

Nature of *Af'al* According to Imam Al-Qushayri in the Book "*At-Tahbir Fi At-Tazkir*"

Omar S.H.S.^{1*}, Faisal M.N.¹, Fadzli Adam¹, Najihah A.W.¹,
Rahimah E.¹, Othman M.S.², Abdullah S.², Omar S.H.S.²,

¹Research Institute for Islamic Products & Civilization (INSPIRE), Universiti Sultan Zainal
Abidin, Gong Badak Campus, 21300 Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu, Malaysia.

²Faculty of Islamic Contemporary Studies, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin,
Gong Badak Campus, 21300 Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu, Malaysia.

E-mail: sylutfi@unisza.edu.my

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Abstract

In the time of the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H), the question of Allah's attributes is not a dispute among the Muslims. If so, then it will be referred to Rasulullah (p.b.u.h). The debate about it began to arise in the early second century of Hijri until now and it has become a matter of debate of thought in the perspective of the tawhid. This article is a study of the nature of Allah almighty seen from the side of the thought of a famous Sufi figure in the fifth Hijri, Imam Abd al-Karim bin Hawazin al-Qushayri. This article touches on his character in the field of faith, his arguments in answering the questions regarding the nature of Allah's affirmation and the style and method he uses in bringing to appreciation of those attributes. The research method used in collecting data and information is library research. At the end of the study found that the style and methodology used by Imam al-Qushayri has succeeded in diverting the purpose of the reader from the issue of debate about the nature of *af'al* solely to appreciation and how to be obedient to Allah almighty.

Keywords: Al-Qushayri, Nature of *Af'al*, divine gnosis, *At-Tahbir fi at-Tazkir*

Introduction

One of the most important issues pertaining to the divine aspect that is often the topic of debate among the rationalists is about *af'al* Allah almighty (Wan Ali 2004,12). In fact, the knowledge of the essence and nature of Allah is not merely as knowledge and debate just like the other absolute sciences, but the real meaning is to practice in achieving the essence of devine gnosis or *ma'rifa* to Allah almighty. In the Qur'an, Allah almighty says,

"And He it is Who has created for you hearing, sight and heart. Very few are grateful. And He it is Who creates and comforts you in this earth, and in Him ye will be gathered. And He it is

Who gives life and causes to die, and He is the keeper of the night and the day. Do you not think about it? " (Surah Mukminun: Verses 78-80)

Hence, in achieving the essence of divine gnosis it is very important to appreciate and understand the noble names and attributes of Allah almighty through the correct interpretation of the characters who hold the Quran, as-sunnah and bring the belief (*i'tiqad*) Authentic according to the agreement of *ahlusunnah waljamaah*.

The Imam 'Abd al-Karim bin Hawazin is well-known or better known as the imam of al-Qushayri was one of the Sufi figures in the fifth century. His name is quite renown to the world of Sufism, but his character in the field of oneness of Allah almighty or *tawhid* is no less than great. His works such as *al-Risalah al-Qushayriyyah*, *as-Syikayah ahlussunnah* and *Lathaif al-Isyarah* contain many valuable pearls of knowledge especially related to the monotheism.

This content analysis article examines the thinking of the imam of al-Qushayri in describing the nature of Allah almighty through the book *at-Tahbir fi at-Tazkir*. In addition to the approach and methods he uses in bringing understanding to these attributes, his character in the *tawhid* knowledge is also touched as this issue relates to the study conducted and the authors find it still not much research in it. Methods used in data collection and information led to library research.

The Short Biodata And The Truth Of Imam Al-Qushayri In The Field Of The Oneness Of God (*Tawhid*)

Imam Abdul-Karim Al-Qusyairi was born in 376H along 986M in Ustawa, a village at the end of the City of Naisabur, Khurasan. If the first Abassiyah era was the era of translation and transfer of knowledge, the second Abassiyah era was the epoch of the implementation of its translation culture from Greek civilization, Persia and India. In this period Imam Al-Qusyairi lived in the opening and innovation period in every area of knowledge of *aqli* and *naqli* (Ibrahim Bissiuni 1972, 10). He died in the middle of the fifth century Hijri on the same day as the 16th *Rabi 'al-Awwal* of 465H.

Imam al-Qushayri received early education in the fields of religion, literature and Arabic from Abu Al-Qasim Al-Yamani, a well-known scholar in Arabic literature (al-Barkhazi 1969, 322). Then he went to the city of Naisabur, the main city which became the focus of scholars at that time because of many knowledge institutions such as *Madrasa Ibn Furak*, *Madrasa Baihaqiyyah*, *Madrasa Sufi Al-Astrabazi* and Special *Madrasa* of Abu Ishak Al-Asfaraini (Ibrahim Bissiuni 1972, 11). There, Imam Al-Qusyairi met with many distinguished Islamic scholars and *ulama* in the field of *tawhid*. Among them are Imam Ibn Furak, Imam Al-Isfiraini, Syeikh Abu Ali al-Hasan bin Ali Ad-Daqqaq, Imam Abdul Rahman as-Sullami and many others.

At the very beginning, Imam Al-Qusyairi spent much time mastering the book of Al-Baqillani, the great scholar of the Sunnah who known as defender of Sunnah and the tounge of *ummah*. He was also very keen in studying *halqa* of Imam Ibn Furak and Imam al-Isfiraini, the two clerics' eminent in the al-Asy'ari sect (Wan Ali 1994, 88). The main teacher who influenced al-Qushayri's Imam was Sheikh Abu Ali ad-Daqqaq an-Naisaburi, one of the distinguished Sufi scholars. Imam al-Qushayri mentions in his book ar-Risalah, that the Sufi members are the ones that build the rules of *tawhid* on the principles of truth, preserve their *aqidah* from

bid'ah, and preserve what is found from the pious predecessors (*salaf*) and they are the group Ahlisunnah (al-Qushayri 1991, 41).

The superiority of Imam al-Qushayri in the science of *tawhid* makes him a stronghold in defending belief (*aqeeda*) of Sufi members. He answers many of the difficult questions in Sufism such as discussions on the existence of the karma, the issues in seeing Allah almighty, the pilgrimage and others (Ibrahim Bissiuni 1968, 143). He was also a defender of the *al-Asyai'rah* when the minister of the Sultan Saljuq Tughril-beg, Abu Nasr Muhammad ibn Mansur al-Kunduri, Mu'tazila who made the defamation and indignation that caused the al-Assam at that time to be admonished and prohibited from teaching and preaching and dumping others (Wan Ali 1994, 75). His struggle reached its peak when he was imprisoned for ten years from 445 Hijri to 455 Hijri because he was so vocal in defending and defending the right *aqeeda*.

Straightening The Aqidah Batil

The book of *at-Tahbir* is the best field for the imam al-Qushayri to debate matters related to science from the perspective of Sufism. Moreover, when a dispute arises which involves matters pertaining to *aqeeda*. In the time of Rasulullah (p.b.u.h), *aqeeda* is not a separate discipline because the problem arises is clear and there is no difference in understanding. If anything, it will be answered by him. In solving the problem of *aqeeda* related Allah's being and attributes, imam of al-Qushayri has made the beautiful name of Allah almighty (*asma'ul-husna*) as a lecture to straighten the ideas that contrary to *aqeeda* of the members of the *ahlusunnah waljamaah* pilgrims such as Mujassimah and Mu'tazila.

A) Defeat the wrong understanding of Mu'tazila Group

Mu'tazila groups are commonly known as those who glorify their intellectual ability so that their ideas are developed especially in relation to rational and liberal science (Mawardi Hattan 2013, 87). In the essence of matter and nature, they hold on to the opinion that the essence and nature of God are one and the same. (Wan Ali 2002, 5). They are also the ones who love to recite the Qur'anic texts so as not to contradict their views and understanding. (Abu Zahra, n.d.: 149).

In referring to the attributes of Allah almighty in the book *at-Tahbir* indirectly Imam al-Qushayri has criticized the Mu'tazila in a delicate way as if in denying something important. According to Imam al-Qushayri, the debate on the essence, and the divine nature is not merely to increase knowledge, but to achieve the divine gnosis knowledge of essence and nature need to be followed by spiritual pathway (*sulook*) ie the knowledge must be in line with practices. Actually, believing in the attributes of God will nourish the *sulook* and give strength and earnestness in practice (Bissiuni 1972, 145).

B) The answer to the I'tiqad of the Mujassimah Group

As for the *Mujassimah* they invoke Allah with His creatures. They say that God is armed, legged, bodily as human. Belief as above is contrary to belief of *Ahlussunnah Wal Jamaah* and mislead because Allah almighty should never be confused with the creature (Selangor Mufti Department 2010). Imam al-Qushayri asserted at the beginning of the book of *Tahbir* about the purpose of the word of almighty Allah "nothing that resembles Him", has said al-Wasati about it that there is nothing similar to the essence of Allah almighty, and nothing like the *fi'il*

or deed and nothing resembles His attributes except in terms of pronouncement only. This is the answer to the fundamental issues of *tawhid*. (Al-Qushayri 1968, 19)

The Appreciation Of The Al-Af'al Leads To The *Ma'rifa*

The most important principle in knowing God is to know who God is and his relationship with man. The relationship can be understood with the main attributes of Allah including The Pre-beginning (*Qadim*), The Creator (*Khaliq*), The One who always existed (*Baqi*) and so forth (Ramli 2016, 1). When deciphering and referring the names of the attributed attributes of the almighty Allah in the book *at-Tahbir fi at-Tazkir*, Imam al-Qushayri has used some style and method in bringing to appreciation of these attributes. In the writer's view, it is not enough to recognize, but the ultimate goal is to practise good manners accordingly to the one (Ibrahim Bissuni 1968, 11). This is what is said to do good with what is known and is also the fruit of the true divine gnosis. Allah almighty says in the Qur'an, "and they do not glorify Allah as it should" (Al-An'am: 91).

Usually the imam of al-Qushayri will begin the discussion by briefly introducing the meaning of the language, then describing the meaning from the origin of the word and other meanings relating to the use of the word. For example, in describing The Opener (*al-Fattah*), from the point of view of the language means *qadi* or judge because of its role as the key to the resolution of the hostility. The name of *al-Fattah* for Allah almighty is because of its nature as the key to sustenance for all of His creatures and the keys of all things (al-Qushayri 1968, 42).

In addition to using the verses of the Qur'an and the narrated hadiths in most places, the imam of al-Qushayri also carries the interpretation, the words and views of the pious predecessors (*salafussoleh*) and their stories to further bring the reader closer to the true meaning. No less is the stories of the prophets as proofs and enlightenments as in the description of the virtues of the Almighty God, The Giver of gifts (*al-Wahhab*) onto the people of the prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h). One day the Prophet Moses asked to meet with the *ummah* of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) because they were amazed by the advantages of those who Allah almighty narrates in the book of Tawrat. Then Allah almighty has summoned those who are still in the loins of their forefathers and said "O people of Muhammad! I give you before you ask, and I forgive you before you ask forgiveness" (al-Qushayri 1968, 40).

Conclusion

Knowledge of oneness of god is the most important aspect in achieving the essence of divine gnosis, especially in relation to the essence and nature of Allah almighty. However, the ultimate purpose of knowledge of oneness of god is not merely as an information and knowledge, but the correct understanding followed by appreciation is one of the means of intermediation to achieve the essence of divine gnosis. The Imam al-Qushayri wisely blasphemes those against belief of *ahlusunnah waljamaah* especially about the issues pertaining to the nature of Allah's affirmation. Through the method and style in describing the names and attributes of Allah almighty, he is also seen to have succeeded in diverting the purpose of the reader from knowledge solely to appreciation and how to be obedient to God.

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