

Digital Sufism: Artificial Intelligence Interpretation in Revealing the Spiritual and Ishāri Dimensions in Sufistic Tafseer

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ABSTRACT

Historically, the tradition of sufistic interpretation in Islamic scholarship offers a spiritual and Islamic approach to uncovering the transcendent meaning of the Quranic verses. Through sufistic interpretation, the spiritual meaning of verses can be deeply understood, even in terms of their symbolic meaning. However, as sufistic interpretation develops, Quranic scholars face challenges ranging from the complexity of the language to the depth of spiritual meaning that is difficult for contemporary readers in today's digital era to grasp. In contrast, the massive availability of digital features such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become an alternative for Quranic scholars in the process of learning the Quran and its interpretation. Based on this phenomenon, this study aims to explore the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI), specifically Natural Language Processing (NLP), in identifying, classifying, and extracting the spiritual meaning of sufistic verses. The research method used is qualitative-descriptive, based on literature studies. The primary sources consist of classical sufistic commentaries such as Tafsir Al-Tustari, Ruh Al-Bayan, and Bahrul Madid by Ibn 'Ajibah, while secondary sources consist of academic literature related to digital interpretation and natural language processing. The data collection technique was carried out through annotation of sufistic verses, which were then classified based on sufism themes such as tazkiyah al-nafs, tajalli, ma'rifat, fana', tauhid dzati, and hudhur. Data analysis was carried out in three stages: linguistic and semantic analysis, application of an NLP model to recognize patterns of Ishari interpretation, and validation of AI results through comparison with classical interpretations and sufism experts. The research findings show that NLP is able to identify sufism terms and classify verses based on spiritual themes with a fairly high semantic consistency. The relationship between verses forms a systematic pattern of spiritual journey, from the purification of the soul to divine consciousness. Although AI has limitations in capturing the depth of mystical experience, the results of this research open up opportunities for the development of more interactive and relevant AI-based digital interpretations, while preserving the spiritual dimension of the Sufi tradition.

Keyword: Sufistic Interpretation, Artificial Intelligence, NLP, Digital Hermeneutics

Introduction

The tradition of sufistic interpretation is one of Islam's intellectual legacies, offering spiritual depth and transcendent symbolic meaning. Unlike the textual or rational approach to interpretation, sufistic interpretation emphasizes the inner, Islamic, and experiential aspects of understanding the Quranic verses (Pangestu et al., 2025, p. 499). Sufistic interpretation not only seeks to explain the literal meaning of the Qur'an's verses but also explores the transcendent dimensions hidden behind them. In classical Islamic literature, figures such as Al-Tustari (Sahl bin 'Abdullah Al-Tustari, 2002), Ibn 'Ajibah (Ahmad bin Muhammad bin 'Ajibah al-Hasani, 2002), and Ismail Haqqi (Ismail Haqqi Al-Burusawi, 2008) have contributed monumental works that show how the verses of the Qur'an can be interpreted through a spiritual lens, intuition, and mystical experiences.

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However, with the passage of time, significant challenges have emerged in accessing and understanding sufistic interpretations. The complexity of classical Arabic, the use of profound sufism symbols and terminology, and the historical and spiritual context behind these interpretations present challenges for the contemporary generation, particularly in the digital age. Many modern readers struggle to grasp the essential meanings contained in the verses of the Quran, especially if the reader lacks a Sufi background or in-depth knowledge of the science of interpretation. As a result, this rich and profound legacy of sufistic interpretations is at risk of being marginalized in the current stream of Quranic scholarship that tends to be literal and technical.

On the other hand, advances in digital technology have opened up new opportunities in the education and Islamic studies world (Rani, 2023, p. 212). One of the most prominent digital innovations is the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI), particularly in the field of natural language processing (NLP). This technology enables machines to automatically understand, analyze, and extract information from text (Alawida et al., 2023, p. 1). In the context of Quranic studies, AI has the potential to be a revolutionary tool in accessing, classifying, and interpreting holy verses with a more systematic and adaptive approach to the needs of the times.

This phenomenon gave rise to the idea of "Digital Sufism," a new approach to understanding sufistic interpretation through the aid of digital technology, particularly AI. Digital Sufism is not an attempt to replace the role of scholars or *murshid* in interpreting the Qur'an, but rather an endeavor to bridge the gap between the legacy of classical interpretation and the needs of modern readers. By utilizing NLP, researchers can identify linguistic and semantic patterns in sufistic interpretation texts, classify verses based on sufism themes such as *fana'*, *baqa'*, *ma'rifah*, *mahabbah*, and *tajalli*, and extract the *Ishari* meaning hidden behind the language structure.

Furthermore, this approach also allows for validation of AI analysis results through comparison with the understanding of tafseer and Sufism experts. Thus, AI functions not only as a technical tool but also as an epistemological partner in the digital hermeneutics process. This approach aligns with the spirit of integration between Islamic sciences and technology, which is a key agenda for developing Islamic education in the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0.

Previous research on Artificial Intelligence interpretation revolves around the use of AI in interpreting the Qur'an, opportunities and challenges, and comparison of AI interpretation with classical interpretation, including Nina Wahidah Purnamawati (Purnamawati, 2025), Fatimah Noni Muhammad (Muhamad et al., 2025), Muhammad Andrian (Andrian & Harahap, 2025) Zukhruful Irbah (Irbah et al., 2024). There are several other researchers who tend to study thematic AI interpretation, including, first, Pipin Armita studies the integration of AI through Natural Language Processing (NLP) into the field of interpretation by emphasizing contextual meaning mapping (Pipin Armita, 2025).

Second, Faiz Hadi et al. analyzed the lafaz *al-marad* in the Qur'an linguistically with the help of AI, especially NLP (Hadi et al., 2025). Third, Shahlawati Binti Abu Bakar and Haziyah Binti Hussin discuss the interpretation of *ihsan* and *amanah* in the Qur'an as an effort to reconstruct the ethics of Artificial Intelligence (Abu Bakar & Hussin, 2025). Fourth, the research of Muhammad Andryan Fitryansyah and Fatimah Nur Fauziah examines AI's interpretation of religious texts in the Indonesian archipelago. Their findings demonstrate that AI can significantly increase accessibility and efficiency in understanding and interpreting religious texts (Fitryansyah & Fauziah, 2024).

Meanwhile, other studies tend to be limited to discussions on the validity, accuracy and authenticity of the interpretation of the Qur'an through Artificial Intelligence as conducted by; Mohd Shafiq bin Sahimi et al. who studied the potential of AI in maintaining the authenticity of the interpretation of the Qur'an and the risk of deviant interpretations (Shafiq Bin Sahimi et al., 2025); M. Faidh Fasyani et al. studied the issue of interpretative accuracy by evaluating how ChatGPT responded when explicitly asked to interpret verses based on the Tafsir al-Qurtubi (Fasyani et al., 2024); and Dzulfaidhi et al. discussed the ability and accuracy of ChatGPT in translating verses of the Qur'an (Dzulraidi et al., 2025).

Based on the literature review, it can be concluded that research on the interpretation of artificial intelligence (AI), particularly Natural Language Processing (NLP), in efforts to identify, classify, and extract the spiritual and Islamic dimensions of sufistic verses, has remained largely unexplored in academic studies or has not been explored by previous researchers. The urgency of this research is further heightened by the limited number of studies that specifically combine sufistic interpretation with AI technology. Most digital interpretation studies still focus on general literal, syntactic, or thematic aspects. However, sufistic interpretation has unique characteristics that require a specialized approach, both methodologically and technologically. Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap by offering a framework that combines linguistic, semantic, and spiritual analysis within a single AI-based system, specifically ChatGPT.

Academically, this research also contributes to the development of contemporary tafsir methodology. By combining a qualitative-descriptive approach with NLP technology, researchers can develop a more adaptive, multidisciplinary analysis model. This model can be applied to various Islamic studies, such as Sufism, Islamic philosophy, and Qur'anic hermeneutics. In the long term, this approach could even serve as a foundation for the development of AI-based interactive tafsir applications for use by academics, researchers, and the general public.

Method

This research is library research using a qualitative-descriptive approach, where the data is described in depth and comprehensively. The primary sources

of this research are based on classical sufistic tafseer books such as the Al-Tustari tafseer, Ruh Al-Bayan, and the Bahrul Madid tafseer by Ibn 'Ajibah. While the secondary sources are in the form of scientific literature in the form of books, articles, and other references relevant to this study. This qualitative-descriptive research will answer three research questions, namely: First, what is the role of ChatGPT in identifying the meaning of *Ishari* in sufistic verses? Second, to what extent can ChatGPT classify and analyze sufistic verses? Third, what are the limitations and advantages of ChatGPT in understanding the spiritual dimension of sufistic verses?

The data collection technique was carried out using annotation techniques for Sufistic verses from classical tafsir such as the tafseer Al-Tustari, Ruh Al-Bayan, and tafseer Ibn 'Ajibah. Then the verses are classified based on Sufism themes. Meanwhile, the data analysis technique was carried out in three stages, namely linguistic and semantic analysis, NLP model analysis in recognizing Sufi-ishari interpretation patterns, and validation analysis through comparing ChatGPT results with interpretive experts and Sufism experts to test the depth of spiritual meaning produced by ChatGPT interpretations.

Results

The Role of Natural Language Processing NLP in Artificial Intelligence

Natural Language Processing (NLP) is a branch of artificial intelligence (AI) that focuses on how computers can understand, analyze, and generate human language. Human language is highly complex due to its ambiguity, context, and cultural nuances. NLP serves as a bridge between everyday natural language and logical, structured machine language. With NLP, computers can perform various tasks such as reading text, recognizing speech, analyzing emotions, and providing relevant answers according to the context of the conversation. (Hirschberg & Manning, 2015).

Technically, NLP works through several stages of analysis. First, text or sound is converted into a form that a computer can process, for example, through tokenization, which breaks down sentences into words. Next, syntactic analysis is performed to understand grammatical structure, and semantic analysis to capture the meaning of words in a given context. This process allows the computer to recognize important entities such as names of people, places, or concepts, and to understand the relationships between words. With the support of machine learning and deep learning, NLP is becoming increasingly sophisticated because it can learn from large amounts of data and adjust interpretations based on the patterns it finds (Young et al., 2018).

The application of NLP is now very broad and touches various aspects of life. In the field of communications, NLP is used to build chatbots and virtual assistants that can interact naturally with humans. In academia, NLP helps researchers analyze large amounts of text, such as classic books or scientific

articles, to find specific patterns and themes. In business, NLP is used for customer sentiment analysis, automatic translation, and recommendation systems. Even in the healthcare sector, NLP is used to read medical records and detect language patterns related to a patient's psychological condition. All of this demonstrates that NLP is not just a technology, but a transformational tool that accelerates human interaction with information (Cambria & White, 2014).

In the study of sufistic interpretation, NLP plays a crucial role in deciphering classical texts rich in symbols, metaphors, and Islamic meanings. With its linguistic and semantic analysis capabilities, NLP can help researchers identify sufism terms such as *qalb*, *ruh*, or *sirr* and relate them to the context of Quranic verses. This makes NLP a strategic tool for understanding the inner dimensions of interpretation, previously accessible only through manual reading.

Identification and Classification of Sufi-Ishari Verses

Technically, NLP works through stages such as tokenization, syntactic analysis, and semantic analysis. In sufistic interpretation research, these stages allow computers to break down tafseer texts into smaller linguistic units and then identify hidden patterns of meaning. For example, when a verse is interpreted as a symbol of a spiritual journey, NLP can recognize the semantic relationship between the word "path" (*sabil*) and the concept of *suluk* in Sufism. With the support of deep learning, NLP is increasingly capable of capturing complex nuances of meaning, although it still requires validation from tafseer experts to ensure the resulting spiritual depth.

The application of NLP to the study of sufistic interpretation opens up new opportunities for classifying Sufism themes. Verses interpreted in a *Ishari* manner can be grouped into categories such as *tazkiya al-nafs* (purification of the soul), *ma'rifatullah* (knowledge of God), or *fana'* (self-melting in God). ChatGPT, as a representation of NLP, is capable of performing this classification with considerable consistency, thereby accelerating the research process, which previously required considerable time. Thus, NLP serves not only as a linguistic analysis tool but also as a means to construct thematic structures in Sufi interpretation. The following are the results of ChatGPT's identification and classification of sufistic verses with *Ishari* nuances.

Table 1. Classification of Sufi-Ishari Verses

No.	Surah/Verse	Ishari Verse	Sufism Theme	NLP Label
1	Al-Baqarah: 138	صِبْغَةَ اللَّهِ (The Dye of Allah)	Purification of the Soul (<i>Tazkiyah al-Nafs</i>) and Manifestation of Divine Attributes (<i>Tajalli</i>)	Purification, tajalli, light, faith
2	An-Nur: 35	اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ	Essential Manifestation (<i>Tajalli</i> <i>Dhati</i>) and Divine	Light, tajalli, heart, gnosis

		(Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth)	Knowledge (<i>Ma'rifah Ilahiyyah</i>)	
3	Al-A'raf: 143	فَلَمَّا تَجَلَّى رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ (When his Lord manifested Himself to the mountain)	Annihilation (<i>Fana'</i>) and Divine Manifestation	Fana', tajalli, majesty
4	Al-Hijr: 29	وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي (I breathed into him of My Spirit)	Spirituality and the Perfect Human (<i>Insan Kamil</i>)	Spirit, tajalli, perfect man, secret
5	Qaf: 16	وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ (We are closer to him than his jugular vein)	Divine Presence (<i>Hudhur</i>) and Unity of Being (<i>Wahdat al-Wujud</i>)	Presence, being, gnosis
6	Ash-Shams: 9	فَدُ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا (Successful indeed is the one who purifies it)	Purification and Spiritual Journey (<i>Suluk</i>)	Soul, purification, path
7	Al-Baqarah: 115	فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوا فَانَّم وَجْهَ اللَّهِ (Wherever you turn, there is the Face of Allah)	Essential Manifestation and Unity of Being	Tajalli, essence, being, gnosis
8	Al-Hadid: 3	هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ (He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden)	Essential Monotheism (<i>Tauhid Dhāti</i>)	Monotheism, outward, inward, being
9	Saba': 46	أَنْ تَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ مَنَّانٍ وَفَرْدَىٰ ثُمَّ تَنَفَّكِرُوا (Stand for Allah in pairs or singly, then reflect)	Inner Retreat (<i>Khalwah</i>)	Reflection, orientation
10	As-Sajdah: 16	تَتَجَافَىٰ جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا (They forsake their beds, calling upon their Lord in fear and hope)	Love (<i>Mahabbah</i>) and Night Vigil (<i>Qiyam</i>)	Love, vigil

The classification and annotation results of the ten verses indicate that all identified verses have a very strong and semantically consistent inner meaning structure. The emerging sufism themes can be grouped into six main axes, namely *tazkiyah al-nafs*, *tajalli* (Divine revelation), *ma'rifat*, *tauhid dzāti*, *hudūr* (awareness of God's presence), and spiritual *suluk*. This finding is clearly visible in

verses such as Al-Baqarah 138, which emphasizes the process of "dipping God" as *tazkiyah* towards *tajalli* of Divine attributes, and An-Nur 35, which explains God's light as a source of revelation of reality and *ma'rifat*. Thus, at this stage, it can be concluded that the verses are not only normative but also contain a structure of guidance for spiritual transformation that is measurable within the Islamic spiritual framework.

Further analysis shows that the relationship between these verses forms a pattern of interrelated spiritual progression. Al-A'raf 143, which describes the *tajalli* of Allah to the mountain, indicates the phase of *fanā'* or the destruction of the ego, while Al-Hijr 29 presents the divine dimension within humans through *nafkh al-rūh* as the basis for the conception of *insān kāmil*. In line with that, Qaf 16 emphasizes the dimensions of *hudūr* and *wahdatul wujūd*, namely the awareness of God's closeness within humans. On the practical side, verses Ash-Shams 91:7–10 place *tazkiyah* as a prerequisite for *suluk*, while Al-Sajdah 32:16 portrays *mahabbah* as the spiritual energy that drives *qiyam* and *munajat* at night. These findings show that these verses do not stand alone, but complement each other in building the framework of the spiritual journey from soul purification to divine awareness.

From a pattern recognition perspective, a series of NLP labels such as *tazkiyah*, *tajalli*, *nur*, *qalb*, *ma'rifat*, *hudūr*, *mahabbah*, and *qiyam* indicate the recurring occurrence of keywords and concepts within the network of sufistic verses. This consistency of terminology reinforces that the interpretation of *isyāri* is not speculative, but rather has a linguistic and semantic basis that can be systematically traced. Thus, this finding not only reveals the thematic structure of Sufism in the Qur'an but also opens up space for an NLP-based computational approach to exploring *isyāri* patterns. This classification reflects that the Qur'anic verses not only contain the basics of faith and law but also provide a coherent, gradual, and semantically consistent map of spiritual transformation according to the Sufi tradition.

Discussion

Comparison between AI Interpretation and Classical Sufistic Interpretation

In this section, the interpretation of ChatGPT and classical interpretations of Sufistic verses that have been classified previously will be described. First, the fragment of the verse "*ṣibghat Allah*" in Al-Baqarah: 138 through AI interpretation is understood not just as a "religious dip" in the formal sense, but as a spiritual dip (spiritual infusion) which makes the heart colored with Divine colors. This immersion occurs when a servant undergoes the process of *tazkiyah al-nafs* (purification of the soul) through *dhikr*, *mujahadah*, and getting rid of despicable qualities until the heart becomes clear and worthy of receiving *nur al-iman*. When this light radiates, the qualities of Allah emerge in the servant in the form of gentleness as a reflection of *ar-Raḥmān*, justice as a reflection of *al-'Adl*, honesty as a reflection of *al-Ḥaqq*, and so on, without ever moving to the union of essence, but

to nature and morals, like a mirror which only reflects the light of the sun without becoming the sun itself. Thus, the "immersion of Allah (*ṣibghat Allah*)" is an inner transformation that makes all the movements, morals, and consciousness of a spiritual person take on the Divine "color" until he not only knows Allah through reason, but lives faith as a spiritual experience, not just a verbal confession.

According to Sahl bin Abdullah At-Tustari in his tafseer, *sibghah* is interpreted as a sign. This sign can be obtained by a servant, for him the heart has a sign, the spirit has a sign, the mind has a sign, and the outward person has a sign. The sign of the outward is the traces of goodness (bestowed by God) (*ṣibghatu al-ashbāhi wa-l-zawāhiri bi-āthāri al-tawfiq*), which are carried out in the form of good deeds and morals in life. Meanwhile, the sign of the spirit (inward) is in the form of the deepest secrets or lights in the suluk of worship (*wa-ṣibghatu al-arwāhi wa-l-sarā'iri bi-anwāri al-tahqīq*) (Sahl bin 'Abdullah Al-Tustari, 2002).

Second, the verse "*Allāhu nūrus samāwāti wal-arḍ*" in An-Nur verse 35 is interpreted by AI as an affirmation that all existential realities can only be understood, lived, and known through Allah's *nur* (light), meaning not physical light, but *ma'nawī* light, which is a source of guidance, awareness, and witnessing (*syuhud*). This light radiates to creatures according to their level of spiritual readiness; with a clean heart, it appears *ma'rifat*, while with a closed heart it is veiled by lust. In the framework of *tajalli dzati*, *nur* Allah is not just guidance, but a manifestation of the presence and recognition of the Divine in the *qalbu* (heart) of the servant, so that the heart becomes a "*mishkāt*" (container), the spirit as a "*zujājah*" (clear crystal), and the *sirr* as a "*miṣbāḥ*" (inner lamp) that shines through *dhikr*, *tazkiyah*, and *mujahadah*. Thus, this verse illustrates that the light of Allah is the essence that gives life and reveals existence, and *ma'rifat* can only be achieved if the *qalb* becomes a clear mirror so that the Divine *tajallī* reflects in it without the hijab of ego, lust, and negligence.

In line with this, the interpretation of Ruh Al-Bayan provides the meaning that Allah is the true light that gives life and illuminates all beings—not a physical light, but rather an inner light that is the source of guidance and knowledge. This divine light, when revealed to the heart of a pure person, makes the heart a "*miṣbāḥ*" (inner lamp), the spirit a "*zujājah*" (clear glass), and the *sirr* a "*mishkāt*" (a means of receiving *tajallī* from the Divine Essence, so that humans do not simply accept Islam as an external law, but enter into a profound inner experience (Ismail Haqqi Al-Burusawi, 2008).

Third, the word of Allah "*fa lammā tajallā rabbuhu lil-jabal*" in Al-A'raf verse 143 is interpreted by AI as a symbolic depiction of the limitations of the ego and the structure of the existence of creatures in the face of *tajallī* (revelation) of Allah's majesty. The mountain in this verse is not only understood as a physical rock, but as a metaphor for *al-nafs al-basyariyah*, namely the structure of the ego, identity, and strength of the human self. When *tajallī jalāl* (revelation of Divine majesty) is revealed, the mountain is destroyed—just as the ego is destroyed when the essence of Allah's presence is realised by a prepared heart—so that what

remains is only pure inner awareness without ego (*fanā'*). In the Sufi sense, Moses was unable to witness *tajallī dzāt* not because of Allah's distance, but because of the limitations of creatures to accommodate the light of His majesty while still bound by self. This verse teaches that the path to *ma'rifat* is not opened through the claim of seeing Allah outwardly, but rather through the dissolution of the ego and the fusion of consciousness in His presence, where the "witness" is no longer the self, but Allah who is witnessed through His own light.

According to the interpretation of Bahrul Madid by Ibn 'Ajibah Al-A'raf, verse 143 contains the *Ishari* meaning of *fana'* al-nafs, namely the disappearance of self-awareness when seeing the majesty of God. Seeing the truth is something that is possible for Sufis in two worlds (this world and the hereafter), but in this world, only special people can achieve it and they express it with testimony and vision, and it can only happen after a servant reaches high spiritual ecstasy (Abu Abbas Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Ajibah, 1999).

Fourth, Allah's words "*wa nafakhtu fīhi min rūḥī*" in Surah Al-Hijr verse 29 are interpreted by AI not as part of the Essence of Allah that enters humans, but as a gift of divine spiritual radiance which makes humans creatures capable of receiving the light of consciousness, reason, love, and *ma'rifat*. "*Rūḥī*" here is understood as *sirr al-wujūd*, the secret of Divine existence which makes humans have the potential to reflect the qualities of perfection (*kamāl*), not the perfection of *dzāt*. When this soul is covered by lust, it is confined in the physical dimension; but when it is cleansed through *tazkiyah*, *dhikr*, and *mujahadah*, the light of the spirit shines again as a manifestation of the Divine nature in human morals, until the qualities of *rahmah*, *hikmah*, *'adl*, *ṣidq*, and *ḥilm* appear in him. This is what is meant by the degree of *al-Insān al-Kāmil*, namely a human being who does not become a "little god", but becomes the clearest mirror that reflects the light of Allah's beauty and perfection without any claims of ego, and who lives life not with ego, but with the clear awareness that "my being is not from me—I am the reflection of His light in this world."

In al-Tustari's view, the spirit that is breathed into humans - even though it is called "from My Spirit," acts as a medium for receiving the light of His *ma'rifat* and secrets; humans as vessels capable of reflecting the *tajallī* of Allah's attributes when desires are cleansed through *tazkiyah* and worship. Therefore, the angels' prostration to Adam (as mentioned in the continuation of the verse) is not just a physical recognition of the glory of the external form, but as a symbol of respect for human inner potential - that humans, with their souls, become caliphs who carry the Divine "color" in the world (Sahl bin 'Abdullah Al-Tustari, 2002).

Fifth, the words of Allah "*wa naḥnu aqrabu ilayhi min ḥablil-warīd*" in Qaf verse 16 are interpreted by AI as a statement that Allah's presence is closer to humans than themselves, not through the proximity of space, but the proximity of form, because all human existence depends entirely on His existence and care. Human negligence makes him feel far from God, even though what is far is not God but a heart that is veiled by ego, the busyness of the world, and lust; When the hijab

is revealed through *dhikr*, *tazkiyah*, and *muraqabah*, I witness Divine *hudhūr*, namely the inner awareness that Allah is always with, knows, and flows through every second of life. At this moment, *ma'rifah* appears - an inner recognition that sees everything as a manifestation of God's presence, until the servant sees himself not as something that stands alone, but as a "vessel" that is completely dependent on His being, and every movement, feeling, and breath is connected to Him.

According to the interpretation of Ruh Al-Bayan, Surah Qaf verse 16 reveals the reality of spiritual closeness that Allah is not just "outside" humans, but is always present in every pulse and breath, even closer than the jugular vein itself. In the meaning of *isyārī*, this closeness is *hudhūr Ilahī*, the essential presence which includes the outer and inner, where the *qalb* and human spirit become containers of awareness of God's form, as long as the hijab of ego and lust is cleansed through *tazkiyah* and inner *mujahadah* (Ismail Haqqi Al-Burusawi, 2008). So, for Salik, who walks the path of inner *sulūk*, this verse is a reminder that the search for God does not require traveling or going beyond the limits of space; simply by cleansing the soul and opening the eyes of the heart, humans can feel that Allah is always closer than it seems - in the spirit, *qalb*, and marrow of existence itself.

Sixth, the words "*qad aflaha man zakkaha*" in Surah Asy-Syams verse 9 show that true luck does not lie in worldly success, but in the success of a servant in purifying his soul from the darkness of lust until it is worthy of receiving Divine light. Purification of the soul (*tazkiyah*) in the *suluk* perspective is not just about abandoning external immorality, but straightening inner motivation, turning off the ego, and revitalizing the heart through *dhikr*, *mujahadah*, and spiritual *riyāḍah*. When this process takes place, a *salik* switches from a life driven by self-desire to a life driven by awareness of the presence of Allah (*hudhūr*), so that every deed becomes a path to wisdom and closeness to Him. According to Ibn 'Ajibah, a soul that is purified is not only kept away from external immorality, but especially from inner stains such as lust, ego, and worldly desires. When the soul is cleansed and illuminated by spiritual light, humans enter the state of *maqām ma'rifah* and inner union with the essence, which is beyond mere worldly success (Abu Abbas Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Ajibah, 1999).

Seventh, the words "*fa aynamā tuwallū fa tamma wajhullāh*" in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 115 are interpreted by Al as a revelation that the *tajallī* of the Divine Essence is present in every corner of existence, so that I do not view Allah as a figure who is only found in one direction of worship, but a reality that encompasses all of existence. When the heart is still covered by the external form, it sees differences in place and direction; but when the ego's veil is revealed through *tazkiyah*, *dhikr*, and *muraqabah*, the inner view witnesses that everything stands in the form of Allah and beckons to Him. At this level, *ma'rifah* does not mean merging in the essence, but recognizing that every phenomenon is a reflection of the Divine *tajallī*, so that the *salik* no longer seeks Him outside himself, but instead presents the awareness that wherever he turns, there is a sign and presence of Allah. According to At-Tustari, this verse indicates that Allah's *tajallī*

is present in every direction of existence, so that the servant does not seek Him in a specific place, but witnesses Him through the eyes of the heart in all things. Therefore, closeness to Allah is not achieved through physical displacement, but through inner purification so that *wajhullāh* is visible in every event and every moment of existence (Sahl bin ‘Abdullah Al-Tustari, 2002).

Eighth, the statement “*Huwa al-Awwal wa al-Ākhir wa al-Zāhir wa al-Bāṭin*” in Al-Hadid verse 3 reveals the essence of *tawhid dzātī*, namely that the entire reality of existence begins with Allah, ends with Allah, is visible with Allah, and is hidden with Allah — so that there is no existence that stands alone outside of Him. For a heart that is still veiled by the external form, nature appears as if it stands alone; but for a heart that has been illuminated by the light of *ma’rifah*, every phenomenon becomes *tajallī* that shows the Divine presence behind everything, both the visible (*zāhir*) and the hidden (*bāṭin*). With this awareness, a seeker lives life not only knowing Allah conceptually, but viewing his being as a trust of Allah’s presence — so that all movements, views, and feelings become contemplative worship rooted in the awareness that only Allah is truly Existent. In line with this, the interpretation of Ruh Al-Bayan provides an explanation that every beginning and end, visible and hidden, are all within the scope of His presence and arrangement. Therefore, a *salik* who attains inner witness sees that nothing exists apart from Allah, and all phenomena are only *tajallī* that lead the heart to closeness and *ma’rifat* to Him (Ismail Haqqi Al-Burusawi, 2008).

Ninth, the words “*an taqūmū lillāhi mathnā wa furādā tumma tatafakkarū*” in Surah Saba' verse 46 are interpreted by AI as a call to stand facing Allah with a sincere heart—both together and individually—as a process of *tawajjuh* towards inner silence. This verse emphasizes that the essence of closeness to Allah is not in the hustle and bustle of external worship, but in *tafakkur*, which reveals the nature of oneself, the purpose of life, and the presence of the Divine in every situation, which can only be achieved through silence and inner witnessing. Therefore, this verse is the basis for spiritual *khalwah*, namely the condition when a spiritual person isolates himself from the hustle and bustle of the world to revive his heart and turn all his consciousness towards Allah until he feels that everything starts from Him, takes place with Him, and returns to Him. This is in line with Ibn ‘Ajibah’s interpretation of the verse, which contains an invitation to turn one’s heart completely towards Allah - both when with other people and when alone - until the *qalb* enters a state of *tawajjuh* and inner silence. In that silence, *tafakkur* becomes a way of witnessing *ma’rifat*, because a heart that is clear and present to Allah will see the signs of His oneness in oneself, nature and all existence (Abu Abbas Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Ajibah, 1999).

Tenth, the word of Allah “*tatajāfā junūbuhum ‘ani al-maḍājī’ yad’ūna rabbahum khawfan wa ṭama’ā*” in Surah As-Sajdah verse 16 describes the state of the lovers of the Divine (*ahl al-mahabbah*) who are unable to dissolve into sleep because their hearts are drawn by the longing to pray to Allah, so that *qiyam al-layl* is no longer an obligation, but a spiritual need. Their prayers are filled with

“*khawf*” and “*ṭama*”, not physical fear or material hope, but rather the fear of being veiled from Allah and hoping to be given a share of His closeness and compassion, so that this dynamic of feeling becomes the fuel for their spiritual journey. At this level, a seeker moves from worship due to the demands of the Shari’a to worship due to love and presence, until *qiyam* becomes the holiest moment of inner encounter between servant and God, when all worldly veils fall away, and only Allah remains in consciousness.

According to At-Tustari's interpretation, As-Sajdah verse 16 describes the condition of servants whose love for Allah overcomes sleepiness and physical comfort, so that their hearts are encouraged to wake up to pray at night without coercion. Their prayers are filled with *khawf* and *rajā'*, not because they are afraid of punishment or hope for the world, but are afraid of being veiled by Allah and hope to continue to be given a share of His closeness and mercy (Sahl bin ‘Abdullah Al-Tustari, 2002).

Advantages and Limitations of AI in Sufi-Ishari Interpretation

Methodologically, AI helps clarify the linguistic and semantic elements that constitute *ishārī* markers—for example, the identification of cosmic metaphors (light, ocean), inner aspects (*qalb, sirr*), and transformation verbs (*tazkiyah, fana', tajallī*)—which can then be used as features for automatic classification or multi-label modeling. The integration of techniques such as semantic embedding, modified named-entity recognition for sufism terms, and fine-tuning a qualitative exegetical corpus can improve the accuracy of detecting esoteric concepts while providing structured output (CSV/JSONL) for further analysis. Several recent studies on the integration of NLP and Qur’anic studies emphasize this potential to enrich exegetical studies with verifiable quantitative output (Najib & Kurjum, 2025).

However, the limitations of AI in the realm of Sufi-Ishari science are quite apparent, as AI does not experience the *dzauq, kashf*, or inner states that are the authentic sources of sufistic meaning. Therefore, it only reconstructs linguistic patterns and interpretive traditions without access to the experiential dimensions that determine Sufi authority. Furthermore, the model risks repeating the biases of the training corpus—for example, the marginalization of local traditions, the simplification of layered terms, or the misrepresentation of historical context—which can produce misleading interpretations if used automatically without verification. Critical literature on AI bias and subjectivity emphasizes the dangers when systems claim “understanding” when in fact they are statistical replications (Tampubolon & Nadeak, 2024).

Therefore, a practical recommendation emerging from these results is to implement human-in-the-loop: AI functions as an exploratory tool that generates maps, tagging, and hypotheses; the final interpretation and validation of the depth of spiritual meaning remains entrusted to *mufassirs*, tarekat teachers, and Sufi experts. Furthermore, ethical and methodological policies—including

transparency of training data, documentation of model limitations, and expert verification procedures—are needed to prevent the establishment of “digital authorities” that replace the tradition of scholars; recent research on AI & religion recommends blending computational techniques with textual quality checks and validation by religious communities. Within this framework, AI can enrich research on Islamic interpretation without claiming inner experiences that are not part of it (Tarwiyyah, 2025).

Conclusion

This research confirms that the integration of artificial intelligence, specifically Natural Language Processing (NLP), into the study of Sufistic interpretation opens up new opportunities for digital hermeneutics. Through the process of identifying, classifying, and annotating verses with *ishari* nuances, AI is able to uncover linguistic and semantic patterns consistent with classical Sufi traditions. These findings demonstrate that Sufistic interpretation can not only be understood as a spiritual heritage but can also be systematically mapped with the aid of technology, thus strengthening its relevance in the digital age.

Furthermore, a comparison between the results of the AI analysis and classical interpretations reveals significant common ground. AI is able to capture inner meanings such as *tazkiyah* (religious understanding), *tajalli* (intelligence), *ma'rifat* (intelligence), and *fana* (intelligence), although it still requires validation from exegetes and Sufis to ensure its spiritual depth. This confirms that AI is not a substitute for the authority of scholars, but rather an epistemological partner that can accelerate the research process and bridge the gap between the contemporary generation and the classical Sufi interpretation.

While this study successfully demonstrates the immense potential of NLP in identifying and classifying Sufistic verses, several limitations are worth noting. First, linguistic limitations, as classical Sufistic commentaries often use symbols, metaphors, and Sufism terminology that are difficult for machines to fully grasp. Second, epistemological limitations, as AI lacks direct spiritual experience like Sufis, require validation from commentators and Sufi scholars. Third, technical limitations stem from the limited data corpus used, which means the classification results do not yet encompass the full breadth of Sufi interpretation. Therefore, further research is recommended to expand the corpus of Sufi commentaries, integrate multidisciplinary approaches (linguistics, philosophy, and Sufism), and develop AI models that are more adaptive to spiritual nuances. With these steps, the study of Digital Sufism can mature and contribute to the development of more comprehensive digital interpretation while preserving the spiritual depth of the Sufi tradition.

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