Exploring Spirituality of Saʿdūn al-Majnūn's Poetry:
A Perspective of Ibn ʿArabī's Hermeneutics

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Eksplorasi Spiritualitas dalam Puisi Saʿdūn al-Majnūn: Perspektif Hermeneutika Ibn ʿArabī

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Abstract
Spirituality poetry generally contains elements of beauty and aesthetics, so it tends to display linguistics and literature. Saʿdūn's poetry has its uniqueness with spiritual content in it. Spirituality in Saʿdūn's poetry describes the close relationship between man and God, which is reflected in the form of criticism of society. Therefore, this study aims to determine the form of spirituality in Saʿdūn's poetry. This research method uses content analysis by using Ibn ʿArabī's hermeneutics approach in its interpretation. The results of this study indicate two things, namely: (1) essence of death in the first poem contains three important pieces of advice, namely life in this world, life in the afterlife, and prepare for death; and (2) essence of *maʿrifah* contained in the second Saʿdūn's poetry shows Saʿdūn's closeness to God as evidenced by two things, namely *zuhud* and world prevents towards Allah. This study is important in expanding the study of Ibn ʿArabi's hermeneutics which is usually only used to interpret the inner meaning in the Qurʾān and ḥadīth. Hermeneutics can also be used in other literary works such as poetry, novels, short stories, etc.

Keywords
Spirituality poetry;
the nature of death;
the nature of *maʿrifah*;
Saʿdūn al-Majnūn

Introduction

In general, poetry contains elements of beauty and aesthetics, so studies in poetry tend to pay attention to linguistics and literature. Saʿdūn's poetry is unique in its spiritual content (al-Naysābūrī, 1987). Poetry has a prominent history in Arabic literature (Abandah et al., 2022). Spirituality in Saʿdūn's poetry describes the human relationship with God, which is reflected in criticism of human behavior (Muyassarah & Abadi, 2021). The spiritual meaning of this poem cannot be separated from Saʿdūn's background, who is considered a guardian of the majdub who came from the Abbasid dynasty and is considered to have reached the *maʿrifah* stage (Miswar, 2017; al-Naysābūrī, 1987; Sayuti, 2002). This makes his poetry contain the values of sincerity, honesty, and the intuition of patience that can be used as a blessing (Zuhdi, 2018). The meaning of a poem has a spirit that gives a mystical experience. Sentences in poetry have an impact on human actors, represent self-anxiety, and

can strengthen relationships with God (Hamzah & Barrunnawa, 2021; Haque, Maimunah, & Wargadinata, 2021; Mustakim, 2014). The lines of poetry have supernatural powers and spirituality, and it is not surprising that the Arab community so glorifies poetry from time to time (Wargadinata & Fitriani, 2018). Poetry that has a deep meaning is not made just like that but through deep reflection in the soul and meditation to get closer to God (Awalia et al., 2019).

In knowing the meaning of spirituality, Sa'dūn poetry is needed the right method. One is Ibn 'Arabī's hermeneutics (Noer, 2012). Ibn 'Arabī's hermeneutics is the art of interpretation used to understand the inner meaning of the Qur'ān and ḥadīth (Wahyudi, 2018). Ibn 'Arabī's hermeneutics combines the concepts of interpretation, *taṣawwuf*, and philosophy so as to make this hermeneutics able to explore the inner meaning in a text (Ibn 'Arabī, 1967). This is undoubtedly very interesting, whereas hermeneutics usually only focuses on the initiator, the text, and the reader (Arif, 2014). Ibn 'Arabī's hermeneutics is referred to as a *ta'wīl* and is included in the category *of naẓarī* sufis or philosophical Sufis (Wahyudi, 2018). This hermeneutics utilizes the linguistic form of a text to reveal the *inner* meaning of the text. Because of that, Ibn 'Arabī's considers the text as a door to the unseen world and has a relationship between humans and God as texts in the Qur'ān, ḥadīth, and poems from a saint. (Ibn 'Arabī, 1967; Atjeh, 1976; Samsurrohman, 2017; Wahyudi, 2018). Ibn 'Arabī accepted the literal and outward meaning, but he added an interpretation based on intuitive revelation (*kashf*) that transcends human cognitive limitations (Chittick, 1989).

It is understood that not all texts can fall into this category. There are two types of *kalām* from the perspective of Ibn 'Arabī. First, *kalām* does not require substance to express language, either in the form of pronunciation or numbers (Bagir, 2015). Second, *kalām* acts as a substance or medium for expressing language, whether in pronunciation or numbers. *Kalām* which is substantive, depends on perceptions that are limited by the senses and bound by language. This perception is impossible to reach in science. Meanwhile, *kalām* that does not require substance is known through direct communication with the source. This causes an interpreter to know all the meanings desired by the initiator. Therefore, when Ibn 'Arabī explains the inner meaning in the Qur'ān, he does not use the term *ta'wīl*, but uses the term "signs" (Abū Zayd, 1983). Goldziher's analysis intends to strengthen the plug of influence in a way opposite to conventional scholars to provide flexibility in the functioning of *ta'wīl*. (Goldziher, 1955).

So far, research on hermeneutics can be mapped into four tendencies, (1) hermeneutics is used to express spiritual essence in literary works, such as poetry, pantun, and novel (Anjarsari & Sayuti, 2019; Athaya & Soedarsono, 2019; Badriyah et al., 2020; Baharudin, 2015; Marlewic, 2018; Muda & Kadirun, 2019; Rahman & Darmawan, 2019; Suryanto & Sukendro, 2021; Tarwiyani et al., 2020; Widayati & Sukarman, 2019); (2) hermeneutics as an analysis in criticizing an interpretation such as criticism of Amina Wadud's interpretation related to *nushūz* and as an application in interpreting the Qur'ān and ḥadīth (Janah & Yasir, 2019; Kurniawan, 2021; Taufiqotuzzahro, 2019; Ulummudin, 2019); (3) hermeneutics as a medium for revealing the aesthetic form of drama plays and revealing the personality of the former community (Rianda & Nurhayati, 2022; Sarmidi & Suryantoro, 2021; Sumaryadi, 2019); and (4) express the cyclical form of music through hermeneutics (Borisova & Klimenko, 2018). However, the implications of Ibn 'Arabī's hermeneutic theory in other literary works, such as poetry, novels, and short stories still seldom found.

Ibn 'Arabī's hermeneutic theory is usually used in interpreting the Qur'ān and ḥadīth so that the implications of this theory are not found in other literary works; poetry, novels, and short stories.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the meaning of spirituality in Saʿdūn's poetry by using Ibn ʿArabī's hermeneutic theory. Ibn ʿArabī's hermeneutic theory combines the concepts of philosophy and *taṣawwuf* in interpreting a text so that it has something to do with the philosophical *taṣawwuf*. The concept of Ibn ʿArabī not only puts forward the logic (*ʿaqlī*), but also the divine aspect (divinity). In line with that, this study aims to map the form of spirituality in Saʿdūn's poetry based on the perspective of Ibn ʿArabī and also to analyze the spirituality of poetry. This research has relevance in expanding the study of Ibn ʿArabī's hermeneutics which does not only focus on the Qurʾān and ḥadīth, but Ibn ʿArabī's hermeneutics can also be implied in a wider scale of objects.

Method

This study uses library research using a qualitative approach, while the method used is descriptive with content analysis techniques. In literature, the content analysis method acts as an effort to understand literary works, including extrinsic elements such as moral messages, philosophical and religious values, and so on. The content analysis method in this study aims to interpret and reveal the hidden meaning in literary works (Endraswara, 2011). Ibn ʿArabī's hermeneutical approach is used in this research as a form of interpretation to reveal the form of spirituality and its implications in Saʿdūn's poetry. Using the content analysis method and Ibn ʿArabī's hermeneutic approach, a focused analytical procedure can be carried out with clear research steps. This is done to determine clear validity criteria for the data source.

This study uses two types of data sources. First, the primary data source in the form of poetry proposed by Saʿdūn in the book of *ʿUqalāʾ al-Majānīn* by Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb al-Naysābūrī's (1987). Second, secondary data sources in the form of additional data from books, previous research articles related to spirituality. Data collection and analysis were carried out with the following steps: (1) reading the text of Saʿdūn's poetry in the book of *ʿUqalāʾ al-Majānīn*; and (2) noting down the most important part that shows the meaning of spirituality in the poem. Meanwhile, the data analysis uses the Milles and Huberman (2013) procedure with three stages, namely: (1) data reduction, researchers simplify the data that has been recorded and collected; (2) data presentation, the researcher presents the data that the researcher in tabular form has obtained; (3) drawing conclusions, researchers conclude the findings that have been obtained so that they can be understood by readers.

Results and Discussion

Poetry of Abū ʿAṭāʾ Saʿīd al-Majnūn (Saʿdūn)

Abū ʿAṭāʾ Saʿīd al-Majnūn is also known as Saʿdūn the Mad. He came from Baṣrah and died in 190 AH (Ibn al-Jawzī, 1978). Besides being known as a madman, Saʿdūn is also known as a *walīyullāh*. As evidenced by the many *karāmah* he has as told by Shaykh ʿAṭāʾ al-Sulamī that when a long drought hit Baṣrah, people flocked to perform the *istisqāʾ* prayer, but Allah still has not sent rain, but when Saʿdūn will look up at the sky and say, "Didn't I swear on your name unless you gave us rain". After Saʿdūn finished praying, the sky immediately clouded with heavy rain. Many of his contemporaries flocked to Saʿdūn and asked for prayers for their safety, blessings, and various needs (al-Naysābūrī, 1987).

This study uses two poems proposed by Saʿdūn. First, a poem was written directly by Saʿdūn with charcoal on the wall of Abī ʿAṭāʾ al-Bannāʾs house when he finished building a luxurious home.

<div dir="rtl">

أمسى وقد رثت هناك جباله   ما حال من سكن الثرى ما حاله

أبدا ولا لطف الحبيب يناله   أمسى فلا روح الحياة تصيبه

وتفرقت في قبره أوصاله   أمسى وقد درست محاسن وجهه

وتقسمت من بعده أمواله   واستبدلت منه المجالس غيره

والمال يذهب صفوُه وحلاله   ما زالت الأيام تلعب بالفتى

</div>

(al-Naysābūrī, 1987, p. 120)

How are the inhabitants of the grave?
the veins have been severed
Life will no longer stop in his body
he also doesn't find a lover's tenderness
The beauty of her face has faded,
in the grave, the joints are scattered
Other people occupy his place in the assemblies
his wealth is also distributed to his successors
The day always plays with youth,
while the clarity and halalness of wealth disappear

Second, Saʿdūn's poetry was read after he prayed for rain, and around that time, Saʿdūn came out in the rain and read poetry.

<div dir="rtl">

إن تريني فإنني لا أراك   قل لدنياي أبعدي وتولي

إنني مغرم بحب سواك   وصلي واملكي وداد سوائي

فاذهبي أنت لست من أسراك   إن تكوني أسرت بالذنب قوما

فكفاني ما قلته وكفاك   إنني مكتفٍ بعرفان ربي

</div>

(al-Naysābūrī, 1987, p. 121–122)

Tell my world, get away and turn away from me!
if you see me, then I don't see you
Come closer, have loved beside me
I have fallen in love again besides you
If you take people captive for sin.
then go away, for I am not your prisoner
Sufficient knowledge of my Lord
that's all I want to say, and you don't have to say anything

From the two poems, there is a spiritual meaning. The first poem shows the meaning of spirituality related to the nature of death and life after death. While the second poem contains the meaning of spirituality which shows the nature of asceticism. The two poems show that Saʿdūn has reached *maʿrifah*. Ibn ʿArabī's hermeneutics is relevant to be used in analyzing the two Saʿdūn poems

above because, in Sa'dūn's poetry, there is a strong relationship between the initiator and God, so that which gives rise to a spiritual meaning in the poetry text. As Ibn 'Arabī's view emphasizes the Sufistic aspect in producing meaning.

Shape Spirituality in Sa'dūn Poetry Based on the Perspective of Ibn 'Arabī's Hermeneutics

This study found data showing the form of spirituality in the two Sa'dūn poems contained in the book '*Uqalā' al-Majānīn* by Abū al-Qāsim al-Naysābūrī (1987). The form of the spirituality of the two Sa'dūn's poems is shown in table 1 below.

Table 1. Shape spirituality in Sa'dūn poetry based on the perspective of Ibn 'Arabī

Type	Form Spirituality
Essence of death	Life in the world
	Life in the afterlife
	Prepare for death
Essence of ma'rifat	*Zuhud*
	World prevents towards Allah

This study summarizes the form of the spirituality of the two poems of Sa'dūn, as shown in table 1. The details are as follows: (1) the first poem contains the essence of death, which is shown to Abī 'Aṭā' al-Bannā, which includes three pieces of advice, namely life in the world, life in the afterlife, and prepare for death; and (2) the second poem contains the essence of *ma'rifah* which is indicated by the behavior of *zuhud*, considering the world prevents towards Allah and the love of Allah.

1. Essence of death

   Sa'dūn's first poem shown to Abī 'Aṭā' al-Bannā shows three important pieces of advice, namely (1) life in the world, (2) life in the afterlife, and (3) prepare for death. The three pieces of advices the researchers describe in the following findings.

a. Life in the world

   Sa'dūn advised Abī 'Aṭā' al-Bannā while building a magnificent house in his poem. Sa'dūn reminded Abi 'Atha' al-Banna that life in this world does not last forever. Therefore, humans should be more prepared to face death.

<div dir="rtl">

ما حال من سكن الثرى ما حاله   أمسى وقد رثت هناك جباله

</div>

How are the inhabitants of the grave?
the veins have been severed

The meaning of spirituality shown in Sa'dūn's poetry relates to life in the world. According to Ibn 'Arabī, understanding a text's spiritual significance requires a literal and inner meaning. The literal meaning of the verse "*mā ḥālu man sakan al-thará*" is how are the conditions of the land dwellers? While the inner meaning of the verse is a form of warning to pay more attention to death and not to be too complacent with the life of the world because it is not eternal. According to Ibn 'Arabī, the emergence of inner meaning is due to the close relationship between the

initiator of the text and God so that spiritual values appear in the text he initiated, as Saʿdūn who has reached the stage of *maʿrifah* (Ibn ʿArabī, 1967).

b. Life in the afterlife

Saʿdūn's poetry also represents life in the afterlife, which is often not considered, so it does not have the readiness to face death, as in the poem below.

<div dir="rtl">

أمسى وقد درست محاسن وجهه   وتفرقت في قبره أوصاله

</div>

The beauty of her face has faded,
in the grave, the joints are scattered

The meaning of spirituality in the stanza of the poem above is related to human life when later it is dead. According to Ibn 'Arabi, understanding the spiritual meaning of a text requires a literal and inner meaning. The literal meaning of the verse "*amsá wa-qad darasat maḥāsin wajhih*" is "the beauty of her face is fading and "*wa-tafarraqat fī qabrih awṣāluh*" namely in the grave, the joints are scattered. In comparison, the inner meaning of the verse is that a human's social status, such as rank, position, and position, will be of no use when a human dies. The graves of all men will be the same, bodies crushed and bones scattered, and nothing saves man except good deeds. According to Ibn ʿArabī, the emergence of inner meaning is due to the close relationship between the initiator of the text and God so that spiritual values emerge in the text he initiated, as Saʿdūn who has reached the stage of *maʿrifah* (Ibn ʿArabī, 1967).

c. Prepare for death

The most important aspect that must be prepared to face death is to prepare provisions. Saʿdūn advises in the face of death in the poem's first stanza.

<div dir="rtl">

وتقسمت من بعده أمواله

</div>

His wealth is also distributed to his successors

The meaning of spirituality in the stanza of the poem above relates to the preparations that must be brought before death. According to Ibn ʿArabī, both literal and inner meanings are needed to understand the spiritual meaning of a text. The meaning of the verse "*wa-tuqussimat min baʿdih amwāluh*" is even his wealth is distributed to his successors. In comparison, the inner meaning of the verse is to prepare for death by using wealth in the way of Allah rather than property used as a contest for heirs. According to Ibn ʿArabī, the emergence of inner meaning is duse to the close relationship between the originator of the text and God so that spiritual values appear in the text he initiated, as Saʿdūn who has reached the stage of *maʿrifah* (Ibn ʿArabī, 1967).

2. Essence of *maʿrifah*

Spirituality in the second poem read by Saʿdūn is proof that Saʿdūn has reached the stage of *maʿrifah*. There are two main points in Saʿdūn's second poem: *zuhud* and world prevents towards Allah and love for Allah. The detailed explanation is as follows.

a. *Zuhud*

One of the essential aspects that must be passed to reach the stage of *ma'rifah* is *zuhud*. In Sa'dūn's view, *zuhud* behavior is a behavior where one must hate the world because it will make humans negligent as in verse below.

قل لدنياي أبعـدي وتولي   إن تريني فإنني لا أراك

Tell my world, get away and turn away from me!
if you see me, then I don't see you

The spiritual meaning contained in the poem above shows *zuhud* behavior. According to Ibn 'Arabī, literal and inner meanings are needed to understand a text's spiritual meaning. The literal meaning of the verse "*qul li-dunyāya, ab'idī wa-tawallī*" is tell my world, stay away and turn away, and the verse "*in turīnī fa-innanī lā arākī*" is if you see me then I don't see you. While the inner meaning of the verse shows the definition of *zuhud* Sa'dūn by hating the pleasures of the world because it will make humans fall asleep and fall into sin, it is proven by Sa'dūn telling the world to leave before him, and if Sa'dūn is given the pleasures of the world, then he prefers to reject its. According to Ibn 'Arabī, the emergence of inner meaning is due to the close relationship between the initiator of the text and God so that spiritual values appear in the text he initiated, as Sa'dūn who has reached the stage of *ma'rifah* (Ibn 'Arabī, 1967).

b. World prevents towards Allah

Sa'dūn commented on the world in his poetry. For Sa'dūn, the world is only seen as an obstacle to being with Allah, and this is because the luxury of the world makes humans complacent. As in the second stanza of Sa'dūn.

إن تكوني أسرت بالذنب قوما   فاذهبي أنت لست من أسراك

If you take people captive for sin.
Then go away, for I am not your prisoner

The poem above's spiritual meaning shows Sa'dūn's behavior, who considers the world only as a barrier to God. According to Ibn 'Arabī, literal and inner meanings are needed in understanding a text's spiritual meaning. The literal meaning of the verse "*in takūnī asarti bi-al-dhanbi qawmān*" is if you take people captive for sin, and the verse "*fa-idhhabī anti lastu min asrāki*" is go away because I am not your prisoner. In comparison, the inner meaning of the verse is a satire from Sa'dūn, who thinks that most people are often complacent with the world's blessings to the point of committing sins. Adding the pronoun (*ḍamīr*) "*anti*" after imperative verb (*fi'l al-amr*) "*fa-idhhabī*" further strengthens Sa'dūn's hatred of the world. According to Ibn 'Arabī, the emergence of inner meaning is due to the close relationship between the initiator of the text and God, so that spiritual values arise in the text he initiated, as Sa'dūn who has reached the stage of *ma'rifah* (Ibn 'Arabī, 1967). This aspect also shows the love of Sa'dūn to Allah as in verse below.

إنني مكتف بعـرفان ربي   فكفاني ما قلته وكفاك

Sufficient knowledge of my Lord.
That's all I want to say, and you don't have to say anything

The spiritual meaning in the second stanza of Sa'dūn is related to the love of Allah. According to Ibn 'Arabī, in understanding the spiritual meaning of a text, the literal meaning is needed and then proceeds to the inner meaning. The literal meaning of the verse "*innanī muktafin bi-'irfān rabbī*" is sufficient for me my knowledge of my Lord, and the verse "*fakafānī mā qultuh wa-kafākī*" is that's all I have to say, and you don't have to say anything. Meanwhile, the inner meaning of the verse shows Sa'dūn's love for Allah by not compromising on something that makes him complacent, such as possessions. This is evidenced by the fact that he feels enough if he already knows God and does not have any desire anymore. According to Ibn 'Arabī, the emergence of inner meaning is due to the close relationship between the initiator of the text and God, so that spiritual values appear in the text he initiated, as Sa'dūn who has reached the stage of *ma'rifah* (Ibn 'Arabī, 1967).

The research's finding state that the spiritual form in Sa'dūn's poetry shows two points: (1) the essence of death contained in the first poem and contains three essential pieces of advice, namely life in this world, life in the afterlife, and prepare for death; and (2) the essence of *ma'rifah* contained in the second poem of Sa'dūn shows the nature of *ma'rifah* as evidenced by two things, namely *zuhud* behavior and world prevents towards Allah. This researcher's findings are relevant to Ibn 'Arabī's hermeneutics, which uses a literal and inner meaning model in the text and links it between the initiator and God (Ibn 'Arabī, 1967). In this case, Sa'dūn has reached the stage of *ma'rifah* so that his poetry text is a form of inspiration and contains a spiritual aspect.

The findings of this research can be compared with several studies that state that hermeneutics is an effective method of interpreting texts to find out the essence of the text, which is mainly used in revealing the spiritual essence of the text (Anjarsari & Sayuti, 2019; Athaya & Soedarsono, 2019; Badriyah et al., 2020; Baharudin, 2015; Marlewic, 2018; Muda & Kadirun, 2019; Rahman & Darmawan, 2019; Suryanto & Sukendro, 2021; Tarwiyani et al., 2020; Widayati & Sukarman, 2019). In other studies, it turns out that some use hermeneutics to express aesthetics in a drama, used to reveal the personality of the previous community used, to reveal the music cycle, and used as a medium for criticism of interpretation errors so that this hermeneutic study the day after tomorrow (Borisova & Klimenko, 2018; Janah & Yasir, 2019; Kurniawan, 2021; Rianda & Nurhayati, 2022; Sarmidi & Suryantoro, 2021; Sumaryadi, 2019; Taufiqotuzzahro, 2019; Ulummudin, 2019).

The relationship between a servant and his Lord can show the level of *ma'rifah* of a servant. This type of sufism can be internalized in attitudes, traits, and life (Sauri et al., 2022). Sa'dūn is described as having been able to reach the stage of *ma'rifah* so that indirectly the poetry he initiated has a high spiritual value because someone who has reached the stage of *ma'rifah* will receive grace, inspiration, and *karāmah* from Allah. Not all poems that contain spiritual meaning can be interpreted easily, and it takes an appropriate method of interpretation, such as Ibn 'Arabī's hermeneutics, so that the message conveyed by the initiator of the text can be understood easily.

Conclusion

There are two forms of spiritual meaning that exist in Saʿdūn's poetry based on the perspective of Ibn ʿArabī: (1) the nature of death. This form of spirituality can be seen in the first poem, which contains three important pieces of advice, namely life in this world, life in the afterlife, and the prepare for death must be prepared; (2) the nature of *maʿrifah*, this form of spirituality is found in the second poem with the behavior of *zuhud* and world prevents towards Allah. The concept of *taṣawwuf* and philosophy in Ibn ʿArabī's hermeneutics, in addition to making the structure of the text, also links the relationship between the initiator and God because not all texts can be interpreted with this hermeneutic. The text cannot be interpreted textually only but must relate to external elements (contextual). Ibn ʿArabī's hermeneutics is usually used in interpreting the Qurʾān and ḥadīth. Therefore, this hermeneutic is often referred to as *taʾwīl*. This research plays a role in revealing the concept of *taṣawwuf* in poetry which is often covered by the aesthetics of the language, as is the case in Saʿdūn poetry. This study also applies the study of Ibn ʿArabī's hermeneutics to literary objects widely, which is not only focused on the Qurʾān and ḥadīth.

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