahā'*) of Allah, the letter *sīn*

represents the light (*sanā'*) of Allah, and the letter *mīm* represents the glory (*majd*) of Allah. This view is nearly identical to that of *Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā*.

Abū Ḥamīd al-Gazālī (d. 505 AH/1111 CE), although known as a Sufi figure, took a more moderate approach to ta'wil and the symbolic interpretation of the letters of the Quran. Al-Gazālī's approach (n.d., p. 64) focuses more on the ethical and spiritual aspects of Quranic exegesis than on elaborate metaphysical symbolism. As in his interpretation of Surah Al-Fātiḥah, Al-Gazālī simply interprets the first verse as a revelation concerning the essence of Allah (نَبَأٌ عَنِ الذَّاتِ).

It can be concluded that Ibn `Arabī's distinctive symbols are so far removed from exoteric interpretation that they can be categorized as *al-dakhīl al-isyārah*, since the interpretation of *bismi* in relation to the three levels of reality lacks a strong textual foundation, and the symbolic interpretation exceeds the methodological boundaries established by Sufi exegetes. The researcher classifies it as belonging to the *yasīran* level and its interpretation as *mauqūf*, since the interpretation does not undermine the creed.

Third, regarding the final part of the interpretation of the first verse specifically the phrase *al-Raḥīm* Ibn `Arabi offers a highly esoteric interpretation. He states that the body of the letter *yā'* is like the cave where the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, took refuge with Abū Bakr when they were being pursued by the Quraysh during the Hijrah. The dot near the letter *mīm* represents Abu Bakr, while the dot near the *alif* represents the Prophet. According to him, while in the cave, Abu Bakr comforted the Prophet by saying, "*Do not grieve; indeed, Allah is with us*" (Quran 9:40) a view that differs from that of the majority of other exegetes. According to him, Abū Bakr uttered these words based on evidence from the Prophet's hadith: "*If I were permitted to choose a closest companion, I would make Abū Bakr my closest companion*" (Mandzur, 1999).

Ibn `Arabī's interpretation in this section differs significantly from the views expressed by other exegetes. He also links it to Surah Al-Taubah [10]: 40, which is considered too far removed from the context of the verse. The hadith he cites also does not align with the *sabab al-wurūd*. The researcher will explain this further below.

Looking at the interpretations of other Sufi scholars, such as Al-Sulamī (d. 1034 CE) in *Ḥaqāiq al-Tafsīr*, he states that *al-Raḥmān* is the pinnacle of His infinite glory because He has linked mercy to eternity, which is the pinnacle of glory. Meanwhile, regarding *al-Raḥīm*, His mercy is associated with the letters *yā'* and *mīm*, which relate to worldly mercy, guidance, and sustenance (Muttaqin, 2025). Al-Qusyairī (d. 1072 CE) also did not interpret *al-Raḥīm* using the symbolic interpretation of dots and letters. These two Sufi exegetes appear to be more objective in their interpretation of the Quran.

Meanwhile, the hadith cited by Ibn `Arabī as evidence that it was Abu Bakr who said, "*lā taḥzan innallāha ma`anā*," has been found by researchers in the book Jam`u al-Jawāmi` al-Ma`rūf bi al-Jāmi` al-Kabīr by al-Suyūṭī.

أَخْبَرَنَا أَحْمَدُ اِبْنُ مُحَمَّدِ اِبْنُ غَالِبٍ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا القَاسِمِ يَقُوْلُ: حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدٌ اِبْنُ عِمْرَانَ ابْنُ مُوْسٰى ابْنُ إِسْمَاعِيلَ أَبُوْ بَكْرِ الْخَزَارِ الْكُوْفِي السُّوْسِى الْهَمْدَانِى بِبَغْدَادٍ، حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيٌّ اِبْنُ إِبْرَاهِيْمَ ابْنُ عَبْدِ الْمَجِيْدِ الْوَاسَطِى،حَدَّثَنَا وَهَبْ اِبْنُ جَرِيْرٍ حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةٌ عَنْ أَبِي إِسْحَاقَ، عَنِ الْبَرَاءِ قَالَ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ – صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ –: "لَوْ كُنْتُ مُتَّخِذًا خَلِيْلِى لَاتَّخَذْتُ أَبَا بَكْرٍ خَلِيْلًا

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Gālib narrated to us, saying: "I heard Abū al-Qāsim say: Muḥammad ibn `Imrān ibn Mūsā ibn Ismā`īl Abū Bakr al-Khazār al- -Kūfī al-Sūsī al-Hamdānī al-Bagdādi, who said: It was narrated to us by `Alī ibn Ibrāhīm ibn `Abd al-Mujīd, who said: It was narrated to us by Wahab ibn Jarīr, who said: It was narrated to us by Shu`bah from Abū Isḥāq from al-Barā', who said: "The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: 'If I

were permitted to choose a closest companion, I would make Abu Bakr my closest companion.'" (Al-Suyūṭī, 2005).

Although this hadith is considered authentic, it is not specifically related to the story of the Messenger of Allah and Abu Bakr when they took refuge in the Cave of Thawr to escape the polytheists. In Syarh sahīh al-Bukhārī, it is narrated that the Prophet uttered this hadith while sitting on the pulpit during his final illness, which led to his passing in the 11th year of the Hijri calendar in Medina.

Al-Qurṭubī (d. 1273 CE) states in his exegesis *al-Jāmi` li Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* that the phrase *lā taḥzan innallāha ma`anā* is addressed to Abū Bakr. As narrated by Aṣbag and Abū Zaid from Ibn al-Qāsim, from Malik, he said: "*The person who is grieving, as mentioned in Allah's words 'lā taḥzan innallāha ma`anā,' is Abū Bakr*" (Al-Qurtubi, 2002).

This incident was also recounted by Abū Bakar *radiyallāhu `anhu* himself in an authentic hadith:

حَدَّثَنَا حَبَّانُ بْنُ هِلَالٍ :أَخْبَرَنَا، وَقَالَ الْآخَرَانِ :وَعَبْدُ اللهِ بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ الدَّارِمِيُّ ، قَالَ عَبْدُ اللهِ وَعَبْدُ بْنُ حُمَيْدٍ حَدَّثَنِي زُهَيْرُ بْنُ حَرْبٍ نَظَرْتُ إِلَى أَقْدَامِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ عَلَى رُءُوسِنَا وَنَحْنُ فِي حَدَّثَنَا هَمَّامٌ حَدَّثَنَا ثَابِتٌ حَدَّثَنَا أَنَسُ بْنُ مَالِكٍ أَنَّ أَبَا بَكْرٍ الصِّدِّيقَ حَدَّثَهُ قَالَ الْغَارِ، فَقُلْتُ : يَارَسُولَ اللهِ لَوْ أَنَّ أَحَدَهُمْ نَظَرَ إِلَى قَدَمَيْهِ أَبْصَرَنَا تَحْتَ قَدَمَيْهِ، فَقَالَ : يَا أَبَابَكْرٍ مَاظَنُّكَ بِاثْنَيْنِ اللهُ ثَالِثُهُمَا

Zuhair ibn Harb, `Abd ibn Humaid, and `Abd Allāh ibn `Abd al-Rahmān al-Dārimiy have narrated to me. `Abd Allāh said, "He informed us," and another said, "Habbān ibn Hilāl narrated to us, from Hammām, from Sābit, from Anas, who said: 'Abū Bakr once told me, saying: 'I saw the feet of the polytheists above our heads while we were in the cave, so I said, "O Messenger of Allah, if one of them were to look down at his feet, he would surely see us beneath his feet."' Then the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "O Abu Bakr, what do you think of two people whom Allah has aided as a third party?" (Narrated by Muslim (6/108, no. 2381); added from Tafsir al-Qurtubī (10/215) that al-Bukhāri also narrated this in his discussion of tafsir (3/135), Aḥmad in his Musnad (1/4), al-Tirmidhi in his section on exegesis (5/278), Ibn Kathir in his exegesis (2/358), and al-Alusi in his exegesis *Rūh al-Ma`ānī* (3/308) (`Arabī, n.d., p. 173).

From this, it can be concluded that Ibn `Arabī's esoteric interpretation of the term al-Raḥīm in Surah Al-Fātiḥah [1]: 1 is inconsistent with the *asbāb al-wurūd*, and his interpretation that "*lā taḥzan innallāha ma`anā*" was a comforting statement from Abū Bakr to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) contradicts authentic hadiths. Therefore, the researcher classifies Ibn `Arabī's interpretation regarding the meaning of the dot behind the term *al-Raḥīm as al-dakhīl al-isyārah*, specifically under the category of *al-dakhīl al-isyārah dakhlan syadīdan*, and his interpretation is rejected (*mardūd*), as it contradicts authentic hadith.

The Status of *Al-Dakhīl* in the Interpretation of QS. Al-Fātihah [1]: 2

First, the *isyārī* interpretation of the meaning of *al-ḥamd* as a purified servant (Al-Qurtubi, 2002). In Arabic, *al-ḥamd* linguistically means praise or gratitude (Maesyaroh, 2021). However, Ibn `Arabī engages in a highly speculative *ta`wil* by interpreting it as "the purified servant," which has no direct connection to the linguistic meaning of the word.

`Abd al-Qādir al-Jailāni (d. 1166) states in Tafsīr al-Jailāni that al-ḥamd refers to every form of praise and honor that flows voluntarily from the lips of humans and all creatures toward their Creator. They are always grateful and acknowledge His power and the blessings bestowed by their Creator through both actions and words, from time immemorial to eternity (Al-Jailānī, 2010).

Al-Qusyairī (d. 1072) states that al-ḥamd is to praise the Most Praiseworthy. All praise belongs solely to Allah, the Exalted, for His power, His majesty, His abundant grace, and His priceless blessings. All praise be to Him, who possesses attributes of perfection, and to Him belongs the praise of all creatures (Al-Qusyari, 2007).

Al-Sulamī (d. 1034) interpreted *al-hamd* as praise of Allah the Almighty, citing several opinions of scholars. Ibn `*Atā'* stated that *al-hamd* means giving thanks to

Allah. Praise Allah to express gratitude for the knowledge He has bestowed upon us. Furthermore, there is a narration from Ja`far al-Ṣadiq regarding his statement about "all praise be to Allah," in which he said: whoever praises Him with His attributes as Allah has described Himself then that person (the creature) has indeed praised Him. This praise consists of the letters *ḥā', mīm,* and *dāl*, where *ḥā'* signifies *waḥdaniyyah* (Oneness, having no partner), *mīm* signifies *mulk* (sovereignty), and *dāl* signifies eternity and perpetuity. Thus, whoever recognizes Allah as the One, the All-Powerful, and the Eternal has come to know Him (Muttaqin, 2025).

After examining the interpretations of Sufi scholars regarding the meaning of the term *al-ḥamd*, it can be concluded that Ibn `Arabī's interpretation deviates significantly from the rules of the Arabic language. Therefore, the researcher classifies Ibn `Arabī's interpretation of the word *al-ḥamd* as *al-dakhīl al-isyārah* on the grounds that the interpretation does not conform to the linguistic rules established by the scholars. As for its category, it falls under *al-dakhīl al-isyārah* of the *dakhlan yasīran* type, and its interpretation is *mauqūf*, since it does not undermine religious doctrine.

Second, the use of the hadith *Mān `arafa nafsahu fa-qad `arafa Rabbahu*, which means: "*Whoever has come to know himself has come to know his Lord*" as justification for his interpretation of the meaning behind the letter *lām* in the phrase *lillāh* is a problematic interpretation because this hadith is considered fabricated (*mauḍū`*) by many hadith scholars (`Arabī, n.d., p. 173).

Al-Suyūṭī (d. 1505 CE), in his Kitab al-Hāwī lil Fatāwā, under the subsection titled "*al-Qaul Asybah fī Ḥadiṡ Man `Arafa Nafsahu Faqad `Arafa Rabbahu*," presents the opinions of several scholars regarding this hadith, including those of Imam al-Nawawī (d. 1277 CE), Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328 CE), and al-Zarkasyi (d. 1392 CE). Al-Suyūṭī quotes Imam al-Nawawī's opinion from his Kitab, Fatāwā al-Nawawī:

Imam al-Nawawi was once asked for a fatwa regarding this statement, to which he replied, "*This statement has no validity as a hadith of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him.*"

Ibn Taymiyyah also deemed it a *maudū`* (fabricated) hadith. Al-Zarkasyi also expressed his opinion in *al-Aḥādiṡ al-Musytahirah*, citing the words of Imam al-Sam`ānī, who claimed that the statement was the words of Yaḥyā' ibn Mu`āż al-Rāzī, a renowned Sufi scholar from Iran. Meanwhile, Al-Suyūṭī did not favor the opinions of these three great scholars. It is highly likely that his opinion was not significantly different from theirs (Al-Suyūṭī, 2005).

Based on the scholars' comments regarding the quality and status of the hadith cited by Ibn `Arabī when interpreting the esoteric meaning of the letter *lām* in the phrase *lillāhi*, the researcher concludes that this hadith is a mauḍū` hadith. The researcher categorizes Ibn `Arabī's interpretation as *al-dakhīl al-ma'ṡūr* under the category of fabricated hadith. A fabricated (*maḍū`*) hadith that finds its way into an exegesis falls under the category of *al-dakhīl al-ma'ṡūr dakhlan syadīdan* (a severe intrusion) and its exegesis is rejected (*mardūd*).

The Status of *Al-Dakhīl* in the Exegesis of QS. Al-Fātiḥah [1]: 5

Ibn `Arabī (n.d., p. 177) interprets the word *na`budu* (we worship) as an action performed by the *yā'* (the servant) through the pronoun *nā* (we), and the status of the servant itself is, in fact, an act of Allah. This understanding reveals that, in truth, nothing truly exists except the Divine Presence alone.

Ibn `Arabī's views and interpretations outlined above are deeply rooted in the doctrine of *waḥdah al-wujūd*, which touches upon a theological topic known as *af`āl al-`ibād*. According to the *Ash`ari* school, human actions are, in essence, created by Allah; however, humans play a role in performing those actions through the concept of *kasb* (effort). Al-Baqillani (d. 1013) stated that although Allah creates all actions,

humans remain morally responsible due to the free will and choice granted to them (Hadariansyah & Asy'ariyah, 2009).

According to the Jabariyah, humans have absolutely no freedom in their actions (Lailatul et al., 2024). They adhere to the doctrine of absolute determinism (*jabr*), in which all human actions are directly created by Allah. Humans are merely tools that are moved without possessing any will or power of their own. Its leading figure, Jahm bin Ṣafwān (d. 745 CE), asserted that the actions attributed to humans are actually *majazi* (figurative), not *hakiki* (literal).

The Qadariyah hold the view that humans possess complete freedom in their actions. Humans create their own actions through their will and power without any intervention from Allah (Subekti et al., 2026). Gailan al-Dimasyqi (722 CE), an early Qadariyah figure, emphasized that human actions are entirely the responsibility of humans, regardless of Allah's predestination. Thus, humans are the creators of their own actions.

The *Mu'tazilah*, as the developers of *Qadariyah* thought, hold that humans create their own actions through the power granted by Allah prior to the occurrence of the action. Allah grants humans complete freedom to use that power. Qāḍī `Abdul Jabbar (d. 995 CE) explained that human actions are the creation of humans themselves; for if Allah were the one to create them, it would be unjust to punish humans for evil deeds that were actually created by Allah (Sundari, 2010).

According to Imam Ja`far ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq (d. 148 AH), the Shia sect holds the view that human actions are neither subject to Allah's intervention nor entirely independent of His power. In line with Imam Ja`far's view, Imam `Alī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā (d. 818 AH) stated that Allah does not compel humans to be obedient, nor does He compel them to commit sins, but He also does not leave humans entirely to their own devices. Allah manifests His power when humans are in need of His power (Shidqia Al-Muntadhar, 2024).

Of all the theological sects regarding *af`āl al-`ibād* that have been discussed, Ibn `Arabi's interpretation which interprets *na`budu* as an act of Allah aligns with the theology of the *Jabariyah*, which asserts that all human actions are metaphorical (*majazi*). Therefore, the researcher classifies the interpretation of QS. Al-Fātiḥah [1]: 5 regarding the phrase "*na`budu*" under the category of *al-dakhīl al-isyārah*, which stems from the exegete's personal ijtihad without being grounded in a consideration of its appropriateness when ascribed to Allah the Almighty. This falls under the category of *al-dakhīl dakhlan syadidan*, and the interpretation is rejected (*mardūd*) because it pertains to the concept of divinity.

Factors Behind the Presence of *Al-Dakhīl* in the Kitab Al-Futūḥāt Al-Makkiyyah

There are internal and external factors underlying the presence of al-dakhīl in the kitab Al-Futūḥāt Al-Makkiyyah. The internal factor is Ibn `Arabī's scholarly background. Meanwhile, there are three external factors. First, the influence of cross-cultural exchange, which cannot be ignored. Andalusia during Ibn `Arabī's time was a meeting point for various civilizations and schools of thought, including Greek philosophy (Neoplatonism) and the Persian mystical tradition.

Second, the socio-historical context of Ibn `Arabī's lifetime. The turbulent political and social situation in Al-Andalus, the intellectual struggles among various schools of thought, and the dynamics of interfaith and intercultural dialogue in the region all contributed to the complexity of his thought. Pressure from strict Islamic groups that adhered to a literal interpretation of the Sharia regarding Sufi thought also influenced the way Ibn `Arabī expressed his ideas (Noer, 1995). Against this backdrop, Ibn `Arabī sometimes resorted to symbolic language to avoid direct confrontation, which in turn created room for misunderstanding. This is explained in al-Qusyairī's (d. 1072 CE) kitab *al-Risālah*, where he states that the use of symbols in

the Sufi tradition is a defensive strategy to protect their teachings from those who do not share their views. This was particularly true during the 3rd and 4th centuries of the Hijri calendar, when Sufis expressed their teachings through secret languages rooted in spiritual experience to prevent the conflicts that were prevalent during those centuries (Firdaus & Hasan, 2021).

The third external factor relates to the lengthy process of transmitting and copying the *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*. Al-Sya`rānī (d. 1565 CE) hypothesized that the manual copying process, which was common at the time, was highly prone to errors, whether intentional or unintentional. Additions and omissions by copyists, interpolations by followers and interpreters, as well as the complexity of the *al-Futūḥāt's* writing period which was written and revised over a long span of time created opportunities for changes and the introduction of foreign elements into the original text. He argues that it is possible that not all parts of the currently circulating versions of *al-Futūḥāt* are actually Ibn `Arabī's own writings. The combination of the above internal and external factors created conditions conducive to the occurrence of *al-dakhīl* in the kitab al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah.

The use of ʿAbd al-Wahhāb Fāyed's (1980) critical framework which is based on scientific-rational analysis has its limitations when applied to Sufi-esoteric texts such as al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah. Ibn ʿArabī's interpretations often stem from spiritual experiences and a metaphysical horizon that are difficult to measure using rational parameters alone (Nuruddin, 2021).

Therefore, this study seeks to combine Fāyed's framework with a reading of other, more moderate Sufi commentaries such as Tafsīr al-Jailānī, Ḥaqāiq al-Tafsīr, and Laṭāʾif al-Isyārāt (Abd al-Qādir al -Jailānī, 2010; Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī, 2001; Abū al-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Qusyairī, 2007), so that the assessment of *al-dakhīl* continues to take into account both the spiritual dimension and the methodological boundaries of exegesis.

CONCLUSION

This article demonstrates that Ibn ‘Arabī’s interpretation of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah in *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah* contains several instances of *al-dakhīl* that can be identified through ‘Abd al-Wahhāb Fāyed’s theory of *al-dakhīl*. The analysis reveals six instances of *al-dakhīl* distributed across the interpretation of the *basmalah*, the verse affirming Allah’s lordship over all creation, and the verse expressing servitude to and reliance upon Allah. These findings consist of one fabricated ḥadīth categorized as *al-dakhīl al-ma’thūr dakhlan shadīdan*, two *ishārī* interpretations classified as *al-dakhīl al-ishārī dakhlan shadīdan*, and three *ishārī* interpretations classified as *al-dakhīl al-ishārī dakhlan yasīran*. The findings indicate that not all symbolic and esoteric interpretations proposed by Ibn ‘Arabī can be regarded as *al-aṣīl*, since some fail to fully satisfy the criteria of valid Sufi exegesis, particularly conformity with Arabic linguistic principles, the outward meaning of the Quranic text, and the normative framework of Islamic law.

The emergence of *al-dakhīl* in Ibn ‘Arabī’s interpretation is shaped by both his philosophical-Sufi worldview and the broader socio-historical context in which his thought developed. The novelty of this study lies in applying ‘Abd al-Wahhāb Fāyed’s *al-dakhīl* theory to critically evaluate the interpretation of surah Al-Fatihah in *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*, an approach that remains largely unexplored in previous studies. The findings contribute to the advancement of Quranic interpretive criticism by providing a methodological framework for assessing the validity of Sufi exegesis and enriching contemporary scholarly discussions on the boundaries between *al-aṣīl* and *al-dakhīl* interpretations within Quranic studies.

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Author contribution

Nadiatul Fadhilah: data curation, writing-original draft preparation, **Muhammad Ulinnuha:** analysis, conceptualization, **Saim Kayadibi**: methodology, **Oki Dermawan**: visualization, and editing.

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