

# The Phenomenology of *Ma'rifat al-Hallaj*: Interpreting *Anā al-Ḥaqq* Amidst the Spiritual Crisis of the Contemporary Era

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## Abstract

*This article examines the phenomenology of al-Hallaj's ma'rifat through an interpretation of the phrase "Anā al-Ḥaqq" in the context of the contemporary spiritual crisis. The main research questions include: how al-Hallaj's ma'rifat is understood as a transformation of mystical consciousness, how "Anā al-Ḥaqq" is interpreted phenomenologically, and how this experience is relevant in addressing the spiritual crisis of modern humanity. This study employs a literature review method with a qualitative-philosophical approach, utilizing phenomenological analysis of consciousness and textual readings of al-Hallaj's primary sources, particularly Kitāb al-Ṭawāsīm, supported by contemporary academic studies. The results of the study indicate that al-Hallaj's ma'rifat is a spiritual experience characterized by tazkiyah, fanā', baqā', and tajallī, thereby shifting the center of consciousness from the empirical ego toward Divine Presence. Within this framework, "Anā al-Ḥaqq" should not be understood as an ontological identity claim between humanity and God, but rather as a linguistic testimony to a consciousness that has transcended the subject-object duality. A phenomenological analysis reveals that the "Ana" in this expression is not al-Hallaj's biographical self, but a subject that has undergone the dissolution of the ego and appears as an atsar (trace) of al-Ḥaqq. This finding affirms that al-Hallaj's Sufism is not only significant as a classical mystical legacy but also relevant as a*

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*spiritual paradigm capable of addressing the crisis of meaning, the formalization of religion, and the existential alienation of contemporary humanity. Thus, this article contributes to bridging classical Sufism, the phenomenology of religion, and the problems of modern spirituality through a more textual, philosophical, and contextual reading.*

**Keywords:** *Ma'rifat; Al-Hallaj; Anā al-Haqq; Phenomenology; Spiritual Crisis.*

## Abstrak

*Artikel ini mengkaji fenomenologi makrifat al-Hallaj melalui penafsiran atas ungkapan “Anā al-Haqq” di tengah krisis spiritualitas era kontemporer. Permasalahan utama penelitian ini meliputi: bagaimana makrifat al-Hallaj dipahami sebagai transformasi kesadaran mistik, bagaimana “Anā al-Haqq” ditafsirkan secara fenomenologis, dan bagaimana pengalaman tersebut relevan dalam merespons krisis spiritual manusia modern. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode studi kepustakaan dengan pendekatan kualitatif-filosofis, melalui analisis fenomenologi kesadaran dan pembacaan tekstual terhadap sumber primer al-Hallaj, terutama Kitāb al-Ṭawāsīn, serta didukung kajian akademik kontemporer. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa makrifat al-Hallaj merupakan pengalaman spiritual yang ditandai oleh tazkiyah, fanā', baqā', dan tajallī, sehingga menggeser pusat kesadaran dari ego empiris menuju kehadiran Ilahi. Dalam kerangka ini, “Anā al-Haqq” tidak tepat dipahami sebagai klaim identitas ontologis antara manusia dan Tuhan, melainkan sebagai kesaksian linguistik atas pengalaman kesadaran yang telah melampaui dualitas subjek–objek. Analisis fenomenologis memperlihatkan bahwa “Ana” dalam ungkapan tersebut bukan diri biografis al-Hallaj, tetapi subjek yang telah mengalami peluruhan ego dan tampil sebagai atsar (jejak) dari al-Haqq. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa tasawuf al-Hallaj tidak hanya penting sebagai warisan mistik klasik, tetapi juga relevan sebagai paradigma spiritual yang mampu merespons krisis makna, formalisasi agama, dan keterasingan eksistensial manusia kontemporer. Dengan demikian, artikel ini berkontribusi dalam menjembatani tasawuf klasik, fenomenologi agama, dan problem spiritualitas modern melalui pembacaan yang lebih tekstual, filosofis, dan kontekstual.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Makrifat; al-Hallaj; Anā al-Haqq; Fenomenologi; Krisis Spiritualitas.*

## Introduction

The contemporary era is often characterized by a crisis of spirituality that encompasses a void of meaning, existential depression, social alienation, materialism, and the loss of authentic divine experience. This arises from social, technological, and modern value changes that create an imbalance in the search

for meaning in human life. Various schools of thought —from orthodox theology to Islamic traditions, from existentialist analysis to clinical psychology—note that modernity, technology, and consumerist culture contribute to the fragmentation of human spirituality and change the way individuals seek meaning, their relationship with the Transcendent, and their closeness to their communities.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, digital transformation has created new spaces for spiritual practice through online platforms and virtual communities. However, this also requires caution to preserve the authenticity of spiritual experiences so that they are not reduced to mere digital content.<sup>2</sup>

In this era of rapid progress, Sufism, with its experience of *ma'rifat*, offers a model of spirituality that is existential, personal, and transformative, positioning the search for meaning in life, the formation of personality, and profound self-change along the path of *ma'rifat*, which is directed toward closeness to Allah. This description is supported by Sufi literature that emphasizes *ma'rifat* as the pinnacle of self-recognition of God, as well as an ethical, psychological, and educational framework. Sufism is seen as a spiritual discipline that starts from the purification of the soul (*tazkiyah*), purification of the heart, and purification of the self towards *maqāṣid* piety, which in classical tradition is accompanied by *maqāmāt* such as repentance, fear, and asceticism until reaching *ma'rifat* as a form of direct encounter with the essence of God.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tupa Pebrianti Sihombing and Helma Mesya Cristiani Br Siregar, “Membangkitkan Kembali Kelaparan Akan Kebenaran Firman Tuhan Dalam Konteks Masa Kini (Amos 8:11-14),” *JPTA: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Dan Teologi* 2, no. 3 (2024): 47–56, <https://doi.org/10.59581/jpat-widyakarya.v2i3.3384>.

<sup>2</sup> Abd. Muiz et al., “Reflection of Hadith and Sufism In Modern Life: The Transformation of Islamic Spirituality In The Digital Era,” *Reflektika* 20, no. 1 (2025): 151, <https://doi.org/10.28944/reflektika.v20i1.2143>.

<sup>3</sup> Mohammad Rohmanan, “Konsep Tasawuf Al-Ghazali Dan Kritiknya Terhadap Para Sufi (Telaah Deskriptif Analitis),” *Jasna: Journal For Aswaja Studies* 1, no. 2 (2021): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.34001/jasna.v1i2.2206>.

a view is considered one of the ways to offer new meaning to human existence when experiencing a spiritual crisis in an era of uncertainty. This model departs from the idea that spiritual transformation is personal and existential, as it changes the inner structure, the way one assesses oneself, and the purpose of human life. Contemporary research shows that this transformation manifests through psychological and spiritual dynamics, such as the pursuit of *nafs al-muṭma'innah* (a tranquil soul) through the practices of *zikr* and *tafakkur*, and the strengthening of moral values in line with Islamic teachings.<sup>4</sup>

Then, the phenomenon of meaninglessness, digital fatigue, and spiritual crisis that plagues modern humans often reduces God to an abstract concept, no longer an existential experience. Sufism, particularly through the figure of Husayn ibn Mansur al-Hallaj and his controversial statement “*Anā al-Haqq*,” offers another horizon, a God who is experienced through *maṣrifat*, *fana*, and *baqa*. This is where the importance of phenomenological reading lies, which seeks to understand how a Sufi’s consciousness “experiences” God directly, rather than merely defining Him dogmatically.

The Authors’ interest in this theme stems from both academic and spiritual concerns. In various studies at universities, al-Hallaj is often presented as a controversial figure who was sentenced to death for his extreme statements or as a symbol of Sufi ecstasy that is difficult to comprehend. However, al-Hallaj’s experience of consciousness is rarely discussed in depth from a phenomenological perspective. The Author sees that such a reading is important because it can explain *how* a Sufi experiences God, not just what he says. Moreover, al-Hallaj’s experience of *maṣrifat*, which involves *fana* (the disappearance of the ego) and *baqa* (the persistence of consciousness in God), has a psychological and existential depth that is highly relevant to modern humans who are seeking inner

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<sup>4</sup> Nita Trimulyaningsih et al., “The Process of Spiritual Transformation to Attain Nafs Al-Muṭmainnah in Islamic Psychology,” *HTS Theological Studies* 80, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v80i1.8526>.

balance, tranquility, and spiritual closeness amid the hustle and bustle of the material world.

Previous studies have addressed aspects of Sufism and modern spirituality, though they have not specifically examined the phenomenology of al-Hallaj's *ma'rifat*. Joma and Subektis study discusses al-Hallaj's concept of divine love through Louis Massignon's interpretation and attempts to relate it to the spiritual problems of digital society, particularly how divine love can overcome superficial human relationships resulting from online interactions.<sup>5</sup> This study contributes to the understanding of *mahabbah* (divine love), but does not analyze the structure of al-Hallaj's mystical consciousness when he uttered "*Anā al-Ḥaqq*." Hasibuan and Nasution's research also affirms Sufism as a solution to the modern spiritual crisis, by showing how spiritual practices can balance the inner needs of a society that has lost its direction due to materialism.<sup>6</sup> However, this research is general-descriptive in nature and does not discuss individual mystical experiences, let alone the phenomenology of *ma'rifat*.

Lone's study offers a social perspective on Sufism, arguing that Sufi teachings can serve as a path to healing for modern humans trapped in busyness and social pressures.<sup>7</sup> Although relevant to spiritual therapy, this study does not explore mystical experiences in depth. Meanwhile, Arifka examines mystical experiences (*unio mystica*) in the Sufi tradition and compares them with Western theories of mysticism.<sup>8</sup> The article enriches the

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<sup>5</sup> Muhammad Asmar Joma and Fiqi Restu Subekti, "Cinta Ilahi dalam Sufisme Al-Hallaj: Studi Pemikiran Louis Massignon dan Relevansinya di era Digital," *JSI: Jurnal Studi Islam* 14, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.33477/jsi.v14i1.9656>.

<sup>6</sup> Qori Ananda Azhari Hasibuan and Syawaluddin Nasution, "Tasawuf Sebagai Solusi Krisis Spiritual Dalam Masyarakat Modern," *Mukadimah: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sejarah, Dan Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* 9, no. 2 (2025): 746–52, <https://doi.org/10.30743/mkd.v9i2.11936>.

<sup>7</sup> Niyaz Ahmad Lone, "The Role and Significance of Taṣawwuf in Modern-Day Crisis," *Teosofia: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Mysticism* 11, no. 1 (2022): 83–102, <https://doi.org/10.21580/tos.v11i1.12030>.

<sup>8</sup> Angga Arifka, "Mystical Experience in Sufism The Study of Uniqueness

discourse on spiritual union but does not focus on al-Hallaj or the concept of *maʿrifat*, nor does it apply phenomenological methods. Finally, Najib's research on Hamka's neo-Sufism examines how modern Sufi teachings can respond to contemporary challenges, including in the moral and spiritual realms.<sup>9</sup> However, this approach is more ethical-social in nature and does not examine the radical experiences of a classical Sufi such as al-Hallaj.

From these studies, it is clear that there is a research gap. There is no article that directly analyzes al-Hallaj's experience of *maʿrifat* through a phenomenological lens. Nor is there any interpretation of "*Anā al-Ḥaqq*" as a phenomenon of consciousness that can be understood scientifically and philosophically. Previous studies have largely remained within historical, apologetic, theological, or socio-ethical approaches and have not entered the phenomenology of mystical consciousness. In fact, phenomenology can explain how the structure of consciousness changes as a Sufi passes through the stage of *fana* and enters *baqa*, until God becomes the center of consciousness. This is the research gap that the author wishes to bridge.

The author's position in this study is to present a new reading that is methodologically and substantively different from previous studies. Whereas previous studies have emphasized aspects of divine love, the relevance of Sufism in general, or ethical transformation in modern Sufism, this study focuses on the most radical inner experience in the history of Sufism, namely, the experience of *maʿrifat* al-Hallaj, and interprets it using phenomenology. Thus, the author positions himself as a researcher who seeks to understand al-Hallaj's mystical experience not within an apologetic or doctrinal framework, but within a framework of

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of Sufism in Relation to Mysticism," *At-Thullab: Jurnal Mahasiswa Studi Islam* 7, no. 1 (2025): 52–69, <https://doi.org/10.20885/tullab.vol7.iss1.art4>.

<sup>9</sup> Ismawati Saragih et al., "Reconstruction of Hamka's Neo-Sufism in the Contemporary Era: Synthesis of Tradition and Modernity," *World Journal of Islamic Learning and Teaching* 1, no. 2 (2024): 31–47, <https://doi.org/10.61132/wjilt.v1i2.49>.

transcendental consciousness that can be justified philosophically. This approach provides space to understand “*Anā al-Ḥaqq*” as a moment of intentionality of consciousness, when consciousness is no longer directed at the empirical world or the ego, but entirely at God as absolute reality (*al-Ḥaqq*).

As a methodological note, this study uses a qualitative-philosophical approach with a *library research* type. This approach was chosen because the object of study is spiritual experiences and the structures of mystical consciousness expressed in Sufi texts, particularly the works and expressions of al-Hallaj. The analysis combined a phenomenological approach to understand *maʿrifat* as a phenomenon of consciousness with textual analysis to interpret symbolic language and mystical expressions such as “*Anā al-Ḥaqq*”. Through this approach, the study does not aim to assess al-Hallaj’s statements normatively-theologically, but rather to describe and interpret his experience of divinity philosophically and contextually, especially in relation to the spiritual crisis of the contemporary era.

The purpose of this article is to describe the experience of *maʿrifat al-Hallaj* phenomenologically, by revealing the structure of mystical consciousness that underlies the expression “*Anā al-Ḥaqq*,” and to show its relevance to the contemporary spiritual crisis. In the modern context, humans need spirituality that is not only ritualistic and formal, but also capable of touching the depths of existence, providing inner peace, and building a personal relationship with God. Through a phenomenological reading, this article argues that al-Hallaj’s *maʿrifat* is not merely a Sufi doctrine but also a model of inner experience that can inspire the spiritual search of modern humans who have lost their center of divine consciousness.

## The Concept of *Ma'rifat* in Sufism

*Ma'rifat*, often translated as direct or inner knowledge of Allah, is a central concept in various Islamic mystical traditions, especially Sufism. This concept represents a deep understanding and direct experience of the divine that transcends ordinary knowledge derived from reason or sensory experience. This perspective emphasizes that *ma'rifat* is a form of knowledge that exceeds/transcends *bayānī* knowledge (field knowledge) and *burhānī* knowledge (demonstrative argumentative knowledge) because it is sensorium-cognitive in nature, present through *ḍḡauq* (sense/level of inner sensitivity) and direct experience of God.<sup>10</sup> In Islamic thought, *bayānī*, *burhānī*, and *ʿirfānī*, *ʿirfānī* is specifically related to mystical knowledge about the nature of God, which cannot be fully reduced to rational argumentation.<sup>11</sup> This aligns with al-Ghazali's thinking, which emphasizes that *ma'rifat* involves direct experience and realization of Allah Swt., not merely philosophical arguments.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, Mulla Sadra situates *ma'rifat* within a synthesis of the dimensions of experience and intellectuality, so that knowledge of God arises from a synthesis of inner reality (*irfānī*) and rational reflection (*burhānī*).<sup>13</sup>

*Ma'rifat* in the Sufi tradition is rooted in the heart (*qalb*) and nurtured through *taẓkiyah* (purification of the soul), which builds the soul's capacity to receive *tajallī*, divine manifestation in the *qalb*. Key practices for achieving *ma'rifat* (repentance, reflection, contemplation, remembrance) affirm that the formation of the *qalb* through the discipline of inner worship is an epistemological

<sup>10</sup> Samuji Samuji, "Tasawuf, Kalam Science and Islamic Philosophy," *Jurnal Paradigma* 15, no. 1 (2023): 12–20, <https://doi.org/10.53961/paradigma.v15i01.4>.

<sup>11</sup> Samuji, "Sufism, Kalam Science, and Islamic Philosophy."

<sup>12</sup> Asep Zaenal Muttaqin et al., "Al-Ghazali's Philosophical Thoughts on Combining Philosophy with Religious Teachings," *Al-Falsafah: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Filsafat Islam* 1, no. 1 (2025): 14–20, <https://doi.org/10.61166/falsafah.v1i1.2>.

<sup>13</sup> Nuruddin Al Akbar and Salih Abdulrahman Yousuf Assenhaji, "Mulla Sadra and Sufism: Fazlur Rahman Interpretation," *Living Sufism: Journal of Sufism and Psychotherapy* 3, no. 2 (2024): 88–108, <https://doi.org/10.59005/ls.v3i2.579>.

prerequisite for obtaining inner knowledge of God. The emphasis on *dzikir* as the “primary tool for *maʿrifatullāh*” shows how the *qalb* is activated through inner rituals that cultivate spiritual sensitivity and allow *tajallī* to unfold more clearly.<sup>14</sup> This process confirms that *dzikir*, *taubah*, *tafakkur*, and *tadabbur* are the main tools for achieving *maʿrifatullāh*.<sup>15</sup> It also confirms that *tajallī* is the experience of God’s presence in the *qalb* that leads individuals to closeness or union with Allah through *taṣkiyah*, which is based on *maqāmāt* and *aḥwāl*.<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, rational knowledge is viewed as an epistemic framework that focuses on reasoning, principles, and arguments, which in the Sufi tradition are often grouped as Bayani (explicit) or Burhāni (based on rational *ijtihād*). The distinction with irfani knowledge emphasizes that heart knowledge arises from inner experience (*maʿrifatullāh*) and spiritual practice, rather than merely from textual interpretation.<sup>17</sup> In this framework, Bayāni represents knowledge that can be textually presented as part of religious reasoning, while Burhāni highlights critical thinking skills integrated into the broader Islamic tradition.<sup>18</sup> From the

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<sup>14</sup> Fahrudin Fahrudin et al., “Ali Jum’ah Sufistic Thinking And Its Relevance on Islamic Education (PAI) in Higher Education,” *Lentera Pendidikan: Jurnal Ilmu Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan* 24, no. 2 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.24252/lp.2021v24n2i7>.

<sup>15</sup> Fahrudin et al., “Ali Jum’ah Sufistic Thinking And Its Relevance on Islamic Education (PAI) in Higher Education.”

<sup>16</sup> Farhad Muhammad et al., “Dimensions of Sufism Within The Islamic Religious Education Curriculum in Higher Education,” *Nazḥruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 1 (2024): 40–58, <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v7i1.4525>. The Dimensions of Sufism in education can function as an alternative to stem the disruption and problems of millennial education. This study uses a multi-case study type of Higher Education in East Java, Indonesia. The dimensions of Sufism in Islamic religious education in higher education show their uniqueness. The unique fact is the teaching of Sufism at Darul Ulum University (UNDAR)

<sup>17</sup> Rosyi Ibnu Hidayat et al., “Ahlaq Tasawuf Manunggaling Kawula Gusti,” *Jurnal Penelitian Agama* 24, no. 1 (2023): 49–62, <https://doi.org/10.24090/jpa.v24i1.2023.pp49-62>.

<sup>18</sup> Farhad Muhammad et al., “Dimensions of Sufism Within The Islamic Religious Education Curriculum in Higher Education,” *Nazḥruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 1 (2024): 40–58, <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v7i1.4525>.

perspective of spiritual practice, *dẓauq* (an authentic inner sense of divine reality) is often presented as an epistemological turning point that indicates closeness to God, understood as a spiritual experience that cannot be fully reduced to rational argument alone.<sup>19</sup> Meanwhile, the concept of *kayf* (unveiling) emerges from *mujāhadah* and *riyādah*, that is, self-discipline that leads the soul to the unveiling of hidden secrets through a personal process in the context of *maqām* and *aḥwāl*.<sup>20</sup> *Syuhūd* (witnessing) is generally understood as the soul's capacity to witness the Divine presence, an experience often presented in *Irfāni* literature as a level of heart knowledge that complements rational knowledge. In short, these two paths do not negate each other but operate at different levels that complement one another in the effort to understand God and the nature of reality.<sup>21</sup>

### **Al-Hallaj and the Mystical Dimension of *Ma'rifat***

In the treasure trove of Islamic Sufism, Husayn ibn Mansur al-Hallaj occupies a unique and paradoxical position. He was not only a Sufi who experienced spiritual ecstasy, but also a symbol of the intensity of *ma'rifat* experience that transcended the boundaries of language, social norms, and even conventional theological categories. *Ma'rifat*, in al-Hallaj's perspective, was not understood as discursive knowledge about God, but as a direct experience (*al-ma'rifah al-dẓauqiyyah*) born of a total transformation of consciousness. In this experience, God is no longer an object of knowledge but a reality that dominates and fills the entire structure of the mystic's consciousness. Therefore, understanding al-Hallaj requires an approach that does not stop at the historical or dogmatic dimensions, but at the mystical-phenomenological dimensions of

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<sup>19</sup> Rosyi Ibnu Hidayat et al., "Ahlaq Tasawuf Manunggaling Kawula Gusti."

<sup>20</sup> Rosyi Ibnu Hidayat et al., "Ahlaq Tasawuf Manunggaling Kawula Gusti."

<sup>21</sup> Fahrudin et al., "Ali Jum'ah Sufistic Thinking And Its Relevance on Islamic Education (PAI) in Higher Education."

his inner experience.<sup>22</sup>

The mystical dimension of al-Hallaj's *ma'rifat* is rooted in an inner transformation that removes the ego as the center of consciousness. In *Kitāb al-Ṭawāsīn*, al-Hallaj writes: "*Qultu anā: in lam ta'rifūhu fa'rifū atsarahu, wa anā dẓālika al-atsar, wa anā al-Ḥaqq, li-annī mā ẓiltu abadan bi al-Ḥaqq ḥaqqan.*"<sup>23</sup> The statement of Mansur al-Hallaj affirms that God is known through the traces of His manifestations, and that in the highest mystical experience a Sufi may become a mirror of the Divine, such that his consciousness is wholly absorbed in al-Ḥaqq, to the point that the expression "I" no longer refers to the ego, but to the presence of God Himself.

An expression indicating that the "I" in Mansur al-Hallaj no longer appears as an autonomous empirical subject, but rather as *atsar*—a trace whose entire significance is oriented toward al-Ḥaqq. Therefore, an interpretation of the Sufi experience is inadequate if it stops at dogmatic judgments, for religious experience also concerns the structure of consciousness and the way the subject experiences transcendent reality.<sup>24</sup> Meanwhile, Sufism itself has become relevant again in the modern context as humanity faces a crisis of values, a dislocation of meaning, and a disparity between material needs and spiritual depth.<sup>25</sup> Among contemporary Muslims, the spiritual quest is increasingly taking on a personal and existential form amid the changing landscape of urban piety.<sup>26</sup> Meanwhile, digital religious authorities also tend to shift the depth of inner experience toward religious performativity and popularity.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, 4th ed. (Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1981).

<sup>23</sup> Al-Husain bin Mansur Al-Hallaj, *Dīwān Al-Hallāj Wa Ma'abu Akbbār al-Hallāj Wa Kitāb al-Ṭawāsīn*, ed. Muhammad Basil Al-Sud (Dar al-Kitab Al-'Ilmiyah, n.d.), 166.

<sup>24</sup> Lukis Alam et al., "The Changing Piety and Spirituality: A New Trend of Islamic Urbanism in Yogyakarta and Surakarta," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 13, no. 2 (2023): 227–52, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v13i2.227-252>.

<sup>25</sup> Lone, "The Role and Significance of Taṣawwuf in Modern-Day Crisis."

<sup>26</sup> Alam et al., "The Changing Piety and Spirituality."

<sup>27</sup> Arief Rachman et al., "Transformation of Religious Authority in the Digital

Upon closer analysis, the phrase “*wa anā dzālika al-atsar*” is the central pivot. Here, al-Hallaj does not begin directly with “*wa Anā al-Ḥaqq*” as a bare assertion, but precedes it with an identification of himself as an “*atsar*” (trace). Hermeneutically, this is significant because it shifts the meaning of “I” from a substantial identity to a trace of presence. A trace is not the source, but a pointer to the source. A trace does not possess full autonomy; it is meaningful because it points to the one who left it. Thus, when al-Hallaj says “*I am that trace*,” he is emptying “I” of its egoistic sovereignty. What remains is a subject that can only be understood in relation to the Divine. At this point, *fana’* can be understood not as the ontological annihilation of the self, but as the decentralization of the ego.

The next phrase, “*wa Anā al-Ḥaqq*” only acquires its proper meaning when read after “*wa anā dzālika al-atsar*”. Without that introduction, a literal reading would easily lead to accusations of an ontological identification between humanity and God. However, in al-Hallaj’s own phrasing, “*wa Anā al-Ḥaqq*” appears as a continuation of the experience of the trace, not as an autonomous self-affirmation. Phenomenologically, this indicates that al-Hallaj’s consciousness speaks from a position in which the ego has receded, and the present, as the center, is no longer the empirical “I” but rather al-Ḥaqq, the absolute horizon of consciousness. Therefore, “*Anā al-Ḥaqq*” is more accurately read as an expression of the subject’s transfiguration rather than a conventional metaphysical proposition. Such a reading is also in line with recent studies that emphasize interpreting mystical language as the language of experience, not merely as doctrine.

Then “*li annī mā ziltu abadan bi al-Ḥaqq ḥaqqan*” further clarifies this point. Here, the subject’s truth does not stand on its own; it is only possible “*bi al-Ḥaqq*”. Thus, “I” become true, valuable, or meaningful not in and of myself, but because I am supported,

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Era: A Post-Normal Times Analysis by Ziauddin Sardar on ‘The Phenomenon of Social Media Da’wah,’ *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 45, no. 1 (2025): 107–22, <https://doi.org/10.21580/jid.v45.1.25644>.

imbued, and upheld by al-Ḥaqq. This is very close to your reading of *ma'rifat* as a condition where consciousness is no longer representational, but rather direct presence. In phenomenological terms, the center of intentionality no longer moves from the ego toward a distant divine object, but rather from the transcended subject toward the Divine Presence that sustains the entire experience. That is why this quotation is highly suitable as a basis for explaining that, for al-Hallaj, *fanā'* is the dissolution of the ego's center, not the ontological annihilation of the human being.<sup>28</sup> Thus, "*Anā al-Ḥaqq*" is more accurately read as an expression of the subject's transfiguration—that is, when the ego dissolves and consciousness is sustained by Divine presence—rather than as a simple ontological claim.

However, al-Hallaj's experience did not end with *fanā'*. In the Sufi tradition, *fanā'* is always followed by *baqā'*, which is the persistence of consciousness in God after the ego has been annihilated. *Baqā'* marks the phase in which the subject returns to being "present" in the world, but with a radically transformed structure of consciousness. The human being no longer acts based on the will of the ego, but rather as a medium of the Divine Will. It is in this state that the mystical dimension of *ma'rifat* reaches its peak, as human consciousness becomes a space for *tajallī*, the manifestation of God's attributes within the *qalb*. For al-Hallaj, *tajallī* is not an abstract metaphysical event, but an existential experience that transforms how a person perceives themselves, the world, and God.<sup>29</sup>

The phrase "*Anā al-Ḥaqq*" must be understood within the framework of this mystical dimension. Phenomenologically, the phrase is not an ontological claim that al-Hallaj is God, but rather

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<sup>28</sup> Joma and Subekti, "Cinta Ilahi dalam Sufisme Al-Hallaj: Studi Pemikiran Louis Massignon dan Relevansinya di era Digital."

<sup>29</sup> Henry Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sūfism of Ibn 'Arabī. With Bollingen Foundation Collection (Library of Congress)*, Bollingen Series 91 (Princeton University Press, n.d.).

an expression of a consciousness that has lost its egoic center. In the state of *fanā'*, there is no longer an individual "I" speaking; what remains is only the Divine reality (*al-Haqq*) revealing itself through human consciousness. In other words, the "Ana" in "*Anā al-Haqq*" does not refer to the empirical subject of al-Hallaj, but rather to a consciousness that has been completely taken over by the presence of God. Phenomenology helps explain this shift in the subject as a transformation of intentionality: from self-centered consciousness to consciousness entirely directed toward God as absolute reality.<sup>30</sup>

This interpretation is consistent with modern scholars' readings of al-Hallaj. Louis Massignon emphasized that al-Hallaj's experience was one of extreme divine love and witnessing, in which human language was no longer sufficient to convey the depth of the inner experience. For Massignon, al-Hallaj's ecstatic utterances constitute "the cry of experience," not theological propositions intended for dogmatic formulation.<sup>31</sup> This approach is further reinforced by contemporary studies that view Sufism as a response to the modern spiritual crisis. Joma and Subekti, for example, demonstrate that al-Hallaj's dimension of divine love remains highly relevant in the digital age, characterized by superficial relationships and inner alienation. Yet they also emphasize that al-Hallaj's experience must be understood as a consciousness, not merely a symbol of spiritual romanticism.<sup>32</sup>

Other relevant studies indicate that Sufism, including extreme experiences such as those of al-Hallaj, can be understood as a model of spirituality that offers profound meaning to modern

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<sup>30</sup> William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (The University of Adelaide Library, 2009).

<sup>31</sup> Louis Massignon, *The Passion of Al-Hallaj, Mystic and Martyr of Islam, Volume 1: The Life of Al-Hallaj*, trans. Herbert Mason (Princeton University Press, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvh9w050>.

<sup>32</sup> Joma and Subekti, "Cinta Ilahi dalam Sufisme Al-Hallaj: Studi Pemikiran Louis Massignon dan Relevansinya di era Digital."

humans. Lone asserts that Sufi mystical experiences provide an alternative framework for people trapped in instrumental rationality and materialism, as they restore the center of life to the experience of God's presence.<sup>33</sup> In this context, the mystical dimension of al-Hallaj's *ma'rifat* becomes significant not because of its controversy, but because of its ability to demonstrate that God can be experienced as a living and transformative reality.

Thus, the mystical dimension of al-Hallaj's *ma'rifat* cannot be reduced to mere theological doctrine or doctrinal deviation. It is a phenomenon of consciousness born of a profound spiritual process: *tazkiyah*, *fanā'*, *baqā'*, and *tajallī*. Through this experience, al-Hallaj presents a model of *ma'rifat* that positions God not as an object of belief, but as the subject of experience. A phenomenological reading of this experience allows classical Sufism to engage with the crisis of contemporary spirituality while affirming that the depth of inner experience remains relevant in a modern world that is increasingly losing its center of meaning.

## **Anā al-Ḥaqq from a Phenomenological Perspective**

### **a. Epoché and the Suspension of Theological Preconceptions**

The expression "*Anā al-Ḥaqq*" has historically been interpreted through two reductive approaches: a theological-juridical approach, which assesses its doctrinal validity, and a hagiographical approach, which dissolves its complexity into an aura of sanctified ecstasy. Both overlook a more fundamental phenomenological question: what is the structure of consciousness that gives rise to this expression? To answer this, the phenomenological method requires an *epoché*, a suspension of all prior judgments regarding the truth value of the expression, so that the phenomenon may emerge on its own terms. In al-Hallaj's case, this suspension is not merely methodologically determined; it is also textually mandated by al-

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<sup>33</sup> Lone, "The Role and Significance of Taṣawwuf in Modern-Day Crisis."

Hallaj himself. In *Tasīn al-Fahm*, he writes: “*Yā ayyuhā al-ẓānn, lā tah sab annī “anā” al-ān, aw yakūn, aw kāna.*”<sup>34</sup> The statement emphasizes that the “I” appearing in his mystical utterance is not the empirical ego possessing an independent existence across time (past, present, or future), but rather a self that has been effaced and can no longer be understood as an individual subject.

This is not rhetorical humility. It is a precise phenomenological instruction: the “Ana” in “*Anā al-Ḥaqq*” does not refer to the empirical ego, the biographical al-Hallaj who could be tried and executed, but to a structure of consciousness that has undergone a radical transformation. Massignon recognized this uniqueness when he argued that al-Hallaj was the first among Muslim mystics not to evade the difficulty of explaining mystical union by attributing his theopathic utterances to an irresponsible state of intoxication during ecstasy.<sup>35</sup> al-Hallaj insisted on a clear and structurally articulable explanation of his experience, rather than taking refuge in irrationality. This dual fact, that the subject uttering “*Anā al-Ḥaqq*” simultaneously denies that “I am this I”, constitutes a fundamental paradox whose structure must be traced by phenomenology.

## b. Husserlian Reduction: Three Stages of Analysis

The distinction Edmund Husserl draws between the empirical ego and the transcendental ego provides a precise and fundamental analytical tool.<sup>36</sup> The empirical ego is the self as experienced in natural attitudes, a biographical subject with habits, memories, and social roles. The transcendental ego is the pure “I” of consciousness itself, which cannot become an object because

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<sup>34</sup> Al-Hallaj, *Dīwān Al-Ḥallāj Wa Ma’abū Akhbār al-Ḥallāj Wa Kitāb al-Ṭawāsīn*, 154.

<sup>35</sup> Louis Massignon, *The Passion of Al-Hallaj, Mystic and Martyr of Islam, Volume 2: The Life of Al-Hallaj*, trans. Herbert Mason (Princeton University Press, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvh9w050>.

<sup>36</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology* (Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1988).

it is the primary condition of all objectivity. In ordinary religious experience, the empirical ego directs itself toward God as the Other; intentionality flows from the ego toward the Transcendent Object. The phenomenology of mysticism asks: what happens to this structure when the empirical ego is gradually eliminated? Al-Hallaj provides the answer in three successive formulations in *Tasīn al-Fahm*: “*Ka-annī ka-annī, aw ka-annī huwa, aw huwa annī.*”<sup>37</sup> This expression articulates a liminal condition in mystical experience in which the boundary between the self and God becomes blurred, causing consciousness to oscillate between the “I,” the “He,” and the “unity of their experiential encounter,” without implying an actual ontological unity.

This triad describes the three stages of phenomenological reduction. In the first stage “as if I were I”, the empirical ego is perceived as something contingent, not as the foundation of consciousness, a moment of reflective alienation. In the second stage “as if I were He”, the boundary between the subject and the Divine presence becomes unstable; intentionality no longer clearly distinguishes between the directing subject and the directed object. In the third and decisive stage “He is my ‘I’”, what remains when the empirical ego has been fully bracketed turns out to be Al-Haqq. This is precisely what Massignon identified as *wahdat al-syuhūd* (testimonial monism), which differs from both *hulul* and *wahdat al-wujūd*: the subject does not become God, and God does not permeate the subject; rather, when the empirical subject, is fully reduced, what remains as the foundation of consciousness is Al-Haqq. Al-Hallaj affirms this: “*Al-Haqq mā aslamahu ilā khalqibi, li-annahu huwa, wa annī huwa, wa huwa huwa.*”<sup>38</sup> This statement expresses a mystical paradox in which the ego is effaced in divine consciousness while affirming that God, as al-Haqq, remains

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<sup>37</sup> Al-Hallaj, *Dīwān Al-Hallāj Wa Ma'abu Akbbār al-Hallāj Wa Kitāb al-Ṭawāsīm*, 154.

<sup>38</sup> Al-Hallaj, *Dīwān Al-Hallāj Wa Ma'abu Akbbār al-Hallāj Wa Kitāb al-Ṭawāsīm*, 153.

absolutely transcendent and can never be ontologically identified with His creation. The metaphysical separation between God and creation does not vanish; what vanishes is the empirical ego's claim to be the center of consciousness.

### c. Heideggerian Analysis: Geworfenheit and the Affirmation of Fact

Heidegger's concept of Geworfenheit (thrownness) describes the fundamental condition of Dasein, the human existence "thrown" into a world it did not choose, into a reality it cannot avoid.<sup>39</sup> Much of human existence is characterized by Verfallenheit (fallenness), an escape from this state of thrownness into the distractions of das Man. Authentic existence demands confronting the state of being thrown without evasion. *Tasīn al-Aẓal* offers an extraordinary three-directional typology regarding responses to Geworfenheit. Al-Hallaj presents a confrontation between himself, Iblis, and Fir'aun, each facing existential demands that reveal the structure of their existence:

فقال إبليس: ﴿أنا خير منه﴾ (٧: ٢١)، حين لم يرَ غيره غيراً. وقال فرعون:  
﴿ما علمت لكم من إله غيري﴾ (٨٢: ٧٣)، حين لم يعرف في قومه من  
يُمَيِّز بينَ الحقِّ والخلق.

*"Iblis said: 'I am better than him' (QS 7:12), when he saw no true uniqueness in what he considered to be the other. Pharaoh said: 'I know of no god for you other than myself' (QS 28:38), when he could not find anyone among his people capable of distinguishing between Al-Haqq and the created."<sup>40</sup>*

Both Iblis and Pharaoh responded with an inflated ego; each asserted an ego that refused to be relativized by the Absolute. In Heideggerian terms, both represent a form of Verfallenheit: they

<sup>39</sup> Massignon, *The Passion of Al-Hallaj, Mystic and Martyr of Islam, Volume 1*, trans. Mason (Princeton University Press, 2019), 153.

<sup>40</sup> Al-Hallaj, *Dīwān Al-Hallāj Wa Ma'abu Akhbār al-Hallāj Wa Kitāb al-Ṭawāsīn*, 153.

flee from a true encounter with Being by absolutizing the empirical self. Al-Hallaj's response is structurally opposed: "*Qultu anā: in lam ta'rifūhu fa'rifū atsarahu, wa anā dzālika al-atsar, wa anā al-Ḥaqq, li-annī mā ziltu abadan bi al-Ḥaqq haqqan*".<sup>41</sup> This expression summarizes a mystical experience in which God is known through the traces of His manifestations, and in the state of fanā' the ego is effaced such that the "I" appears as a mirror of the Divine presence without negating the ontological distinction between the human being and al-Ḥaqq.

The key term here is *atsar* (trace). Al-Hallaj does not claim to be the totality of Al-Ḥaqq; he claims to be a trace of Al-Ḥaqq, the remnant of an epiphany left behind when the Absolute passes through a self emptied of egoistic resistance. The adverb *haqqan* is phenomenologically decisive: al-Hallaj does not claim "I am God" but "I never cease to be true with Al-Ḥaqq," a claim of continuous harmony with Being, not substantial identity. Massignon recognized this as a "militant impulse" that constitutes the "root of the Hallajian character", a continuous and unshakable harmony with Being that forms the authentic Heideggerian existence.

#### **d. Levinas's Phenomenology: Anā Dzālika al-Atsar as an Infinite Trace**

Emmanuel Levinas's concept of the trace (*la trace*) provides the most accurate philosophical interpretation of al-Hallaj's self-description as *atsar*. For Levinas, the Infinite, is cannot appear as a phenomenon in the Husserlian sense; it cannot take shape in intentional consciousness, because its nature is to transcend every horizon.<sup>42</sup> However, the Infinite leaves a trace within the finite: not a presence that can be grasped, but an orientation that issues

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<sup>41</sup> Massignon, *The Passion of Al-Hallaj, Mystic and Martyr of Islam, Volume 1*, trans. Mason (Princeton University Press, 2019), 58.

<sup>42</sup> Louis Massignon, "The Passion of Al-Hallāj, Mystic and Martyr of Islam, Volume 2: The Survival of al-Hallāj," *ACLS Humanities E-Book* (Princeton, New Jersey Guildford, Surrey), Bollingen series, 1982, page 58.

an infinite demand without allowing itself to be totalized. In *Tasīn al-Safa'*, al-Hallaj records a divine utterance that perfectly encodes this structure: “*Anta tabdī ilā al-dalīl, lā ilā al-madlūl, wa anā dalīl al-dalīl.*”<sup>43</sup> Overall, this argument highlights the distinction between symbolic knowledge, which remains confined to signs, and mystical experience, which apprehends all signs as manifestations of the one Divine Reality, in which the “I” no longer functions as an individual ego but as a mirror reflecting the totality of God’s presence.

This divine utterance affirms the structure of the trace: al-Hallaj is not Al-Haqq in absolute fullness; he is the trace of Al-Haqq within limitation, a sign pointing toward that which cannot be indicated by signs. This is precisely what Levinas means by the trace of the Infinite: it is present within the finite as a surplus that cannot be contained or represented by the finite. The expression “*Anā al-Haqq*” functions as a linguistic trace, a limited articulation pointing toward what it cannot capture, subverting the normal language of subject-object duality because that duality is constructed for a structure that has been shattered by experience. This also explains the irreversibility of al-Hallaj’s utterance: the trace cannot be “withdrawn,” for to do so would deny the Infinite that has passed through the subject. Al-Hallaj affirms this with ontological certainty: “I was killed, my hands and feet were cut off, and I did not withdraw my claim”.<sup>44</sup>

### **e. Marion’s Phenomenology of Full Existence: *Anā al-Haqq* as Excess**

Jean-Luc Marion’s concept of the saturated phenomenon (phenomène saturé) complements the phenomenological explanation by elucidating why “*Anā al-Haqq*” takes on a distinctive paradoxical form. A saturated phenomenon is an event of giving so excessive that it overflows beyond the intentional horizon of the

<sup>43</sup> Al-Hallaj, *Dīmān Al-Hallāj Wa Ma’abū Akhbār al-Hallāj Wa Kitāb al-Ṭawāsīn*, 43.

<sup>44</sup> Jean-Luc Marion, *Being Given: Toward a Phenomenology of Givenness* (Stanford University Press, 1997), 160–65.

receiving subject; rather than the subject shaping the phenomenon through its categories, the saturated phenomenon exceeds the subject's capacity to receive it, transforming the subject into a "witness" (l'adonne) rather than a shaper. Three textual markers in al-Hallaj's work confirm this structure. First, the poem "Ana Anta" (no. 22 in the Diwan) describes this moment: "*Māzajāt rūḥuka rūḥī fī dunūwwī wa bi'ādī, fa-anā anta kamā anta ka-unsīsī wa murādī.*"<sup>45</sup> This argument articulates an intense experience of spiritual love in which the boundaries between "I" and "you" dissolve, giving rise to a sense of existential unity marked by profound intimacy and deep longing.

The verb "*māzaja*" (to mix) does not describe the dissolution of boundaries, but rather a dynamic interpenetration between them, a *mūzaja* that permeates the subject without annihilating it. The subject is enveloped by the Divine presence to the point where it is no longer able to determine the origin of its own consciousness. Second, *Tawāsin* reveals the structural collapse of the question "who is speaking?", a characteristic of unifying events: the Divine utterance is received from within al-Hallaj himself, blurring the boundary between inner monologue and Divine address. Third, Massignon's observation that al-Hallaj's philosophy of language is dynamic and testimonial (*wahdat al-syuhūd*) accurately identifies the Marionian structure: "*Anā al-Ḥaqq*" does not describe a state of being, but rather bears witness to an event of giving, language enveloped by its reference, compelled to take the only available form of linguistic syn, the first person present tense, while pointing to a "first person" who is no longer merely an empirical subject.

#### **f. Anā al-Ḥaqq as a Four-Layered Phenomenological Structure**

These four phenomenological analyses demonstrate that "*Anā al-Ḥaqq*" possesses a layered structure: *first*, as the result of

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<sup>45</sup> Al-Hallaj, *Dīwān Al-Ḥallāj Wa Ma'abu Akbbār al-Ḥallāj Wa Kitāb al-Ṭawāsin*, 56.

the reduction of the empirical ego (Husserl), such that “Ana” is no longer al-Hallaj’s biographical self.<sup>46</sup> *Second*, as an affirmation of authentic existence (Heidegger), because al-Hallaj does not glorify the ego like Satan and Pharaoh, but rather finds the deepest foundation of his existence in al-Haqq.<sup>47</sup> *Third*, as a trace (*atsar*) of the presence of the Infinite within a self-emptied of ego (Levinasian). And *fourth*, as a saturated phenomenon (Marion), namely the experience of divine presence that transcends the capacity of representation and can therefore only be expressed through paradoxical language.<sup>48</sup> Thus, *Anā al-Haqq* is not *ḥulūl*, nor is it *wahdat al-wujūd* in the sense of ontological identity, nor is it a literal propositional claim, but rather a testimony to an experience of consciousness that transcends the subject–object duality.

For contemporary people experiencing a spiritual crisis and a loss of depth in religious experience, this phenomenological reading suggests that al-Hallaj’s experience is not a theological anomaly, but rather the deepest possibility within human religious consciousness when it is no longer centered on the ego. Therefore, the analysis of *Anā al-Haqq* is not intended to defend or condemn al-Hallaj, but to philosophically understand how mystical experience works, as well as how classical Sufism can once again provide a horizon of meaning for the modern spiritual crisis.

## The Concept of *Anā al-Haqq* in the Face of the Spiritual Crisis

The crisis of spirituality afflicting contemporary humanity is neither singular nor uniform; it manifests itself differently in

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<sup>46</sup> Ann Taves and Egil Asprem, “Experience As Event: Event Cognition and The Study of (Religious) Experiences,” *Religion, Brain & Behavior* 7, no. 1 (2017): 43–62, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2153599X.2016.1150327>.

<sup>47</sup> Massignon, *The Passion of Al-Hallaj, Mystic and Martyr of Islam, Volume 1*, trans. Mason (Princeton University Press, 2019).

<sup>48</sup> Massignon, *The Passion of Al-Hallaj, Mystic and Martyr of Islam, Volume 1*, trans. Mason (Princeton University Press, 2019), 85–86.

two socio-cultural contexts that must be analytically distinguished: secular Western society and modern Muslim society. The mistake of generalizing between the two obscures an accurate diagnosis and ultimately undermines the relevance of Sufism as a specific and contextual response.

In Western societies that have undergone a long process of secularization, the spiritual crisis manifests as a decline in trust in formal religious institutions. Religion has shifted from the center of public life to the private sphere. For many individuals, the relationship with the Transcendent is no longer mediated by doctrine or institutional communities. Brook points out that the intensity of spiritual experience is actually increasing among contemporary Western individuals, yet it is becoming increasingly difficult to integrate into a coherent framework of meaning because the traditional frameworks capable of interpreting such experiences have weakened.<sup>49</sup> As a result, many individuals experience powerful yet isolated religious experiences, lacking an interpretive community capable of helping them deeply internalize those experiences. This condition differs fundamentally from the crisis faced by modern Muslim societies.

In contemporary Muslim societies, particularly in countries with Muslim-majority populations such as Indonesia, the spiritual crisis does not stem from a lack of faith or alienation from religious institutions. On the contrary, religion remains strongly present in social life, even growing quantitatively in public expression, but this is precisely where the paradox lies: the increasingly formal and performative presence of religion is not accompanied by a deepening of authentic inner experience. Alam and colleagues note that the landscape of urban piety in Indonesia reveals a new trend: piety is no longer measured by the depth of personal spiritual

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<sup>49</sup> Marie Grace Brook, "Struggles Reported Integrating Intense Spiritual Experiences: Results from a Survey Using the Integration of Spiritually Transformative Experiences Inventory," *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 13, no. 4 (2021): 464–81, <https://doi.org/10.1037/rel0000258>.

experience, but by appearance, the consumption of religious symbols, and participation in digital religious communities.<sup>50</sup> Religion, in this context, is reduced to a social identity and cultural marker, rather than an existential experience that transforms how one understands oneself and reality. It is here that the inner crisis of modern Muslim society takes on its distinctive form: not a lack of faith, but a lack of depth.

The transformation of religious authority driven by social media and digital platforms has significantly exacerbated this situation. Rachman and colleagues demonstrate that religious figures in the digital age tend to build their influence based on popularity and the appeal of their content, rather than on the depth of spiritual experience and traditional authority cultivated through the lengthy processes of *tazkiyah* and *suluk*.<sup>51</sup>

Muiz and colleagues assert that the transformation of Islamic spirituality in the digital age presents a dual challenge: on the one hand, it opens broader access to religious knowledge, but on the other hand, it has the potential to reduce inner experience to mere consumption and a display of identity.<sup>52</sup>

It is in this context that al-Hallaj's concept of *Anā al-Haqq* takes on its sharpest relevance. Al-Hallaj's experience of *ma'rifat*, marked by the dissolution of the ego (*fanā'*), the perpetuity of consciousness in God (*baqā'*), and the transformation of intentionality from ego-centered to God-centered, offers a fundamental correction to these two distinct forms of crisis. , for Westerners who have intense but isolated spiritual experiences lacking an interpretive framework, Sufism provides a rich hermeneutic tradition, with concepts such as *fanā'*, *baqā'*, and *tajallī*, capable of coherently interpreting transcendent experiences without binding them to rigid dogma. Brook emphasizes that

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<sup>50</sup> Alam et al., "The Changing Piety and Spirituality."

<sup>51</sup> Rachman et al., "Transformation of Religious Authority in the Digital Era."

<sup>52</sup> Muiz et al., "Reflection of Hadith and Sufism in Modern Life."

individuals who undergo transformative spiritual experiences often struggle to integrate them precisely because there is no adequate traditional framework for interpreting them.<sup>53</sup> The Sufi tradition, with its conceptual richness and historical experience, provides such a framework. Taves and Asprem assert that intense religious experiences require a supportive socio-cognitive context to be meaningfully internalized by the subject.<sup>54</sup>

For modern Muslims who experience formalism devoid of inner depth, *Anā al-Haqq's* message is more radical and direct. Al-Hallaj's *ma'rifat* is insufficient if understood merely as a doctrine or celebrated as a cultural legacy without genuine experience. The experience he describes, when consciousness is no longer centered on the ego but is fully sustained by the presence of al-Haqq, demands a genuine inner transformation, not merely a display of piety. Wildan demonstrates that the most meaningful reactualization of Sufi spirituality in Indonesia occurs precisely when it breaks through the layers of religious formalism and restores the personal, transcendent dimension of experience.<sup>55</sup> In the same vein, Lone asserts that Sufism is relevant to modern humans not because it offers an easily consumable spiritual formula, but because it demands a structural transformation in how humans engage with reality: from a defensive ego to openness to the Divine Presence that transcends all categories.<sup>56</sup>

The relevance of al-Hallaj's *ma'rifat* to the contemporary crisis of spirituality can also be seen from its psycho-spiritual dimension. Trimulyaningsih and colleagues demonstrate that attaining *nafs al-muṭma'innah* (the tranquil soul) in the Islamic tradition involves

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<sup>53</sup> Marie Grace Brook, "Struggles Reported Integrating Intense Spiritual Experiences: Results from a Survey Using the Integration of Spiritually Transformative Experiences Inventory," *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 13, no. 4 (2021): 464–81, <https://doi.org/10.1037/rel0000258>.

<sup>54</sup> Taves and Asprem, "Experience as Event."

<sup>55</sup> Muhammad Wildan, "Rethinking Sufi Spirituality in Contemporary Indonesia," *Jami'ah* 61, no. 1 (2023): 1–28.

<sup>56</sup> Lone, "The Role and Significance of Taṣawwuf in Modern-Day Crisis."

a long psychospiritual journey: from self-knowledge and inner discipline to the restructuring of the center of consciousness from an ego-oriented focus to a Divine-oriented focus.<sup>57</sup> Structurally, this process aligns with what al-Hallaj described through *fanā* and *baqā*: not the annihilation of the self, but the decentralization of the ego as a step toward a more complete presence. In the context of the mental health crisis that characterizes modern life, where anxiety, existential emptiness, and a loss of meaning have become a psycho-social epidemic, the transformative dimension of *ma'rifat* offers something that neither cognitive therapy nor formal religious rituals alone can provide: a fundamental restructuring of how humans understand themselves in relation to the Absolute.

This relevance becomes even more pronounced when confronted with the reality that the instrumental rationality dominating the discourse of modernity, both in the West and in Muslim societies influenced by modernization, is incapable of answering humanity's deepest existential questions. Wynn demonstrates that natural theology, renewed through phenomenology, can reopen space for the transcendent experience sidelined by positivism.<sup>58</sup> Zulkifli asserts that the crisis of meaning in modern society requires a response that is not merely cognitive or dogmatic, but one that touches upon the dimension of inner experience that has long been neglected by formal religious discourse.<sup>59</sup> Hasibuan and Nasution, as well as Lone, simultaneously demonstrate that Sufism, with its emphasis on the transformation of consciousness rather than the accumulation of knowledge, holds the greatest potential as an alternative spiritual paradigm for

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<sup>57</sup> Trimulyaningsih et al., "The Process of Spiritual Transformation to Attain Nafs Al-Muṭmainnah in Islamic Psychology."

<sup>58</sup> Wynn Wynn, "Renewing Natural Theology through Phenomenology," *Religious Studies* 57, no. 1 (2021): 1–18.

<sup>59</sup> Hanung Sito Rohmawati and Zulkifli Zulkifli, "The Role of Sufi Orders in Social Change in Indonesia: A Systematic Literature Review," *Teosofia: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Mysticism* 13, no. 2 (2024): 187–212, <https://doi.org/10.21580/tos.v13i2.22567>.

societies experiencing a crisis of meaning in the contemporary era.<sup>60</sup>

Thus, *Anā al-Haqq* is not merely an eccentric mystical expression from the past. It is the most radical formulation of a possibility that remains open to contemporary humans: that human consciousness, when it ceases to be centered on the ego and allows itself to be open to al-Haqq as the reality underpinning all experience, finds a fulfillment that cannot be offered by performative, consumptive, or merely formal spirituality. A phenomenological reading of *Anā al-Haqq* is not intended to urge all modern people to follow al-Hallaj's extreme path literally, but to affirm that the direction of transformation he points to, from ego-centeredness to God-centeredness, from representation to presence, from claim to witness, is the most fundamental direction for the restoration of the spiritual depth of contemporary humanity, both in the West and in the Muslim world.

## Conclusion

This article demonstrates that *ma'rifat* in al-Hallaj's mystical experience is not conceptual knowledge of God, but rather a fundamental transformation in the structure of consciousness. Through the processes of *tazkiyah*, *fanā'*, *baqā'*, and *tajallī*, human awareness is reoriented from the empirical ego toward an immediate and experiential encounter with the Divine (*ḥudūr*). In this context, the statement "*Anā al-Haqq*" is not an ontological assertion of unity between human and God, but a phenomenological expression of a de-centered subjectivity in which the subject-object distinction collapses.

The findings further suggest that al-Hallaj's symbolic and paradoxical language reflects the limits of theological representation in conveying mystical experience. This study also underscores the continued relevance of al-Hallaj's thought for contemporary

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<sup>60</sup> Hasibuan and Nasution, "Tasawuf Sebagai Solusi Krisis Spiritual Dalam Masyarakat Modern."

spirituality, particularly in addressing crises of meaning, religious formalism, and existential disconnection. It emphasizes that genuine spiritual renewal requires an inner transformation of consciousness rather than mere doctrinal adherence. Ultimately, this article contributes to contemporary scholarship by offering a phenomenological reinterpretation of “*Anā al-Ḥaqq*,” thereby fostering a more constructive dialogue between classical Sufism and modern discussions in the phenomenology of religion and spiritual studies.[]

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