

REINTERPRETING THE EXISTENCE OF KHIDR: A STUDY OF SHEIKH MAHFUDZ AL-TARMASI'S THOUGHT THROUGH DERRIDEAN HERMENEUTICS

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ABSTRACT

Discussions on the existence of Prophet Khidr in Islamic tradition have long been debated. Questions about his status as a prophet or saint, whether he is still alive or has passed away, and other issues remain significant among Muslims. These debates have also drawn the interest of Sheikh Mahfudz al-Tarmasi, a prominent Nusantara scholar. In his work, "Ināyat al-Muftaqir bimā Yata`allaq bi Sayyidinā al-Khidr `Alaihi al-Salām." al-Tarmasi offers detailed and critical insights into Prophet Khidr's existence. This approach allows for the analysis and reevaluation of existing interpretations regarding the existence of Khidr and opens the space for new, more inclusive interpretations. Employing a qualitative descriptive literature method, the study aims to gain a deeper understanding of Prophet Khidr's existence. This research aims to examine Sheikh Mahfudz al-Tarmasi's interpretation of the existence of Prophet Khidr using Derridean hermeneutics and deconstruction, focusing on how he responds to the contradictions among various Islamic perspectives.

Keywords: Deconstruction, Hermeneutics, Khidr, Mahfudz al-Tarmasi

ABSTRAK

Diskusi mengenai keberadaan Nabi Khidir dalam tradisi Islam telah lama diperdebatkan. Pertanyaan-pertanyaan mengenai statusnya sebagai nabi atau wali, apakah ia masih hidup atau sudah wafat, dan isu-isu lainnya masih menjadi perdebatan yang signifikan di kalangan umat Islam. Perdebatan ini juga menarik perhatian Syekh Mahfudz al-Tarmasi, seorang ulama Nusantara terkemuka. Dalam karyanya, "Ināyat al-Muftaqir bimā Yata`allaq bi Sayyidinā al-Khidr `Alaihi al-Salām," al-Tarmasi menawarkan wawasan yang rinci dan kritis tentang keberadaan Nabi Khidir. Pendekatan ini memungkinkan analisis dan evaluasi ulang terhadap interpretasi yang ada mengenai keberadaan Nabi Khidir dan membuka ruang untuk interpretasi baru yang lebih inklusif. Dengan menggunakan metode literatur deskriptif kualitatif, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendapatkan pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang keberadaan Nabi Khidir. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji penafsiran Syekh Mahfudz al-Tarmasi terhadap eksistensi Nabi Khidir dengan menggunakan hermeneutika dan dekonstruksi Derrida, dengan fokus pada bagaimana ia menanggapi kontradiksi di antara berbagai perspektif Islam.

Kata kunci: *Dekonstruksi, Hermeneutika, Nabi Khidir, Mahfudz al-Tarmasi*

A. INTRODUCTION

It is undeniable that Prophet Khidr is a mysterious figure that continues to be discussed to this day. The existence of Prophet Khidr remains a major question mark even now. When discussing Prophet Khidr, many questions arise in the minds of many people. These questions include his identity, his origins, whether Khidr is a prophet or a saint, and whether he is currently alive or has passed away.¹ Such a phenomenon of anxiety is very common, considering the numerous narrations about Khidr known among the Muslim community.

Until now, there are several classic books that comprehensively discuss Prophet Khidr.² Essentially, knowledge about the validity of Khidr originating from the Quran is his encounter with Prophet Musa. Prophet Musa is narrated to seek knowledge of wisdom from a servant of Allah.³ The story of Prophet Musa's apprentice is mentioned in the Quran in Surah al-Kahf, verses 60-82, as excerpted in verse 65;

فَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا مِّنْ عِبَادِنَا آتَيْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِمَّا لَدُنَّا عِلْمًا.⁴

¹ Ibnu Hajar al-Asqalani, *Rahasia Nabi Khidir*, trans. Agus Khudlori (Jakarta: Turos Pustaka, 2018), 12.

² Several scholars have specifically addressed Khidr. Among the early scholars, there is the name Ibn al-Munāḍī (336 H) with his book titled “*‘Ajālah*.” Additionally, from the later scholars, Imām Ibn al-Jawzī (597 H) introduced the book “*‘Ajālat al-Muntaẓir fī Sharḥ Hāl al-Khidr*.” Imām Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalānī also wrote a specific work about Prophet Khidr, titled “*al-Zahr al-Naḍr fī Nabā’i al-Khidr*.” See: Mahfudz al-Tarmasi, *Ināyat al-Muftaqir bimā Yata’allaq bi Sayyidinā al-Khidr ‘Alaihi al-Salām* (Rembang: al-Maktabah al-Ma’had al-Anwar, 2020), 2.

³ Mohammad Arif Taufiqurrohman and Afif Kholisun Nashoihi, “Gaya Bahasa Dialog Nabi Musa dan Nabi Khidr dalam Surah Al-Kahfi (Kajian Stilistika Al-Quran),” *Al-Lahjah* 7, no. 2 (2021): 8–31, doi:10.32764/lahjah.v7i2.1978.

⁴ Q.S. al-Kahfi (18) verse 65. Apart from the mentioned verses, the Quran never elaborates on anything about Khidr except for his journey with Prophet Musa in that particular surah. See: Amrieza Khairi, “*The Story of Prophet Musa and Prophet Khidr in the Quran: A Study of Interpretation in Jami’ul al-Bayan fī Tafsir al-Quran by al-Thabari*” (Undergraduate Thesis, Bandung, Department of Quranic Studies and Exegesis, Faculty of Usuluddin, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati, 2023), available at <https://digilib.uinsgd.ac.id/76808/>.

“Then they met a servant among Our servants, whom We had bestowed mercy upon from Us, and whom We had taught knowledge from Us.”

The popularity of Prophet Khidr in the Islamic tradition is almost equivalent to the mystery and miracles of the saints of Allah. There are numerous narrations that depict the uniqueness and miracles associated with Prophet Khidr, much like the saints.⁵ The fame of Prophet Khidr is also affirmed in the works of Nusantara scholars, such as Sheikh Mahfudz al-Tarmasi, with his book titled “*Ināyat al-Muftaqir bimā Yataallaq bi Sayyidinā al-Khidir ‘Alaihi al-Salām*.”⁶ This indicates that the interest and progressive study of the figure of Prophet Khidr continue, especially in Indonesia.

In his book, al-Tarmasi endeavors to provide a deeper explanation of Prophet Khidr by analyzing various narratives, concepts, and traditions surrounding Prophet Khidr, as well as tracing classical sources to obtain a more comprehensive understanding. Additionally, al-Tarmasi examines the interpretations and thoughts of previous scholars regarding Prophet Khidr, and relates them to relevant social, cultural, and historical contexts. Finally, al-Tarmasi casts doubt on the belief that Prophet Khidr has passed away and

⁵ The stories about Khidr often reflect extraordinary abilities, such as being able to know the unseen, transform his appearance into various forms, and even change barren land into lush and fertile soil, among other astonishing feats. See: Heri Kurniawan Tadjid, *Story of Khidir AS: Mistik dan Makrifat Sang Nabi Misterius* (Yogyakarta: Araska, 2017), 20-21

⁶ Actually, this book is not purely the creation of al-Tarmasi, but rather a summary of the book “*al-Iṣābah fī Tamyiz al-Sahābah*” by *Imām Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalānī*. Al-Tarmasi simply quotes and summarizes information related to Prophet Khidr. Nevertheless, the book remains dense and substantial because al-Tarmasi has compiled it very systematically, making it easier for readers to grasp the essence of the book. See: al-Tarmasi, *Ināyat al-Muftaqir*, 5.

then attempts to construct a new interpretation as an alternative perspective to view Prophet Khidr from various dimensions. Al-Tarmasi's effort to challenge the belief about the death of Prophet Khidr and offer a new interpretation is a significant deconstructive step.

Viewed through the lens of Hermeneutics, the efforts undertaken by al-Tarmasi represent a form of deconstruction inspired by Derrida.⁷ In this regard, the deconstruction is directed towards understanding the existence of Prophet Khidr with the aim of unraveling, questioning, and challenging the assumptions underlying the beliefs about the existence of Prophet Khidr that arise among Muslims. The analytical steps taken by al-Tarmasi aim to dismantle the structure of understanding that has been built around the death of Prophet Khidr, then questioning and casting doubt on these assumptions. al-Tarmasi hopes that the understanding of Prophet Khidr's existence can be reinterpreted correctly, more critically and more accurately in accordance with relevant cultural, historical, and textual contexts.

Investigating Mahfudz al-Tarmasi's thoughts on the existence of Prophet Khidr deserves appreciation. The fundamental distinction lies in the application of Derrida's deconstructive hermeneutic approach as the primary analytical tool, which should be highlighted as the main analytical framework. This reconciliation will lead readers into a profound analysis process of understanding how the narratives of Prophet Khidr can be comprehended and represented in al-Tarmasi's thoughts, and how such understanding can be articulated through a deconstructive lens. The significance of this research is also projected as a response to the numerous questions from the community regarding the issues surrounding the prophethood and saintliness of Khidr and his continued existence.

⁷ Muhammad al-Fayyadl, *Derrida* (Yogyakarta: LkiS, 2015), 165.

Studies on this subject are indeed relatively rare; there are very few specialized works on this subject. However, this does not mean that they do not exist at all. Scholarly works discussing the prophethood of Khidr are relatively scarce, and they tend to follow conventional discussions in a monotonous manner. Upon investigation, several studies related to this research topic have been found. For instance, Muhammad Adib Sanaya's work, titled "The Story of Prophet Musa and Prophet Khidr in Surah al-Kahf, Verses 60-82 According to the Commentary of al-Sha'rawiy (A Study of Jorge J. E. Gracia's Hermeneutic Analysis)."⁸ Additionally, there is the topic of "The Encounter between Prophet Musa and Prophet Khidr in the Quran, Surah al-Kahf, Verses 60-82 (A Semiotic Study of Ferdinand De Saussure)," written by Moch. Ali Fikri.⁹ Although different in approach and method, both studies contribute significantly to understanding the story of Prophet Musa and Prophet Khidir from unique and complementary perspectives.

Viewed from another perspective, studies oriented towards the thoughts of Sheikh Mahfudz al-Tarmasi tend to lean towards the realm of hadith and other fundamental aspects. For instance, research written by Laili Noor Azizah and Istianah, discussing the Contribution of Muhammad

⁸ Muhammad Adib Sanaya, "Kisah Nabi Musa Dan Nabi Khidir Dalam Surat Al-Kahfi Ayat 60-82 Menurut Tafsir Al-Sha'rawiy (Studi Analisis Hermeneutika Jorge J. E. Gracia)" (Skripsi, Cirebon, Jurusan Ilmu al-Qur'an dan Tafsir Fakultas Ushuluddin Adab dan Dakwah Institut Agama Islam Negeri Syekh Nurjati, 2022), <https://repository.syekhnurjati.ac.id/8158/>.

⁹ Moch. Ali Fikri, "Kisah Pertemuan Nabi Musa Dan Nabi Khidir Dalam Al-Qur'an Surah Al-Kahfi Ayat 60-82 (Kajian Semiotika Ferdinand De Saussure)" (Skripsi, Jember, Fakultas Ushuluddin Adab dan Humaniora Universitas Islam Negeri Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq, 2021), <http://digilib.uinkhas.ac.id/12367/>.

Mahfudz at-Tarmasi in Developing Hadith in Indonesia.¹⁰ Additionally, there is an article led by Nur Jihadi titled; Islamic Education Thought in the Concept of Sheikh Mahfudz al-Tarmasi's Thought.¹¹ These two studies highlight Sheikh al-Tarmasi significant contributions in two distinct fields: the development of hadith and Islamic education.

Through the results of several literature reviews conducted, the author realizes that there has not been a focused and in-depth discussion regarding the analysis of al-Tarmasi's thoughts on the existence of Prophet Khidir, especially when affiliated with a hermeneutic approach. Therefore, this research addresses this theme as a primary topic considered to have novelty value in scholarly literature. The presence of this research segment is aimed at providing a substantial contribution to enriching the understanding of Prophet Khidir from various dimensions. This research is also expected to fill existing knowledge gaps and bring a new perspective to the existence of Prophet Khidir, particularly through the intellectual horizon of Sheikh Mahfudz al-Tarmasi's thought.

Based on the elaboration above, there are four main topics as the research framework in this study. First, a brief description of the biography and portrait of the life of Sheikh Mahfudz al-Tarmasi will be provided. Second, topics related to Prophet Khidir in the Islamic perspective along with other important aspects. Third, an exposition on Derrida's hermeneutics and deconstruction along with its workings. Fourth, the discussion of the existence of Prophet Khidir from the perspective of Sheikh

¹⁰ Laili Noor Azizah and Istianah, "The Contribution of Muhammad Mahfudz At-Tarmasi in Developing Hadith in Indonesia," *Holistic Al-Hadis* 8, no. 1 (2022): 72–87, <https://doi.org/10.32678/holistic.v8i1.5852>.

¹¹ Nur Jihadi, "Islamic Education Thought Within the Concept of Sheikh Mahfudz At-Tarmasi's Thought," *Fikrah: Journal of Islamic Education* 5, no. 2 (2021): 1–23, <https://doi.org/10.32507/fikrah.v5i2.1330>.

Mahfudz al-Tarmasi. Fifth, the culmination of the discussion concerning the analysis of Sheikh Mahfudz al-Tarmasi's thought on the existence of Prophet Khidir using a hermeneutic approach.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative method utilized to obtain in-depth and comprehensive understanding in order to address the issues emerging within the research.¹² This article represents a type of literature review research, where data is obtained through the analysis of various sources relevant to the research topic.¹³ The primary source is Sheikh Mahfudz al-Tarmasi's book titled "*Ināyat al-Muftaqir bimā Yata'allaq bi Sayyidinā al-Khidir 'Alaihi al-Salām*". The secondary sources consist of heritage books (*turāth*) and several scholarly literatures such as journals, articles, books, and other data that correlate with the research theme.

Broadly speaking, the applied analysis is the substantive analysis technique (content analysis) by employing the deconstructive hermeneutic approach proposed by Jacques Derrida. Hermeneutics, as a formulation of interpretation towards foreign and ancient texts to become familiar and contemporary, is highly relevant to delve deeper into the meaning of a text by considering socio-historical context aspects.¹⁴ The interpretation technique with this deconstructive approach can be initiated by identifying and analyzing the text to avoid seeing the truth believed as the only truth, then transforming, dismantling, and constructing variations of

¹² Suharsimi Arikunto, *Metode Penelitian* (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 2010), 37.

¹³ Lexi J. Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2017), 4.

¹⁴ Edi Susanto, *Studi Hermeneutika: Kajian Pengantar* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2018), 11; Frety Cassia Udag, "Berhermeneutik Bersama Derrida," *Tumou Tou* 6, no. 2 (2019): 117–27, <https://doi.org/10.51667/tt.v6i2.148>.

interpretations of truth more concretely by considering past texts with present text readings.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Biography of Syekh Mahfudz al-Tarmasi

a. Portrait of Life

One of the prominent scholars in the Nusantara region who made significant contributions to the development of Islamic intellectualism is Syekh Mahfudz al-Tarmasi. His full name is Muhammad Mahfudz bin Syekh Abdullah bin Syekh Abdul Manan bin Abdullah bin Ahmad. He is also known as al-Shaykh al-Allamāh al-Uṣūlī al-Faqīh al-Muḥaddīth al-Muqri' al-Tarmasī al-Jāwī al-Makkī al-Shāfiī.¹⁵ Al-Tarmasi was born in Tremas, Pacitan, East Java, and is the grandson of the Tremas Islamic boarding school, namely KH. Abdul Manan, and the son of KH Abdullah. Various scholars have different opinions about his date of birth. According to Syekh Yasin al-Fadani, al-Tarmasi was born on the 12th of Jumadil Ula, 1285 H, while according to his younger brother Syekh Dahlan, al-Tarmasi was born on Monday, the 6th of Safar, 1280 H. Al-Tarmasi was born while his father was still in Mecca, therefore he was raised by his mother and her siblings.¹⁶

¹⁵ As for "al-Tarmasi" it is an affiliation to Tremas, Pacitan. "Al-Jawi" is an affiliation to one of the large islands in Indonesia. "Al-Makki" is an affiliation to Mecca, because al-Tarmasi came to study there, resided there, and passed away there as well. "Al-Syafi'i" is an affiliation to his school of jurisprudence, namely the Shafi'i school, following Imām Shafi'i as one of the four Imams. See: Syekh Mahfudz al-Tarmasi, *Bughyat al-Adhkiyā 'i fī al-Baḥth 'an Karāmāt al-Awliyā'* (Depok: Sahifa Publishing, 2020), 4-5.

¹⁶ Muhammad Mahfudz al-Tarmasi, *Kifāyat al-Mustafīd Limā 'alā min al-Asānīd* (Beirut: Dār al-Bashāir al-Islāmiyyah, 1408), 2-3.

Al-Tarmasi grew up and flourished in a family environment steeped in scholarly traditions, significantly shaping his personality, particularly his passion for knowledge, especially religious studies. This disposition led him to become both a student and an educator. From a young age, under the guidance, upbringing and mentoring of his mother, uncle, and aunts, al-Tarmasi was already capable of memorizing the Quran fluently and eloquently at a very tender age.¹⁷ Another remarkable trait possessed by al-Tarmasi is his ability to learn and master the fundamentals of religious knowledge proficiently and accurately within a relatively short period under the tutelage of several teachers in the vicinity of where he was raised and resided.

Based on his history, al-Tarmasi spent his teenage years in the village of Tremas until the age of 13. He then went to Mecca to perform Hajj, where he stayed and received various knowledge from prominent scholars. After residing and teaching knowledge in Mecca for 40 years, al-Tarmasi also breathed his last breath in Mecca, before the Maghrib call to prayer, on Sunday night, 1 Rajab 1338 H / 1920 M. al-Tarmasi was buried in the Ma'la cemetery complex next to Sayyidah Khadijah al-Kubra.¹⁸

b. Educational Background of Mahfudz al-Tarmasi

Based on his records, al-Tarmasi was born and raised in a dignified and knowledgeable family environment. In 1291 H, when al-Tarmasi was 6 years old, his parents, Syekh Abdullah al-Tarmasi, took

¹⁷ Muhajirin Gafar, *Muhammad Mahfudz Al-Tarmasi: Ulama Hadis Nusantara Pertama* (Yogyakarta: Idea Press, 2018), 29.

¹⁸ al-Tarmasi, *Ināyat al-Muftaqir*, 2; Aditia Narwan, "The Story of Musa and Khidir in QS. Al-Kahfi (18): 60-82 According to Al-Alusi's Prespective" (Tesis, Semarang, Ushuluddin and Humanity Faculty UIN Walisongo, 2019), <https://eprints.walisongo.ac.id/id/eprint/12215/1/.pdf>.

him to Mecca to fulfill his need for Islamic religious knowledge by studying several disciplines and leaving him with scholars in the city of Mecca. However, this did not last long, and after several years, al-Tarmasi was brought back to Java. In Java, al-Tarmasi went to Semarang and studied under Syekh Sholeh bin Umar Darat. Then, in 1308 H, al-Tarmasi returned to Mecca and studied under renowned scholars there.¹⁹

Al-Tarmasi studied under Sayyid Bakar Shaṭā, received hadith transmissions from Sayyid Ḥusayn al-Ḥabshī and al-Shaykh Muḥammad Saīd Bafaḍal, eventually becoming an expert in hadith and known for his expertise in Islamic jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence and Quranic recitation. Finally, his teacher, al-Shaykh Sayyid Bakar Shaṭā, granted him the authority to teach at Masjidil Haram at the Shafa gate. Many scholars graduated from his teachings. Moreover, several contemporary scholars also narrated from him, such as al-Shaykh Ḥabībullah al-Shanqīṭī, al-Shaykh ‘Umar Ḥamdān al-Maḥrūsī, al-Shaykh Aḥmad al-Mukhallaṭī, and others.²⁰

c. Teachers and Students of Mahfudz al-Tarmasi

Looking at the journey of his life, al-Tarmasi embarked on numerous travels in search of knowledge. He studied under many scholars of his time, who were profoundly knowledgeable in their fields. Among al-Tarmasi’s teachers during his pursuit of knowledge, both in the Nusantara region and in the Haramain, were Kiai Abdullah

¹⁹ Gafar, *Muhammad Mahfudz Al-Tarmasi*, 32. During his time in Mecca, al-Tarmasi delved into many disciplines of religious knowledge, not only hadith, which later became his specialization, but also various other religious sciences. See: Imam Muhtar, *Tremas Makkah Nusantara* (Ponorogo: CV. Nata Karya, 2017), 31.

²⁰ Nurul Azizah, “Mukjizat Naratologis: Studi Andragogi Atas Kisah Musa-Khidr dalam Surah Al-Kahfi 60-82,” *Ilmu Ushuluddin* 18, no. 1 (2019): 188–202, doi:10.18592/jiui.v.

(his father), Kiai Shaleh Darat, al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Sharbīnī al-Dimyāṭī, Sayyid Abū Bakar bin Muḥammad Zayn al-Ābidīn Shaṭā al-Makkī, al-Shaykh Umar bin Barakāt al-Shāmī al-Shāfi`ī, and other eminent scholars.²¹

Al-Tarmasi also had many skilled and knowledgeable students, not only from among the Nusantara students but also from across the continents, including from the Arab region itself at that time. Among the students from outside Nusantara were al-Shaykh Sa'adullah al-Maymanī, al-Shaykh Umar bin Ḥamdān, al-Shaykh al-Shihāb Aḥmad bin Abdullah, and many other students. As for the students from the Nusantara region, they included Kiai Hasyim Asy'ari, Kiai Wahab Hasbullah from Jombang, Muhammad Bakir bin Nur from Yogyakarta, Kyai R. Asnawi from Kudus, Mu'ammār bin Kyai Baidawi from Lasem, and others.²²

d. The Written Works of Mahfudz al-Tarmasi

This scholar from Tremas Pacitan has wielded the pen of gold, producing numerous written works. Some sources note that the writings of Sheikh Mahfudz al-Tarmasi that are still accessible amount to 19 titles covering various fields of knowledge. These include

²¹ From among the many teachers of al-Tarmasi, there is one teacher who played a significant role in leading al-Tarmasi to become a renowned Nusantara scholar, particularly in the field of hadith, namely Sayyid Abū Bakar bin Sayyid Muḥammad Shaṭā. In addition to being a teacher, Abū Bakar Shaṭā also served as al-Tarmasi's foster father, providing much guidance and exerting a significant influence on al-Tarmasi's success in achieving the status of an internationally acclaimed Nusantara scholar. See: Gafar, *Muhammad Mahfudz al-Tarmasi*, 41.

²² H. M. Bibit Suprpto, *Ensiklopedi Ulama Nusantara, Riwayat Hidup, Karya dan Sejarah Perjuangan 157 Ulama Nusantara* (Jakarta: Gelegar Media Indonesia, 2010), 465.

Quranic sciences, hadith, Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), creed or theology and even history.²³

Among his most notable works are the book “*Manhaj Dhawī al-Nazar*” which discusses methodology in the science of hadith, and “*Mawhibah Dhi al-Faḍāl*” which serves as an important guide in the science of fiqh. These works are not only recognized in Indonesia but are also esteemed by the international muslim community. Here are some of Sheikh Mahfudz’s books with detailed specifications as follows:

Table 1.
List of Works by Sheikh Mahfudz al-Tarmasi

Quranic sciences and recitation	<i>Ghunyaḥ al-Ṭalabah bi Sharḥ al-Ṭayyibah al-Risālah al-Tarmasiyyah fī Isnād al-Qirāah al-`Ashriyyah.</i>
	<i>Inshirāḥ al-Fuād fī Qirāat al-Imām Ḥamzah</i>
	<i>Tanwīr al-Ṣadr bi Qirāat al-Imām Abī `Amr</i>
	<i>Ta`mīm al-Manāfi` fī Qirāat al-Imām Nāfi`</i>
	<i>al-Badr al-Munīr fī Qirāat al-Imām Ibn Kathīr</i>
Hadith and the sciences of Hadith	<i>Kifāyat al-Mustafīd Limā `Alā min al-Asānīd</i>
	<i>al-Minḥat al-Khayriyyah fī Arba`īna Ḥadīthān min Aḥādith Khayr al-Bariyyah</i>
	<i>Manhaj Dhawī al-Nazar fī Sharḥ Alfīyah `Ilm al-Athar</i>
	<i>al-Khil`ah al-Fikriyyah bi Sharḥ al-Minḥah al-Khayriyyah</i>
	<i>Thulāthiyāt al-Bukhārī</i>
Fikih and Ushul Fikih	<i>Nayl al-Ma`mul Sharḥ Lubḥ al-Uṣūl</i>
	<i>Mawhibah Dhi al-Faḍāl Ḥāshiyah Sharah Bafaḍāl</i>
	<i>Ḥāshiyah Takmilah al-Minhaj al-Qawim ila al-Faraidh</i>
	<i>Is`āf al-Maṭāli` bi Sharḥ al-Badr al-Lāmi` Nazm Jam`u al-Jawā`mi`</i>

²³ al-Tarmasi, *Bughyat al-Adhkiyā`i*, 5-6.

Beliefs (Aqidah) and Sufism	<i>Bughyat al-Adhikyā' fī al-Baḥṡh 'an Karāmāt al-Awliyā'</i>
	<i>Ināyatul Muftaqir bimā Yata'allaq bi Sayyidinā al-Khidir 'Alaihi al-salam.</i>
History	<i>Faṡḡ al-Kabīr bi Sharḡ Miftāḡ al-Sair</i>
	<i>Taḥyuah al-Fikr bi Sharḡ Alfīyah al-Sair</i>
	<i>al-Siqāyah al-Marḍiyyah fī Asma' al-Kutub al - Fiḡhiyyah al-Shāfi'iyyah</i>

e. The Evaluation of Scholars on Mahfudz al-Tarmasi

Al-Tarmasi is a renowned figure among scholars. His popularity stems from his expertise across multiple disciplines, particularly in the field of Hadith studies.²⁴ Many scholars appreciate al-Tarmasi's contributions, as evidenced by various perspectives and evaluations attributed to this figure born in Tremas.

Khayruddīn al-Ziriklī (1893-1976), a historian and bibliographer from Syria, mentions Mahfudz al-Tarmasi as a jurist following the Shafi'i school of thought and one of the qurrā' (reciters of the Quran) who was active in the field of Hadith and proficient in other areas of scholarship.²⁵ Sheikh Yāsin bin Isā al-Fādāni praised Sheikh Mahfudz al-Tarmasi with the title al-Musnid al-Ḥāfiẓ,

²⁴ Even one anthropologist and orientalist from the Netherlands, Martin Van Brunissen, commented in his book "Biographical Dictionary of Scholars and Great Figures from the Muslim Borderlands Since the 19th Century to the Present (1992)" about the uniqueness of al-Tarmasi. In his book, Martin listed Mahfudz al-Tarmasi as one of the influential and respected scholars of his time, proficient in various fields of Islamic knowledge. See: Zanuar Mubin, "Pemikiran Fiqh Jual Beli Syaikh Muhammad Mahfudz Al-Tarmasi (Kontekstualisasi Konsep Jual Beli al-Mu'āṭāh)" 2020, <https://etheses.iainponorogo.ac.id/8845/>.

²⁵ Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, Jil. 7 (Beirut: Dār al-'Ilm al-Malayin, 2007), 19.

indicating a scholar who has memorized and understood the Prophetic traditions. The title al-Musnid al-Ḥāfīz itself is the highest honor for scholars who comprehend and master the traditions of the Prophet.

Ilyās bin Aḥmad Ḥusayn al-Barmāwī, a teacher of the Quran and tajweed at the Prophet's Mosque, included the name of al-Tarmasi in his monumental work on the biographies of reciters who lived after the 8th century A.H. He aligns Sheikh Mahfudz al-Tarmasi with renowned Quranic scholars such as Sheikh Alī bin Muḥammad al-Dhabbā (d. 1376 H), and other reciters.²⁶ What's even more impressive is the comment by Sheikh `Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Marṣafī, who places Mahfudz al-Tarmasi among internationally esteemed scholars of Qur'anic sciences, such as Imām Nāfi al-Madanī, Hisyam bin Ammār, and others. Not only does Sheikh `Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Marṣafī equate Mahfudz al-Tarmasi with renowned scholars, but he also refers to him as shaykhu shuyūkhinā (the master of our masters).²⁷

The comments conveyed by scholars regarding al-Tarmasi reflect a profound acknowledgment of his expertise across various fields of knowledge, particularly in Hadith and Quranic recitation. This indicates that Mahfudz al-Tarmasi's understanding has been accepted and recognized as authoritative and influential reference sources within the context of Islamic scholarship.

²⁶ Nabīl bin Muḥammad al-Ismā'īl, *al-'Ināyah bi al-Qur'an wa 'Ulūmihi* (Riyadh: Jāmi' al-Iāam Ibn Sa'ūd, 2002), 582.

²⁷ `Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Sayyīd al-Marṣafī, *Hidāyah al-Qārī* (Madinah: Maktabah al-Ṭayyīb, 2010), 803.

2. Prophet Khidr in Islamic Perspective

a. History and Narrative

Prophet Khidr is one of the many prophets sent by Allah with a special mission. Scholars have differing opinions regarding the name and lineage of Prophet Khidr. It is mentioned that there are approximately nine narrations that recount the origin of Prophet Khidr, among them:

1. The opinion mentioned by al-Dāruqutnī states that Khidr is the son of Adam. al-Dāruqutnī explains that this narration originates from Rawad bin al-Jarrah, from Muqotil bin Sulaymān, from al-Dhahak, from Ibn ‘Abbās, may Allah be pleased with him. However, this narration is declared weak (*da‘if*).
2. Prophet Khidr is Qobil bin Adam, as mentioned by Abū Ḥatim al-Sijistānī in the book al-Mu‘ammarīn.
3. Khidr is Balya bin Malkān bin Qalī’ bin Ṣāliḥ bin Abīr, as narrated by Wahb bin Munabbih and Ibn Qutaybah.
4. Khidr is Muamar bin Mālik, the son of Abdullah bin Nadhir bin al-Zayd. This opinion is narrated by Ismāil bin Abū Uways.
5. The opinion stating that Khidr is the son of ‘Amanil bin Nūr bin al-‘Ish bin Ishāq, also supported by Ibn Qutaybah.
6. Narrated by al-Kalabī from Abū Ṣaḥīḥ from Ibn ‘Abbās, that Khidr is the grandson of Prophet Aaron, the brother of Prophet Moses. However, this opinion is far from the truth and Abū Ja‘far has refuted it.
7. Khidr is the grandson of Pharaoh through his daughter, as presented by Muḥammad bin Ayyūb from Ibn Luhay‘ah.

8. Sourced from the narration of Ibn Shawḍab, transmitted by al-Ṭabarī from Dhamrah bin Rabi'ah, from Ibn Shawḍab, stating that Khidr is the son of Fariz.
9. The opinion that Khidr is the son of a believer in Prophet Abraham and migrated with him from the land of Babylon, as narrated by al-Ṭabarī.²⁸

Among the nine narrations above, the most famous name is Balyan bin Malkan, with the kunyah Abu al-'Abbās and the epithet most commonly known as Khidir. The designation Khidir (meaning “green” in Arabic) itself has several reasons behind it, including those mentioned in a hadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah:

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ ابْنُ الْأَصْبَهَانِيِّ، أَخْبَرَنَا ابْنُ الْمُبَارَكِ، عَنْ مَعْمَرٍ، عَنْ هَمَّامِ بْنِ مُنَبِّهٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، قَالَ: إِنَّمَا سُمِّيَ الْخَضِرَ أَنَّهُ جَلَسَ عَلَى قَرْوَةٍ بَيضَاءَ، فَإِذَا هِيَ تَهْتَرُ مِنْ خَلْفِهِ خَضِرَاءً.²⁹

“Muḥammad bin Sa'īd Ibn al-Aṣbihānī narrated to us, Ibn al-Mubārak reported to us from Ma'mar, from Hammām bin Munabbih, from Abī Hurayrah, from the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, who said: 'Verily, he was named Khidir because when he sits on dry grass, immediately the grass he sits on turns green.’”

Substantially, in the hadith above, it is mentioned that at one time Prophet Khidr sat on white-colored ground, but suddenly the ground he sat on shook from below and changed color to green. In another narration from Suddi, it is mentioned that the reason for him being named Khidr is because when he was standing in a place where

²⁸ al-Tarmasi, *Ināyat al-Muftaqir*, 5-6.

²⁹ Abī 'Abdillāh Muḥammad bin Ismā'il al-Bukhārī, *al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, Jil. 4 (Kairo: al-Matba'ah al-Salafiyah, 1983), 156.

grass grew beneath his feet, immediately the grass grew thickly to cover his ankles.

The story of Prophet Khidr is also specifically recounted in the Quran, in Surah Al-Kahf, verses 60-82. Narrated in 23 verses, it depicts four sequences of events, beginning with the meeting of Prophet Moses with Prophet Khidr at a place not explicitly mentioned in the Quran.³⁰ The encounter between Prophet Khidr and Prophet Moses narrates the long struggle of Prophet Moses to meet Prophet Khidr at a location referred to in the Quran as “the junction of the two seas” (*majma` al-baḥrayn*). The journey undertaken by Prophet Moses to meet Prophet Khidr was extremely long, spanning several years.

b. Controversies Surrounding Prophet Khidr

To this day, stories about Prophet Khidr are still often discussed by many people. His stories are always contextual, as numerous discussions and the journey of Prophet Khidr’s narrative represent a portrayal of real life that can be adopted, thus inviting controversial reactions. The controversy that still surfaces is about the existence of Prophet Khidr, which continues to unfold. Some circles assert that

³⁰ The story of Prophet Khidr and Prophet Moses can be summarized into three major points: first, during their journey, Prophet Khidr suddenly punctured the boat they were on. Secondly, Prophet Khidr encountered a young boy and killed him. Thirdly, upon arriving in a city and seeking hospitality from its inhabitants, they were rejected. However, Prophet Khidr noticed a nearly collapsing wall of a house and fixed it. See: M. Faisol, “Struktur Naratif Cerita Nabi Khidir dalam Al-Qur’an,” *Adabiyyāt: Jurnal Bahasa Dan Sastra* 10, no. 2 (2011): 233, doi:10.14421/ajbs.2011.10202; Anita Fauziah and Ahmad Syamsu Rizal, “Implikasi Edukatif Kisah Nabi Musa dan Nabi Khidir dalam Qs. Al-Kahfi/18: 60-82 (Studi Literatur Terhadap 5 Tafsir Mu’tabar),” *Tarbawy: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education* 6, no. 1 (2019): 33–43, doi.org/10.17509/jpp.v2i12.

Prophet Khidr is still alive to this day. Meanwhile, others believe that Prophet Khidr passed away several years ago.³¹

1. Prophet Khidr Has Passed Away

The existence of Prophet Khidr remains a subject of debate among scholars, leading to various arguments regarding his presence. Among these is the notion that Prophet Khidr has passed away like an ordinary human being. One of the scholars who believe that Prophet Khidr has passed away includes Bukhārī, Ibn al-Mandah, Abū Bakr al-Arabī, Abū Yalā, Ibn al-Farra', and others. These scholars argue based on evidence from the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet, such as:

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا لِبَشَرٍ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ الْخُلْدَ أَفَإِنْ مِتَّ فَهُمْ الْخَالِدُونَ.³²

“And We did not grant eternal life to any man before you (Muhammad); then if you die, are they to be eternal ?”

Imām al-Ṭabarī mentions that the above verse explains that Allah informed Prophet Muhammad that no one in this world has eternal life from the time of Prophet Adam to Prophet Muhammad.

³³ Imām Ibn Kathīr also mentions that this verse is evidence for those who believe that Prophet Khidr cannot live until now because he is an ordinary human being.³⁴

In addition to the evidence from the Quran above, Imām al-Bukhārī also mentions its foundation from a saying of the Prophet:

³¹ Khalifī Elyas Bahar, *Khidir Sang Nabi Super Misterius* (Yogyakarta: DIVA Press, 2015), 41.

³² Q.S al-Anbiya (21) ayat 34.

³³ Abī Ja'far Muḥammad bin Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, Jil. 16 (Kairo: al-Dirāsāt al-'Arabiyah, 2001), 268.

³⁴ Ismā'īl bin 'Umar bin Kathīr al-Qurashī al-Dimashiqī, *Tafsīr al-Qur'an al-'Aẓīm*, Jil. 5 (Riyadh: Dār al-Ṭayyibah, 1999), 342.

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدَانُ، قَالَ: أَخْبَرَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ، قَالَ: أَخْبَرَنَا يُونُسُ، عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ، قَالَ: سَأَلِمُ، أَخْبَرَنِي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ، قَالَ: صَلَّى لَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَيْلَةَ صَلَاةِ الْعِشَاءِ، وَهِيَ الَّتِي يَدْعُو النَّاسُ الْعَتَمَةَ، ثُمَّ انْصَرَفَ فَأَقْبَلَ عَلَيْنَا، فَقَالَ: أَرَأَيْتُمْ لَيْلَتَكُمْ هَذِهِ، فَإِنَّ رَأْسَ مِائَةِ سَنَةٍ مِنْهَا، لَا يَبْقَى مِمَّنْ هُوَ عَلَى ظَهْرِ الْأَرْضِ أَحَدٌ.³⁵

“Abdān narrated to us, he said: Abdullah reported to us, he said: Yūnus reported to us from al-Zuhrī, he said: Sālim reported to me from Abdullah, he said: 'One night, the Messenger of Allah performed the Isha prayer at the time known as 'atamah. Then, after the prayer, he turned and faced us and said: “Do you not see this night of yours? Know that indeed, every hundred years, none who was on the face of the earth on this night will still be alive.”

The hadith above clearly explains that no human being is eternal; everyone who lives will die. Therefore, this hadith also serves as the main evidence for scholars who deny the eternity of Prophet Khidr and argue that Khidr has passed away. Hence, it can be concluded that the opinion of scholars stating that Prophet Khidr has passed away refers to the evidence from the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet.

2. Prophet Khidr is Still Alive

Imām al-Dāruqutnī narrates a hadith from Ibn Abbās stating that Prophet Khidr is still alive until Dajjal confronts him. Imām al-Thalabī also mentions that Prophet Khidr will not die except at the end of time coinciding with the lifting of the Quran.³⁶ Then, Imām Abū `Amr Ibn Ṣalāḥ in his fatwa also states that most Sufi scholars

³⁵ al-Bukhārī, *al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, Jil. 1, 117.

³⁶ Sayyid Salāmah Ghanamī, *Sayyidinā al-Khidr `Alayhi al-Salām* (Kairo: Dār al-Aḥmadī, 2000), 18.

believe that Prophet Khidr is still alive, although some hadith scholars oppose this view. Imām al-Nawawī is also among the scholars who believe that Prophet Khidr is still alive. In his book *Tahdhīb*, Imām al-Nawawī states that most scholars believe that Prophet Khidr is still alive and among us today.³⁷

As because serve as the basis for their assertion that Prophet Khidr is still alive according to some scholars, firstly, it is because Khidr buried the body of Prophet Adam, thus fulfilling Prophet Adam's prayer to Allah to extend the lifespan of whoever buried him until the Day of Judgment. Secondly, it is because Prophet Khidr drank from the fountain of life, granting him longevity.³⁸ From this exposition, it can be concluded that some scholars believe that Prophet Khidr is still alive due to two main reasons. This then gives rise to different interpretations and polemics regarding the existence of Prophet Khidr.

3. Derrida's Hermeneutics and Deconstruction

Hermeneutics is a field of study that focuses on the process of interpreting texts, particularly in the contexts of literature and religion. In the development of this discipline, Derrida, as one of its key figures, sought to develop a broader perspective by offering critiques of traditional views on hermeneutics. Jacques Derrida was born in 1930 in Algeria, but he spent most of his career in France, where he taught at

³⁷ Aḥmad bin 'Alī bin Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Zahr al-Naḍīr fī Ḥāl al-Khiḍir* (Kuwait: Maktabah Ahli al-Athar, 2010), 42.

³⁸ M. Ihsan Fauzi, "Penafsiran Khidir dalam Al-Qur'an Perspektif Tafsir Ruh Al-Ma'ani dan Tafsir Lathaif Al-Isyarat (Studi Analisis Perbandingan Penafsiran Surat Al-Kahfi Ayat 60-82)" (Tesis, Malang, Program Magister Studi Islam Pascasarjana Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim, 2023), <http://etheses.uin-malang.ac.id/51040/>.

various leading universities.³⁹ Derrida challenged and criticized the belief that texts have fixed and definite meanings. He was a French philosopher of Jewish descent known for his significant contributions to contemporary philosophy, particularly through the development of the theory of deconstruction.

The concept of deconstruction developed by Derrida aims to demonstrate that within these texts, there exist instability and uncertainty of meaning.⁴⁰ Through the theory of deconstruction, Derrida perceives texts not as cohesive structures but as open arenas of struggle. The singular certainty that modern humans always seek and glorify is an inevitability. The only thing that can be said for certain is uncertainty itself. Therefore, according to Derrida, certainty is uncertainty.⁴¹ The theory of deconstruction will breed dissatisfaction with existing truths and always be suspicious of stability. Hence, it will continually attempt to dismantle previously deemed correct meanings, then construct the truest meaning lying behind them.

Deconstruction as a philosophical approach and critique of texts also has fundamental steps in its operation. Here are two basic steps of how deconstruction works, especially in relation to Sheikh Mahfudz al-Tarmasi's thoughts on the existence of Prophet Khidr:⁴²

³⁹ F. Budi Hardiman, *Seni Memahami, Hermeneutik dari Schleiermacher Sampai Derrida* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2015), 273.

⁴⁰ In addition, Derrida is also renowned for his criticism of the structuralist views that dominated philosophy in his time. Derrida criticized the belief that language has a fixed structure and stable meaning, and showed how language is always in a process of change and meaning formation. See: al-Fayyadl, *Derrida*, 22.

⁴¹ Mangihut Siregar, "Kritik Terhadap Teori Dekonstruksi Derrida," *Journal of Urban Sociology* 2, no. 1 (2019): 65, <https://doi.org/10.30742/jus.v2i1.611>.

⁴² Saiful Mustofa, "Hantu Derrida dan Berhala Kontemporer," *Kontemplasi: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 5, no. 2 (2017), doi:10.21274/kontem.2017.5.2.311-328.

a. Description

It is part of the initial process of deconstruction, where the elements of a concept or text are analyzed in detail to understand their meanings and significance. In this case, the researcher attempts to examine several chapters contained in the book *“Ināyat al-Muftaqir bimā Yata`allaq bi Sayyidinā al-Khidir ‘Alaihi al-Salām”* by al-Tarmasi, especially issues regarding the prophethood and saintliness of Prophet Khidr, his age and encounter with Prophet Muhammad, the mystery of his life until now, and the opinions chosen by al-Tarmasi. This study is intended as a step to see the extent to which the depiction of Prophet Khidr is portrayed through al-Tarmasi’s perspective.

b. Transformation

The second stage involves the process of change, which refers to the use of previously found information to alter or modify existing understandings, interpretations, and concepts. From various readings regarding Prophet Khidr, eventually, there were changes in the concepts and understandings proposed by al-Tarmasi regarding the existence of Prophet Khidr. This transformation process involves numerous narrations and opinions that are brought forth. The transformation that occurs here is that Sheikh Mahfudz leans more towards the opinion of Khidr’s immortality with arguments and evidence that he considers strong supporting his opinion, thus making it a deconstructive process.

In conclusion, deconstruction involves a combination of description and transformation, with description used to identify and analyze existing elements surrounding Prophet Khidr and transformation aimed at generating new understanding or changes in how the existence

of Prophet Khidr is perceived or understood from a different perspective. Although there are no exact methods or steps in conducting deconstruction, the principles above are generally employed by scholars who apply this approach.

4. The Existence of Prophet Khidr from the Perspective of Sheikh Mahfudz al-Tarmasi

Sheikh Mahfudz al-Tarmasi elucidates the story of Prophet Khidr through his work entitled *“Ināyat al-Muftaqir bimā Yata`allaq bi Sayyidinā al-Khidir ‘Alaihi al-Salām.”* The most fundamental reason al-Tarmasi wrote this book is in response to the numerous questions from the public regarding the issues of the prophethood and saintliness of Khidr, and his existence until today.⁴³ Through this book, al-Tarmasi aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding to the general public about who Khidr truly is, his role, and his position from the Islamic perspective.

Broadly, the birth of this book is based on Sheikh Mahfudz al-Tarmasi’s research on everything related to Prophet Khidr. In the book, Sheikh Mahfudz al-Tarmasi expounds on various aspects concerning Prophet Khidr, including; starting from the discussion between Khidr and Moses, Khidr’s lineage, Khidr’s prophethood, the existence of Khidr’s immortality and its factors, experts opinions on Khidr’s death, then information about Khidr’s presence in the era of Prophet Muhammad until now and information about Khidr’s existence after Prophet

⁴³ Furthermore, the writing of this book can also serve as an effort to provide new insights or a deeper perspective on Prophet Khidr, from theological, historical, or mystical viewpoints. See: al-Tarmasi, *Ināyat al-Muftaqir*, 4.

Muhammad as well as the stories of the saints who have met him, and finally, the conclusion.⁴⁴

According to Sheikh Mahfudz own view, in the historical records of the Muslim community, those who firmly believe that Khidir is a Prophet and still alive today are generally the Sufis, while those who reject this belief are generally the jurists. If observed throughout history, in this context, the scholars of hadith themselves are more often aligned with the jurists. In other words, hadith scholars tend to agree with the beliefs of the jurists in rejecting the Sufis assumption about the continued existence of Prophet Khidir. Therefore, it is not surprising that Ibn Hajar, as a prominent hadith scholar, rejects the common view regarding Prophet Khidir.

Based on the available records, although the book *“Ināyat al-Muftaqir bimā Yata`allaq bi Sayyidinā al-Khidir ‘Alaihi al-Salām”* is an adaptation of Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalānī’s book *“al-Iṣābah fī Tamyiz al-Ṣaḥābah”*, however, al-Tarmasi has his own views about Prophet Khidir. Mahfudz al-Tarmasi prefers to take a middle path by positioning himself as a hadith scholar with Sufi inclinations. With this method, al-Tarmasi believes that Khidir is a Prophet who is still alive today, even until the end of time according to the will of Allah Swt.⁴⁵

Thus, the conclusion of the above discussion is that the understanding of Khidir varies among Islamic scholars, with Sufis tending to believe in his eternal life, while the majority of jurists and hadith scholars reject this belief. However, al-Tarmasi is one of those

⁴⁴ In compiling this book, Sheikh Mahfudz Tremas consistently accompanies differences of opinion in each chapter by indicating the most authentic opinion. See: Syekh Muhammad Mahfudz At-Tarmasi, *Nabi Khidir dan Keramat Para Wali*, trans. Ahmad Dzulfikar (Depok: Sahifa Publishing, 2020), 226-307.

⁴⁵ al-Tarmasi, *Ināyat al-Muftaqir*, 3.

who holds a different view by stating that Khidir is still alive, and he attempts to offer a perspective that combines aspects of his scholarly expertise in hadith with his Sufi inclinations. This indicates the complexity of Islamic studies and the diversity of interpretations regarding revered figures like Prophet Khidir.

5. Analysis of Sheikh Mahfudz al-Tarmasi's Thought on Prophet Khidr with Hermeneutic Approach

During differing views between Sufis who believe in the eternal life of Khidr and hadith scholars and jurists who reject this belief, al-Tarmasi leans more towards the conviction that Khidr is still alive to this day. Viewed through a hermeneutical lens, the analysis applied by al-Tarmasi is relevant to Derrida's deconstructive approach. Indirectly, in his book, al-Tarmasi explores and unravels the contradictions and tensions within the Islamic scholarly tradition surrounding the figure of Khidr.

The first step in deconstruction is description. Al-Tarmasi engages in this by detailing the various perspectives on Khidr, as well as outlining the arguments both for and against the eternal life of Khidr.⁴⁶ By describing these diverse perspectives, al-Tarmasi demonstrates the existence of various layers of meaning and interpretations associated with the figure of Khidr.

⁴⁶ Ahmad Fauzan, "Syekh Mahfudz Al-Tarmasi: Muhaddis Nusantara," *Tahdis: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Al-Hadis* 9, no. 2 (2019): 119–45, <https://doi.org/10.24252/tahdis.v9i2.7525>.

Al-Tarmasi first mentions the hadith narrated by al-Bukhārī. According to al-Tarmasi, al-Bukhārī was also asked about the continued existence of al-Khidhir, but he denied it and cited the hadith:⁴⁷

إِنَّ عَلَى رَأْسِ مِائَةِ سَنَةٍ لَا يَبْقَى عَلَى وَجْهِ الْأَرْضِ مِمَّنْ هُوَ عَلَيْهَا أَحَدٌ

“Indeed, at the end of one hundred years, no one on the face of the earth will be alive.”

According to al-Tarmasi, this hadith is the main basis for scholars who argue that al-Khidhir has passed away and deny his eternal life. In addition, other hadith scholars cite the saying of the Prophet narrated by Abū Dāwud:⁴⁸

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ، وَأَنَا خَاتَمُ النَّبِيِّينَ لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدِي.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: “And I am the seal of the Prophets; there is no prophet after me.”

Through al-Tarmasi analysis, this opinion with its arguments is attributed to Ibn Dihyah, and of course, this contradicts the descent of Isa son of Maryam (peace be upon them), because it is clear that Isa is a Prophet. It has been established based on authentic hadiths that Prophet Isa will descend in the end times, and Prophet Isa will rule by the Shariah of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Therefore, this hadith is interpreted as a denial of prophethood for anyone else, rather than a denial of the existence of a prophet who was already foretold during the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

⁴⁷ al-Tarmasi, *Ināyat al-Muftaqir*, 51.

⁴⁸ al-Tarmasi, *Nabi Khidir dan Keramat Para Wali*, 261.

The second step is transformation. After describing the existing views, al-Tarmasi engages in transformation by offering a new interpretation that attempts to integrate aspects of Sufism and hadith scholarship. Al-Tarmasi does not simply accept Sufi views or outright reject the views of jurists and hadith scholars; instead, he unravels existing contradictions and constructs a more inclusive narrative.

In terms of hadith, al-Tarmasi includes a narration from al-Dāruqūṭnī through the chain of transmission from Ibn `Abbās:

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ، قَالَ: نُسِيَ لِلْخَضِرِ فِي أَجَلِهِ حَتَّى يُكَذِّبَ الدَّجَالُ .

From Ibn `Abbās, he said: “The lifespan of Khidr is extended until the Dajjal deceives him.”

Al-Tarmasi also quotes a story written by Ibn Ishāq in al-Mubtada’, that the Companions narrated: “When Adam was nearing death, Prophet Adam gathered all his descendants and advised them. Verily, Allah will send punishment upon the inhabitants of the earth, so let my body remain with you in wandering until you bury me in the land of Syria. When a severe storm arose, Prophet Noah said to his sons, Adam prayed to Allah to lengthen the life of the one who buries him until the Day of Judgment. The body of Prophet Adam was well preserved until Khidr, who was assigned this duty, buried it. Thus, Allah fulfilled His promise and Khidr lived until the time appointed by Allah.”⁴⁹

In line with the story above, al-Tarmasi also quotes the opinion of Ibn Syahin, who believes that there are four Prophets still alive: two in the heavens, namely Isa and Idris, and two others on earth, namely Khidr and Ilyas. Additionally, al-Tarmasi brings up the opinion of al-Tha`labī,

⁴⁹ al-Tarmasi, *Ināyat al-Muftaqir*, 51.

stating that Khidr will not die except at the end of time when the Quran is lifted up. This is also consistent with the general opinion among Sufis, such as Abū Amr bin Ṣalāḥ, that Khidr is still alive.

Based on the elaboration above, according to al-Tarmasi, most scholars hold the opinion that Khidr is still alive and among us today. This has become a consensus among Sufis and experts in spiritual knowledge. They even narrate that they have seen him, met him, gained knowledge from him, and engaged in conversations with him. His presence can be found in noble places.⁵⁰

Substantially, by applying the above deconstruction steps, al-Tarmasi not only presents a new perspective but also invites readers to revisit basic assumptions and open up space for a broader and deeper understanding of the figure of Khidr in Islam. This demonstrates how the hermeneutic approach of deconstruction can be applied to explore and understand the complexities within the Islamic scholarly tradition, including in the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

In conclusion, al-Tarmasi deconstructs classical texts, remaps existing narratives, and reconstructs a more comprehensive understanding of the existence of Prophet Khidr. In Derrida's deconstruction, concepts considered stable and indisputable are often unraveled to reveal hidden meanings and contradictions within them. Al-Tarmasi, in this regard, employs a similar method by examining various texts and views about Khidr, unraveling the contradictions between the perspectives of Sufis, hadith scholars, and jurists, and reconstructing a

⁵⁰ This is based on the numerous stories surrounding Prophet Khidr, the statements of various figures that Khidr was alive during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and the accounts of saints meeting with Khidr. See: al-Tarmasi, *Nabi Khidir dan Keramat Para Wali*, 251-273.

more valid new meaning. Ultimately, al-Tarmasi concludes that Prophet Khidr still exists today, offering this as a more comprehensive new perspective.

D. CONCLUSION

Syekh Muhammad Mahfudz al-Tarmasi, also known as Sheikh Mahfudz al-Tarmasi, was a renowned Nusantara scholar who gained international recognition. He was born on August 31, 1868, in Tremas Pacitan, East Java, and passed away on February 26, 1920, in Mecca. Al-Tarmasi is known as the first Nusantara scholar to teach Sahih Bukhari at Masjidil Haram until the end of his life. Additionally, al-Tarmasi was not only an expert in the field of hadith but also in other areas of scholarship, such as jurisprudence, creed, the Quran, and its recitation.

Prophet Khidr, in the context of Islam, is often regarded as a mysterious figure blessed with special knowledge and wisdom by Allah. The story of Prophet Khidr is found in the Quran, particularly in Surah al-Kahf (Surah 18:65-82), where Khidr meets Prophet Moses. Although Prophet Khidr is esteemed as a wise and blessed figure, there are some controversies that still surface regarding his existence. Some argue that Prophet Khidr is still alive today, while others assert that Prophet Khidr has passed away.

Derrida's deconstruction hermeneutics is an interpretative approach that emphasizes uncertainty. Derrida stresses that texts never have fixed meanings; therefore, readers must continually bring forth new directions and discourses, which can be represented in two main steps: description and transformation. Description involves textual analysis to

uncover structures considered stable and certain. Transformation is a step towards changing how we read and understand texts.

Sheikh Muhammad Mahfudz al-Tarmasi makes a significant contribution to the understanding of Prophet Khidr with a unique and bold perspective. Through a combination of Sufi approaches and expertise in Hadith, al-Tarmasi argues that Prophet Khidr is still alive today. This reflects al-Tarmasi's open attitude in responding to debates among scholars and his ability to reposition traditional narratives into a more relevant context. Through critical analysis of classical texts, he presents his views while challenging more common interpretations, thus creating space for a deeper understanding of Khidr's existence.

Sheikh Mahfudz al-Tarmasi's views have broad implications in the discourse surrounding Prophet Khidr and Islamic interpretation. By affirming the belief in Khidr's existence, al-Tarmasi challenges skeptical views and invites readers to reflect on the meaning and relevance of spiritual figures in Islamic tradition. His deconstructive approach opens the possibility of exploring alternative interpretations that may have been overlooked, as well as highlighting the need to consider social and spiritual contexts in understanding religious texts.

For future research, it is suggested to examine how Sheikh Mahfudz al-Tarmasi's views on Prophet Khidr interact with contemporary thought among scholars and the Muslim community today. Researchers could analyze texts from other scholars who hold differing views on Khidr's existence and how this influences religious practices and theological thinking among their followers. Additionally, research comparing hermeneutic approaches in religious studies outside of Islam with the

approach used by al-Tarmasi could further expand understanding of the impact of deconstructive hermeneutics in interpreting religious texts.

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