‘IRFĀNĪ’ EPISTEMOLOGY:
REVEALING THE INNER MEANING
OF THE QUR’ĀNIC VERSES IN THE
CLASSICAL INTERPRETATION

Mutawali
State Islamic Institute (IAIN) of Mataram
Email: wali.haqqi@yahoo.com

Abstract: ‘İrfānî’ epistemology is one of the Islamic philosophical paradigms for understanding religious texts including the Qur’ānic texts. It maintains that the source of knowledge is intuition that puts emphasis on spiritual cultivation, not text or reason. Although this epistemology is criticized, it has been introduced Muslim scholars since the end of 4th and the beginning of 5th-century hijra as shown by Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Sullāmī, Abū al-Ḥusayn Nūrī, Abū Maṣūr al-Hallāj and Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh through their work Ḥaqā’iq al-Tafsīr. ‘Abd al-Karīm bin Hawazan Qushayrī, Ibn Sīnā, Ibn ‘Arabī, and Șadr al-Dīn Qunāwī, just to mention some, are the next generation of Muslim scholars who are concerned with it. This study examines the construction and the development of ‘ırfānî epistemology as it is seen from the work of those scholars. It argues that ‘ırfānî epistemology constitutes one important and fundamental Islamic episteme that serves to complete the other types of episteme, such as burḥānī and bayānī.

Keywords: epistemology, ‘ırfānî, inner meaning, Qur’ānic verses, classic interpretation.

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v20i2.887
An Epistemological Necessity to Reveal God’s Message

The Qur’ān, as Muslims believe it, is the revelation of God and a guidance for humanity (*budan li al-nās*). It is always guaranteed from any deviation. The Qur’ān normative position is a guide for the legal system, social, literary, education, politics, logic, knowledge resources, and even a guide to take life in the hereafter. However, the Qur’an is the greatest miracle of Islam revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. The originality of the Qur’an will never change and cannot be reduced by any changes. That is the meaning of word *al-ḥifz* in the Qur’an, as stated in the *Sūrah al-Ḥijr* (15):15. This fact makes the Qur’ān, as recognized by Muslims, not only because as a revelation but also a source of all sources of life for the people.

However, to reveal the content of the Qur’an into a grounded knowledge would require an interpretation (*tafsīr*). Conducting an interpretation of a qur’anic text is a necessity because without giving an interpretation of the texts of the Qur’an we will not be able to understand the intent. In other word, the Qur’an is read but there will be no sound if it is not interpreted. That is why, ‘Alī bin Abī Ṭalib once said that the Qur’ān was able to speak because of the existence of interpreters. The fact that the Qur’an reads can be seen in the literatures of Islam in general and *tafsīr* (interpretation) in particular. The interpretations have their features such as Islamic law, linguistic or literary, sociological, and others. The

---

important position of the Qur’an in the scientific context is a source of Islamic knowledge.

To actualize the Qur’an, the Islamic scholars take a wide variety of paradigms or methods. In Islamic studies, method or paradigm used is referred to as an epistemology,\(^8\) which is formulated in three formations, namely epistemology *bayānī*,\(^9\) *burhānī*,\(^10\) and *‘irfānī*.\(^11\) However, these forms of epistemology are

\(^7\)Sociological tafsīr like the work of Muḥammad Rashid Riḍā, entitled *Tafsīr al-Manār*

\(^8\)Epistemology derives from Greek, *episteme* (Knowledge, science) and *Logos* (Knowledge, information) can be defined as theory of knowledge, Loren Bagus, *Kamus Filsafat* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 1996), 212.

\(^9\)This epistemology asserts that Islamic knowledge can only be revealed if it turns to the main and essence (*usūl*) namely *nass* (texts). Texts (*nass*) in the context of *usul fiqh* is *nass* al-Qur`ān and al-Ḥadith. The characteristics of epistemology *bayānī* in formulating the way to achieve knowledge are: First, refer to texts (*lafaz*) with respect to the rules of Arabic language such as *nahw*, *sharaf* as the analysis tool. Second, refer to the meaning of texts by using the ratio as the basis of logic. Muḥammad ʿĀbid al-Jābirī, *Bunyah al-ʿAql al-ʿArab* (Beirut: Markāz al-Thaqafī, 1991), 530.

\(^10\)In this perspective of epistemology, the way to get knowledge is only through ratio. In addition, a truth will be acceptable as long as the argument of it is logic. In this context, the syllogism rules are translated by *qiyaṣ* which refers to the original meaning (*al-Qiyyas al-Ṣāmiʿ*). It consists of some elements: *maʿqūlāt* (definition), *ibārāt* (statement), and *tablīlāt* (logic). Thus, the way of *burhānī* thought is actually *manṭiq* with syllogism (*qiyaṣ*). However, it should comply three conditions: First, *maʿrījāb al-bādī al-awaṣat wa al-nāṭijāb*, that is knowing the intermediary terms. Second, *tartīb al-ʿAlaqah bayn al-Ilāh wa al-maʿlul*, that is well-suited relational ties between terms and conclusion. And third, *nāṭijāb*, a conclusion should be by default and does not emerge other conclusions. *Ibid.*, 349.

\(^11\)This epistemology stated that the source of knowledge is intuition. It means that epistemology *‘irfānī* is developed on the spirit of *kashaf* and direct touch to *Tasawwuf*. However, this epistemology emphasizes on the inner experience (religious experience). When it comes to Islamic discourse, methodological pattern used is esoterism. It means that the meaning of Islamic texts focuses on esoteric meaning. This meaning is seen through the way interpreters (*mutasawwifīn*) understand texts using intuitive approach. *Ibid.*, 435. It is important to note that epistemology *‘irfānī* focuses on spiritual cultivation not texts analysis or ratio. With purity of heart, the God will bless the interpreters. From this bless, the interpretations are conceived in mind before addressing to the others. Therefore, as stated by Shahrawardi, spiritual knowledge methodologically at least can be reached through three
the way to understand epistemic effects of Islamic science and find patterns of Islamic thought.

This article will discuss epistemology of ‘irfānī. This epistemology focuses on finding the deepest meaning of the Qur’ān verse which often get sharp criticism from some Islamic intellectuals and even considered as a form of deviation at the content of the Qur’ān. For example, al-Sayyid al-Sharīf in Sharḥ al-Mawāqif claim to the use of this approach will encourage Muslims to leave the outward interpretation of the Qur’ānic verses in daily practices. He states that “esoteric interpretation encourages people to leave outward practices of the verses.”

The theoretical fact, however, remains an important issue. That is why bāṭinī approach (Islamic esotericism) strayed from the outward meaning of the verses. In fact, in the study of the Qur’ān, there are some Islamic scholars who explicitly confirm that the Qur’ān contains inner and outward meaning. Imam al-Ghazālī in Jawahir al-Qur’ān expressly said that the Qur’ān implies zabīr (exoteric) and the inner meanings (esoteric).

The Trilogy of Al-Jabiri’s Epistemology as a Paradigm

In this context, it is interesting to have a look at the mapping of Islamic epistemology by Muḥammad ‘Abīd al-Jābirī in Bunyat al-‘Aql al-‘Arabi. According to him, there are three forms of Islamic epistemology: bayānī, būrbānī and ‘irfānī epistemology. However, these epistemologies are the way to understand epistemic effects of Islamic science and find the shades of Islamic thought.

The first epistemology is bayānī. This epistemology asserts that Islamic science can only be analyzed by referring to the texts (naṣṣ). It means that knowledge of Islam will only be found if we return to the principal sources (Usūl), i.e. the texts (naṣṣ).

---


The texts (nasṣ) in the context of Islamic science are al-Qur’ān and hadīth. The characteristics of epistemology bayānī in formulating a way to get knowledge are adhering to the form of texts (lafẓ) which refer to the rules of Arabic language such as nahw and ṣarf as the analysis tool, and adhering to the meaning of the text by using logical reasoning as a base.14

Although bayānī justifies the use of logic, the logic should not be at odds with nasṣ as reflected in the use of qiyās in usūl fiqh. Therefore, anything seen as Islamic science in the perspective of bayānī is the science that makes nasṣ as a source of authority. The text is epistemic authority, an epistemology that reason text. In this context, there is no room for criticism or even an intellectual subversion because the text has authority.

The source of problem is the apriori of Islamic scholars especially by the jurists in seeing lafẓ as the main reference. Lafẓ must be put on the first level and should not be construed as wild outside the possibilities provided by the grammatical procedure (qawā’id kalām al-‘Arabī). The meaning must be subordinated to the restrictions given by the grammatical procedure of lafẓ. Therefore, one of the most crucial requirements of ijtihād for jurists is the mastery of language rules (qawā’id al-Ingāli).15

Revelation (Waḥyu), as reflected in the verbal text of the Qur’an, is always regarded as a baseline and the source of par excellence truth. The mind is the source that opens the possibility for the uprising of the revelations. Therefore, it must be controlled. Among over-textualized jurists like the school of Zābīrī, the tension was intensified. The meaning is nearly untold.16 Departing from the assumption that makes text as epistemological force, then in the context of this epistemology Bayānī, anything referred to as qiyās, maṣlahāb al-mursālab, sād al-Dhari'ah, al-‘urf and al-istihsān will be able to be a force of the law as long as they do not conflict with the sound of the texts.

14al-Jābirī, Bunyab al-‘Aql, 530.
16Ibid.
The second epistemology is *burhānī*. In this epistemological perspective, knowledge can only be acquired by reasoning (ratio). It is through the facilities of logic. Therefore, a truth would be acceptable for a logical argument. In this context, the argument of syllogism is translated by *qiyyās* which refers to the original meaning (*al-qiyyās al-jamiʿ*) consists of several elements: *maʿqūlāt* (definition), *ibārāt* (statement), and *tablīlāt* (reasoning). Thus, thinking *burhānī* is thinking *manthiqi* with syllogism (*qiyyās*). Nevertheless, it should fulfill three conditions: First, *maʿrifah al-had al-Awsāt wa al-Nātijah*, that is knowing intermediary terms. Second, *tartīb al-ʿAlaqah bayn al-/allāh wa al-māliʿul*, which means there exist harmonious relational relationship between the terms and conclusions. Third, *nātijah*, a conclusion should appear automatically and presenting so no other conclusion.17

In any case, epistemology *burhānī* rely on logic as a source of knowledge. For this case, the Islamic philosophers like al-Farabi emphasizes that syllogism be at the level of thought and not on the pronunciation (*lafāz*). When a person's mind has formed a concept of truth then the other new truth will simultaneously appear. So, something that accompanies someone knows something that has not been known is not the pronunciation but the existing concepts in mind, whereas *lafāz* is structured in oral pronunciation. If the pronunciations itself can be assembled in mind in such a way so as to give birth to something else, then the birth, of course, is not the concept or truth. However, in mind it is not the pronunciation but the conceptual meaning.18

The third epistemology is ʿ*irfānī*. This epistemology views that the source of knowledge is intuition. Consequently, epistemology ʿ*irfānī* is built on the passion of *kashaf* and it has direct contact with Sufism. However, this epistemology focuses on the inner experience (religious experience). But when it entered in the Islamic discourses, methodological pattern used is esotericism. The meaning of Islamic texts refers to the esoteric meaning. It can be seen from the method Sufi understand the texts. This method is called as intuition.

18Ibid., 435.
The emphasis of epistemology ‘irfānī is on the spiritual cultivation instead of text analysis or ratio. With a pure heart, we wish God would bestow knowledge to the interpreters. The knowledge is then conceptualized in their mind before addressing to the others. Thus, as stated by Shuhrawardi, methodologically spiritual knowledge is acquired through at least three stages namely preparation, acceptance, and disclosure either orally or in writing. According to Ulil Abshar Abdalla, "Exploring the aesthetic theory of Islam is more widely open if we refer to the Sufi. Therefore, this group has done intensive exploration of the possibilities provided by inspiration (ilhām), impurity (hadath), exposure (mukāshafah), and intuition."

Sufism, however, is a branch of Islamic study which seriously understands the religious message concerning the esoteric meaning. Thus, in many cases, Sufi will never change a word of esoteric meaning. The Sufis try to find the meaning of a command by searching the meaning behind the text. They are in contrast with the scholars of jurisprudence (fiqh) who see the truth only based on the outward meaning of the texts. The meaning which refers to the esoteric meaning of the text in the study of philosophy is seen as a hermeneutic approach.

Although those epistemological perspectives work with different analytical instruments in fact they keep returning to the text. Only, bayānī is struggling to make a verbal text as a measure of the validity of the truth. Meanwhile, burbānī and ‘irfānī do not get stuck on the esoteric meaning of the text as explained in the above descriptions.

That is, and should be recognized, ontological reality of Islamic knowledge whether departing from epistemology of bayānī, burbānī, and ‘irfānī, they are still theocentric. In this case, the discourse of the three epistemologies is too metaphysical and less grounded because they remain in the shadows of the hegemony of the text. The hegemony of the text is the real problem of Islamic knowledge especially when dealing with the problems of contemporary humanity. Therefore, the re-

---

formulation of methodological approaches and theoretical framework is necessary.

Harold L. Brown, as quoted by Amin Abdullah, states that:

Most scientific research consists, in this view of a continuing attempt to interpret nature regarding a presupposed theoretical framework. This framework plays role in determining what problems must be solved and what are to count as solution to these problems; the most important events in the history of science are revolution which change the framework...Perhaps the most important theme of the new philosophy of science is its emphasis on continuing research, rather than accepted result, as the core of science.21

It should be recognized that the Islamic sciences such as tafsir, hadith, Islamic jurisprudence, and other sciences in the history of their journey experienced great development. They have played significant roles in building the society at the level of social, cultural and intellectual. Without ignoring the contribution of early Islamic scholars, the methodological framework should be reconstructed by changing the approach. The philosophy of science, however, is a science that can help, for example, by using the approach of hermeneutics.

The Tradition of Epistemology ‘Irfini in Islamic Exotericism

Epistemology ‘irfini22 is one of the Islamic philosophical paradigm for understanding religious texts including the Qur’anic texts. It is one of the Islamic epistemology built on the spirit of exposure (kashaf) and direct contact with Sufism. However, this epistemology pays close attention on the inner experience (religious experience). When it enters into the Islamic discourses, the methodological pattern used is esotericism. It means that the meaning of the texts of Islam emphasizes esoteric meaning. It can be seen from the way Sufis understand the texts which can be seen in an approach known as intuition.23

It is worth noting that the discourse about the tradition of interpretation by using this paradigm is not limited among

21Amin Abdullah, Pengembangan Metode Studi Islam, 9.
23See ibid.
Muslims or ʿurofā only. Non-Muslims also use this paradigm. Philo Alexandria (400 AD), for example, for the first time used this method for interpreting the Torah. He stated that "The holy book has the outward and the inner dimension. Where the inner level is superior and transcendent than its outward degree. The paradigm of Philo Alexandria passed by Origen Alexandria (185-254 AD), a Catholic dignitary. According to him, “With the multiplicity of meanings of the sacred texts require their allegorical and symbolic interpretation.” Nelson, a longtime historian of philosophy stated, “The important insight of Origen about interpretation (tafsir) and Bible is the muhkam and essential verses, for example, a verse which says that God had a hand.” According to Origen, this kind of verse shall be taʾwil.24

Epistemic construction has also been actualized among Muslim scholars since the end of the 4th and the beginning of 5th-century hijra as shown by Abū ʿAbd al-Rahmān Sullāmī, Abū al-Husayn Nūri, Abū Mansūr al-Hallāj and Ibn ʿAtāʾ Allāh through their work entitled Ḥaqāʾiq al-Tafsīr. The tradition of academic in the 5th-century hijra was followed by ʿAbd al-Karīm bin Hawazan Quṣhayri through his work Laṭaʾīf al-Ishārah and the others like Ibn Sīnā with Asrār al-verse and al-Ishārah wa al-tanbihāt; Ibn Ṭabarī through al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah, Ṭūsūṣ al-Hikām, Ṭabāh min al-Rahmān fi Tafsīr wa Ishārat al-Qurʾān, and Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-Karim; and Ṣadr al-Dīn Qunāwī through Tafsīr Ijāz al-Bayān fi Tarjamaṭ al-Qurʾān.25

In general, the paradigm of ʿirfānī and taʾwil in those works is sometimes used as a method of symbolic interpretation and Ḥārah. Both of these approaches are the effort made by the interpreters of Islam in understanding the revealed texts which have different pattern from most interpretations formally and publicly. However, the use of such methods do not reduce the value of the interpretation, but rather a different approach when dealing with the Qurʾān. Thus, it is clear that the actualization of epistemology of ʿirfānī as one of the esoteric approaches (non-


25Ibid.
official interpretation) toward the Qur'ān. The construction of epistemology ‘irfānī as mentioned above are reflected through the concept of ta’wil by Ibn' Arabi He says:

Anyone who interprets his opinions (tafsīr bi al-ra‘yi) then he is a disbeliever. The ta’wil cannot be abandoned because ta’wil is different and vary according to the condition of the listener and time he had spent in mysticism and different degree. Every time He uphill (perfected) the level it will be opened for him a new understanding and sublimity of new meaning. 26

It should be emphasized that the actualization of epistemology ‘irfānī perpetrated by the Islamic theosophism is not only based on the historical arguments but also it bases itself on theological arguments both al-Qur’ān and al-Ḥadīth. In the Qur’ān mentions “He bestows wisdom upon anyone He wills, and he who is given wisdom is in fact given great wealth, but only those who have common sense learn lessons from these things”. 27

This verse indicates that the character of the qur’anic texts inspires or emphasis on the principle of symbolic values, as actualized in the Sura Luqmnān: 20

“Do you not see that Allah has subjected to you whatever is in the earth and the heavens, and has bestowed on you all His favors, visible as well as invisible?” 28

Another similar point is given in the Sura Āli ‘Imrān: 7. Thus, a text always contains the explicit and implicit meanings, as Ghazzali says. 29 Finding the values of the religious text is not enough to rely on lafaz (literal texts) alone without looking to the meaning or the secret behind the text itself. In this regard, Nur al-Din al-Mukhtar bin Khādimī suggested that in exploring Islamic law we need to consider substantive meaning in texts of Islamic law. al-Khādimī states that “it is not enough (sufficient) by directing attention to lafaz, structure, outward side of the

27 Qs. al-Baqarah: 269
28 Qs. Luqmnān: 20.
29 al-Gazālī, Mishkat, 74.
texts, and the laws without regard to meaning, secret, the aspects of *ta’wil*, and other legal reason.\(^\text{30}\)

Humans as independent subject are required to make efforts so that the interpretation of religious texts can be understood. And at the same time, the meanings can be revealed either explicitly (literal) or implicitly (substantial). In a ḥadīth, the Prophet Muhammad mentions “I (God) was a hidden treasure. I want to be known, so I created a creature.”\(^\text{31}\)

The ḥadīth provides an important affirmation that man was created to explore the hidden dimensions and truth of the revelation of God. It should be emphasized that the Sufistic expression is not a ḥadīth. According to al-ʿAjlūnī Ismaʿil al-Jarāḥī, the statement is held by the scholars of Sufi but it is not a ḥadīth. This opinion is based on the view of Ibn Taymiyyah who said that the phrase is not an utterance of the Prophet, unknown *sanad* and the source as stated by al-Zarkasyi, al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar, al-Suyuti and other scholars of ḥadīth. However, according to al-Qari, regarding meaning (substance) the phrase was nice.\(^\text{32}\)

Another ḥadīth stated that “The Qurʾan was revealed in the form of seven letters. Each letter was contained outward and inner meaning, and the meaning of the beginning and end.”\(^\text{33}\)

The ḥadīth still requires *ta’wil* of what constitutes these inner and outward meaning. However, Imam Baqir as, in interpreting this excerpt stated that "The outward of the Qurʾan is its *tanzīl* and the inner is its *ta’wil*. Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī when interpreting the ḥadīth said that:


I argue, first, outward and inner have lots meanings and one of them is that if you discuss the inner of the verses then it is analogically deduced with the outward meaning of the verse and you find the true meaning. Second, the interpretation of a verse performed by a people and other people practice the verse as revealed by Ibn Su'ud anchored in the Ibn Abi Hatim. Third, the outward of the verses is their sentence and the inner is its ta'wil. Fourth, Abū 'Ubayd said that the argument is closer to the truth. In fact, the stories told by God about some people at past time and the punishment they received, its outward meaning is to tell the upcoming people the damage the people did in the past. While its inner meaning is to give a warning to those who came later not to perform actions such as those in advance (torture) as they have accepted. Ibn Naqib told the fifth meaning is that the outward meaning of the verses is the variety of outward meanings for the experts of ĥābir. Meanwhile, the inner is the secrets given by God to arbāb al-baqā‘i’ which lies behind the verses.  

Furthermore, al-Alusi also provided an opinion that the search for the outward and inner meaning is a concept of Islam. Al-Alusi said  

Not supposed to be for someone who has a low intelligence level (simple) to deny the use of the Qur'an toward the deepest meanings (esoterie) the Lord has given some people He will. However, I also wondered to what will be done by those who deny the meaning of the word of God "I did not leave anything at all in the book (the Qur'an) 

Acknowledging the truth of the Divine words contained in the Qur'an is not to be understood solely through the redaction of the Qur'an that have outward characteristics but also through its inner meaning. Thus, esoteric interpretation is not an interpretation that is out of line with any grammatical or the texts of the Qur'an. That is why, the Sufis in understanding the intentions of the Qur'an is not "wild" but also they stick to the values of the Qur'an. In fact, it can be said that the approach of esotericism is a beautiful blend between the outward texts with the inner texts of the Qur'an.  

The motivation of 'urafā uses symbolic language and ishārab, according to Ibn Khaldun (the great historian and sociologist in 8th-century hijra), is a transformation process of lafaz used by urafā to the meanings and nature that they desire. Therefore, according to Ibn Khaldun, the argument of evidence used by the Islamic theosophism cannot be rejected or accepted, because it is the result of their findings. The transformation process of lafaz to meanings is called the concept of tanazzul and tanzil. In the hermeneutics, the process to understand the meaning is done through intermediary of lafaz. This process is then called as ta'wil. Therefore, ta'wil differs from tanzil. Ta'wil is characterized as su'udi (uphill) while tanzil is nuzūlī (dip). Tanzil is the process of reduction of the meanings of God to the creature while ta'wil is the process of ascension and the climbing of man from the creature to the Creator and the journey from exoteric to the esoteric domain. The hermeneutical procedure or ta'wil like this can only be done by people who have the spiritual ability and intuition which directs the invention in the texts (nasg) as it seems, to the view of spiritual essence (haqiqah) or inner confidential (sirr).

When a man listens to the common lafaz used in the discipline of ‘irfāni, it bases itself on the transcendental and the universality of its manifestation. On this basis, it can find various meanings behind lafaz vertically, top-down. As the reception of the meanings and natures rests on the level of human beings, an understanding of editorial and the ishārab of meanings rest on the degree of human existence. According Ulil, original text of the Qur’an tends to be poetic. It contains a wide and complex ambivalence which open possibility for various interpretations (multi-interpretable). The text is alive and authentic then it changes fundamentally and radically, restricted in semantic field by strict and rigid procedure.

38Abdalla, Membakar Rumah, 109.
The semantic confine makes excessive dependence on the literal meanings of texts. This dependence is believed as a result of using strict and rigid grammar as found in mainstream Islamic studies especially fiqh and theology. In this case, Ulil said:

“The jurists face serious problems related to lafaz (words) and ma'na (meaning). In this case, the jurists had always assumed that the lafaz should be won and should not be construed as "wild" outside the possibilities provided by the existing grammatical procedure. So that, the meaning should be subordinated to the limits given by the grammatical procedures of lafaz... While meaning is considered as the source of opportunities for subversion or rebellion over the words (lafaz).”

Thus, epistemology ‘irfānī provides a vehicle for an interpretation of universal ideas to find esoteric meaning of the Qur’ān. The practice of this interpretation has found its historical-theological argument in the classical-medieval Islamic texts.

The Portrait of Epistemology ‘IrFāNī in the Interpretation of the Qur’āN

The exploration of academic interpretation of Islamic esoterism with ta’wil approach as the realization of epistemology ‘irfānī paradigm seen from the way they (the exoterism) interpret the Qur’ān orients to their perspective and religious experience and tends to differ from mainstream interpretation. Spiritual experience or the conscience of Sufism in the perspective of Islamic Sufism apparently is a necessity. Because, according to Mulla Sadra, the Qur’ān and humans respectively have a level of inner and outer, exoteric and esoteric. The inner of the Qur’ān is perceived by the human spirit, not through the senses and outward perception. Of course, after crossing the outward level and the degree of lafaz, taking into account other forms of outward, the human will reach the inner level and degree of meaning.

On this track, interpreters explore the meaning with shubud (seeing) and mukāshafah (exposure). Here is the significance of the existence of spiritual reasoning (al-qalb), not a rational reason

\[39\text{Ibid., 106.}\]
(al-'aql) in the perspective of the theosophist when present in ma'rifah ilâbiyah. 'Abd al-Hakim Hasan, in his book entitled al-Tasawwuf fi al-Shi‘r al-‘Arabi said:

Heart in the view of a Sufi is more important than mind or reason, even for those the heart is everything. Therefore, they make the heart (like a throne for God).\(^{40}\)

The views above illustrates that an intuitive approach is applicable paradigm among the Islamic theosophism. Therefore, most of the Sufi especially philosophical Sufi find difficult to translate their religious concepts. Through this spiritual reason, the Islamic theosophism will be able to find their identity so they can shape themselves into individuals who can "communicate" with God. For example, when the shufi interpret the following verse “We have given you seven verses that are worthy of recitation over and over again, and We have also bestowed on you the glorious Qur'an”.\(^{41}\)

The word al-sab'u al-mathâni in the verse, according to the theosophism, is the real in His existence, either the nature or His seven characteristics. So, al-sab'u al-mathâni is the seven attributes of God.\(^{42}\) Furthermore, according to them, this verse is a sign to a substance and not to show the day of the verse given nor at the place. But, it refers to absolute substances, a substance which collected all the attributes or phenomena. That is why, the word Qur'an in that verse is accompanied by the words al-‘ Ağîm.

The interpretation is in contrast with the general interpretation that asserts that al-sab'u al-mathâni is the seven verses repeatedly read namely al-Fâtiḥah which consists of seven verses. Most of the interpreters say seven long verse, i.e. al-Baqara, Ālî ‘Imrân, al-Mā'idah, al-Nîsâ', al-A'râf, al-An'am, and al-Anfâl or al-Tawbah.

The pattern of epistemology ‘irfânî can be captured in al-Fâtiḥah. Imam Khomeyni in his work presents a perspective of ‘irfânî such as when he interprets\(^{43}\) the verse al-Ḥamd li Allâh

\(^{40}\)Abd al-Hakim Hasan, al-Tasawwuf fi al-Syi‘r al-‘Arabi, 19

\(^{41}\)QS. al-Hijr: 87

\(^{42}\)al-Ālûsî, Rûh al-Ma‘ânî, 9.

Rabb al-‘Ālāmīn. According to Imam Khomeyni, al-Ḥamd means the existence of human perfection is the ultimate goal of tarbiyah (teaching) of the Divine. So, the Lord deserves to be praised and exalted. He also said:

Because the rules of nature composed of a series of astronomy-celestial sphere, elements, substances and accidents-accidents, is the preamble of the embodiment of the perfect man. So essentially the embodiment of perfect man is at the core of the real nature and the ultimate purpose of the creation of the whole of the universe, which is why he is a last creation. Additionally, due to the universe moves with substantial motion and the motion always leads to perfection then wherever the motion is finite, that is where the purpose of creation and the estuary of the trip... therefore, the value of God teaching in all nature incarnate in human teaching. Man is the beginning and the end.

Furthermore, the word al-Ḥamd, is the ultimate purpose of creation. And human teaching is the substance of God, the return of man to God, the path of Lord, by the hand of God and towards Him. On this case, Imam added:

The purpose of what has been stated is in particular action and from the standpoint of the level of being. Meanwhile, from the viewpoint of absolute God act, no purpose other than the Essence of God... therefore man is created by God and for God... The purpose of mystical trip of the man is in order to come at the door of God, mortal (melt) in God’s substance, 'ākūf (pull) in mortality in the Essence, turn to to the real truth, from Him, in Him and with Him as revealed in the verse "and in fact We are the only place they come."

While other creatures return to God through the medium of the man, the returned place for other creatures is the man as stated in the jami‘ah manuscript when explaining the various degrees of place and the region, "and the returned place for creature is you and their reckoning is upon you."

Imam Khomeyni, while explaining that the goal of all praise is God, after mentioning the verse “To Us they have to return; then it is for Us to call them to account,” explained that the final journey of perfect man is God and mortal in His Essence. He also added that this verse is the secret of monotheism secrets

---

44Qs. al-Gāshiyah: 25.
45Imam Khomeyni, Tafsir-e surey-e hamd, 43.
46Qs. al-Ghāshiyah: 25 & 26,
which suggests that the final place for the perfect man is God, they are mortal in the Essence and bāqa (immortal) in the eternity of God. In them there are no more sightings of existential (ta'ayyun), selfish and egoism. But they are part of asma’ al-ḥusnā and ismi aʿzām.47 He added that the Qur’an is loaded with ‘irfānī studies that can only be understood by people who are qualified, which is the top secrets that cause the grandeur and greatness of the Qur’an. The glorious Qur’an is full of secrets, the nature, the noble meanings of monotheism in which the ma’rifat experts stunned. And this is the great miracle (the Qur’an)48

Another explanation of al-Ḥamd, Imam Khomeyni explained that, "it is not true if al-ḥamd li Allāh Rabb al-ʿĀlamīn only be interpreted as praise to the Lord, but the meaning is that praise would never be praised except for God alone".49 Furthermore, Khomeyni said that al-Fāṭihah contained in the Qur’an, the first letter, made recitations of prayers in which without reading it the prayer is not valid (Hurru 'amili, volume 4, hal.732) is the vere that contains all knowledge. But, it should be emphasized that we should study them. It is true, we are not the experts, we just recite “al-ḥamd li Allāh Rabb al-ʿĀlamīn” meaning that everything should praise for Him. However, the Qur’an does not say so, the Qur’an says that all the praise will not be addressed except for Him. The pagans also claimed that praise belongs to God and not theirs. It means that the problem is due to our foolish and ignorance”.50

Conclusion

Epistemology as a foundation of the construction of philosophy, however, is inevitable. In Islamic philosophy, ‘irfānī epistemology strives to provide an idea that Islamic teachings can be seen from two perspectives, formal and substantial. In the context of this substantive meaning, ‘irfānī epistemology is

---

47 Imam Khomeyni, Tafsir-e suray-e hamd, 44.
48 Ibid
49 Imam Khomeyni, Hurrū 'amīlī, volume 4, 732
50 Imam Khomeyni, Tafsir-e suray-e hamd, 200.
one method to uncover the substantive values of Islam such as in some interpretation of the Qur’an.


**References**


