

**THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF THE ULAMA OF THE
LANDS BELOW THE WINDS' IN THE
TWENTIETH CENTURY: A Study of *Minhāj al-
Ummiyya Fī Bayān 'Aqīdat Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'a*
of Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil Jambi**

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Abstract

The arrival of Islam into the lands below the winds, the terminology used to designate the Malay-Indonesian world or the entire South East Asia, was inseparable from the influence of Māturidīyya and Ashā'ira in *kalām*. This influence was reflected in the translation works or the commentaries upon *Aqā'id al-Nasafī* of Imam al-Nasafī in the seventeenth century. The eighteenth century and onwards also saw a rapid appearance of the translations, commentaries, *ḥāshīya*, and *ta'līq* of *Umm al-Barāhīn* of Imam al-Sanūsī. In Jambi, in the early twentieth century, Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil synthesized the worldview of *kalam* of *al-Māturidīyya* and *Ashā'ira* in his work, *Minhāj al-Ummiyya fī*

Bayān ‘Aqīdāt al-Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamā‘a. The result of his endeavor was an epistemology of *kalām* that was established upon the classical intellectual legacy of Islam. Amid the hegemony of the Western epistemology on the general modern epistemology and, specifically, that of Islam, this article attempts to discuss the epistemology of Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil in order to answer the bewilderment of the modern epistemology. After analyzing the work of Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil along with other relevant results, this article shows that the epistemology of Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil is powerfully relevant in the current debates about epistemology.

Keywords: Epistemology, Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil, the Lands Below the Winds, *Minhaj al-Umniyya*

Abstrak

Datangnya Islam ke ‘negeri bawah angin’, suatu istilah pada masa lalu yang merujuk kepada dunia Indonesia-Melayu atau Asia Tenggara secara keseluruhan, tidak terlepas dari pengaruh kalam Māturidīyyah dan Ashā‘irah. Hal ini tampak dari lahirnya karya-karya dalam bentuk terjemahan dan ulasan terhadap *‘Aqā’id al-Nasafi* karya Imam al-Nasafi pada abad ke-17. Semenjak abad ke-18 dan seterusnya, muncul pula ulasan-ulasan terhadap *Umm al-Barāhin* karya Imam al-Sanūsī dalam bentuk terjemahan, *ḥāshiyah*, *ta‘liq* dan sebagainya secara masif. Di Jambi, pada awal abad ke-20, ada Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil yang mensintesisasikan antara kalam Māturidīyyah dan Ashā‘irah dalam karyanya *Minhaj al-Umniyyah fī Bayān ‘Aqīdat Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā‘ah*. Hasilnya, terbentuklah suatu epistemologi dalam bingkai kalam berlandaskan pada tradisi keilmuan Islam klasik. Di tengah hegemoni epistemologi Barat dalam bangunan epistemologi modern umumnya dan kajian keislaman khususnya, tulisan ini mendiskusikan epistemologi Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil untuk menjawab kerancuan-kerancuan epistemologis modern tersebut. Setelah menelaah karya Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil dan karya-karya yang relevan lainnya, tulisan ini menunjukkan bahwa epistemologi Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil masih sangat relevan dalam memberikan tawaran-tawaran epistemologis saat ini.

Kata Kunci: Epistemologi, Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil, Negeri Bawah Angin, *Minhaj al-Umniyyah*

Introduction

With all of his capability as well as limitation, every human being is capable of knowing (*‘ilm*), recognizing (*ma‘rifā*), selecting (*ikhtiṣār*), categorizing (*tafriq*), differing (*tamyīz*), judging and deciding (*ḥukm*) between true and false, between *ḥaqq* and *bāṭil*, between right (*ṣawāb*) and wrong (*ḵhaṭa*), and so on.¹ Accordingly, knowing is possible, categorically in contrast to what had been claimed by sophism who advocated skepticism for generations. How can one know something? The aim of this article is to answer this question, i.e. discussing and exploring some aspects of the epistemology of an *ulama* from the lands below the winds—an ancient terminology used to signify the Malay-Indonesian world or the Southeast Asia in general²—more specifically from Batang Asai, Jambi, a region from which a prominent local *ulama* named Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil originated, based on his work *Minhāj al-Ummiyya fī Bayān ‘Aqīdat al-Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamā‘a*—furthermore referred as *Minhāj al-Ummiyya*—in answering the bewilderment of the modern epistemology.

This article argues that amid the hegemony of the western epistemology in Islamic studies and the spread of subjectivism (*al-‘indiyya*) and skepticism (*al-‘inādiyya*) amongst Muslims upon their religion and intellectual legacy, the epistemology of Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil promises an alternative basis as well as a foundation for the establishment of Islamic epistemology. To attest this argument, this article will proceed from an introduction to Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil. Before going further exploring his epistemology, this article will describe *Minhāj al-Ummiyya* in the context of the intellectual tradition of the *ulama* below the winds. Finally, before the concluding remark, this article will discuss the framework of the epistemology of Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil within the context of the Islamic intellectual legacy, specifically the tradition of *Ahl a-Sunna*

¹Syamsuddin Arif, *Orientalis & Diabolisme Pemikiran* (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2008), 202.

²Azyumardi Azra, “Islam di ‘Negeri Bawah Angin’ Dalam Masa Perdagangan,” *Studia Islamika* 3, no. 2 (1996): 203.

wa al-Jamā‘a, the result of which will be explored as the basis in scrutinizing the bewilderment of the western epistemology.

Up to this day, the intellectual product of Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil is considerably understudied; this subject has so far become only the scholarly attention of Pirhat Abbas in his article *Paham Keagamaan H. Abdul Jalil bin H. Demang: Analisis Kitab Minhaj al-Ummiyyah fi Bayan al-‘Aqidah al-Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā‘ah*.³ Pirhat’s account concerns only with the general description of Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil’s intellectual thought in *aqida*, *fiqh*, and *tasawwuf*. Unlike his study, this article deals specifically with the epistemology of Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil.

Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil: A Brief Biography

“In 1909, the Dutch Agency in Cairo noted the presence of a Sumatran pilgrim (Abd al-Galil of Jambi) staying without a passport,” wrote Micael Francis Laffan in his *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia*.⁴ Who was Abd al-Galil Jambi? He was Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil bin Haji Demang Jambi Batang Asai, as written in his *Minhaj al-Ummiyya fi Bayan al-‘Aqidat Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamā‘a*. He was born in 1840 in Pondok VIII, sub-district of Batang Asai, district of Sarolangun, province of Jambi. The name of his father was Haji Demang, an entrepreneur in his town.

With the support of his parents, Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil went to the Holy Land to perform the fifth pillar of Islam as well as to study.⁵ He studied under the supervision of, among other scholars, Shaykh ‘Umar Sumbāwāh,⁶ an *ulama* from Sumbawa, West Nusa

³Pirhat Abbas, “Paham Keagamaan H. Abdul Jalil Bin H. Demang: Analisis Kitab Minhaj Al-Ummiyyah Fi Bayani ‘Aqidah Ahl Al-Sunnah Wa Al-Jamā‘ah,” *Kontekstualita: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan* 25, no. 1 (2010).

⁴ Micael Francis Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia: The Umma Below The Wind* (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003), 54.

⁵ Abbas, “Paham Keagamaan H. Abdul Jalil ...,” 139.

⁶Abdul Jalil, *Minhaj al-Ummiyyah fi Bayan ‘Aqidat Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā‘ah* (Singapura: H. Muhammad Sa‘id bin H. Arsyad, n.d.), 1.

Tenggara, who was a teacher in Haram mosque and contributed to educate influential *ulamas* in the Indonesian archipelago, such as Guru Mansur al-Falaki al-Battawi (1295-1387 H),⁷ Ahmad bin Yusuf al-Qisti (1296-1367 H),⁸ Guru Haji Ismail Mundu of West Kalimantan (1287-1377 H/1870-1960 M), and Guru Muhammad Basuni Imran.⁹ His son, Shaykh Muhammad Arshad ibn Shaikh ‘Umar Sumbāwā, was one of the teachers of Guru H. Hasan bin H. Anang Yahya, the third *mudir* of Madrasah Nurul Imam Seberang Kota Jambi,¹⁰ a madrasah responsible for the Islamisation of Jambi province.

After spending about nine years of study in Mecca, Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil came back to Indonesia in 1919. He resided in Bangka Belitung for several years until he decided to come back to his hometown. Furthermore, in his hometown, he devoted himself to teaching Muslims of his neighborhood until he passed away in 1928 M for paralysis. He was buried in Kasiro village, more specifically in Baru sub-village, in Sarolangun District, Jambi.

Minhāj al-Umniyya in the Intellectual Tradition of the *Ulama* below the Winds

The complete title of this work is *Minhāj al-Umniyya fī Bayān ‘Aqīdat Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamā‘a* (A Beautiful and Muwafakat Pearl on the Path of Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamā‘a). This 32-page work was

⁷Yūsuf al-Mar‘asli, *Nathr al-Jawābir wa al-Durar fī ‘Ulamā’ al-Qarn al-Rābi’ ‘Ashar*, Vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifah, 2006), 1500-1501.

⁸Umar ‘Abd Al-Jabbār, *Sīyar wa Tarājīm Ba’d ‘Ulamā’ina fī Qarn al-Rabi’ ‘Ashar Li al-Hijrah*, 3rd ed. (Jeddah: Tihāmah, 1986), 54-56.

⁹Didik M. Nur Haris, “Kitab Jadual Nikah Karya Guru Haji Isma’il Mundu; Teks Dan Analisis” (Master Thesis, Academy of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya, 2011), 42-43; G.F. Pijper, *Beberapa Studi Tentang Sejarah Islam Di Indonesia 1900-1950*, pent. Tudjimah dan Yessy Augusdin (Jakarta: UI Press, 1984), 142-143.

¹⁰Fauzi M.O Bafadhal, *Sejarah Sosial Pendidikan Islam Di Jambi: Studi Terhadap Madrasah Nurul Iman* (Bandung: IRIS, 2008), 97.

published in 1346 H/1924 M by al-Ḥajj Muḥammad Sa‘īd ibn al-Ḥajj Arshad publishing, number 82 Arab Street, Singapore.¹¹

In general, the book comprises two disciplines: *tawḥīd* and *fiqh*. The elaboration on *tawḥīd* synthesizes the theologies of Ashā‘ira and Māturīdiyya, while that of *fiqh* is drawn upon Shafi‘ī madhhab. The tendency of Ashā‘ira of the book appears in Tuan Abdul Jalil’s explanation about the twenty attributes of God, the prerequisite attributes of the Prophets, the angels and their duties, *imān*, its pillars and categorizations, and the scriptures revealed by Allāh *subḥānahu wa ta‘āla* to His prophets.¹² The Māturīdiyya’s outlook appears in his explanation about three channels of knowledge, namely the sound five senses, the true report (*al-khabar al-ṣādiq*), and intellect,¹³ in which he referred to ‘*Aqā’id al-Nasafi*, a popular text on ‘*aqīda* in the Māturīdiyya madhhab.¹⁴ His Shafi‘ite tendency occurs in his explanation upon the thirteen pillars of prayer, namely intention, standing straight, *takbīrat al-iḥrām*, reciting *al-fātiḥa*, *rukū‘*, *i’tidāl*, two *sujūds*, sitting between the two *sujūds*, the last *tashabbud*, reciting *ṣalawāt* upon the prophets after the *tashabbud*, *salām*, and performing all of them in the right sequence, which is the teaching developed by Shafi‘ite madhhab.¹⁵

The elaboration on the madhabs of al-Māturīdiyya and Ashā‘ira in *kalām* and Shafi‘i in *fiqh* is entirely not new in the

¹¹ Abdul Jalil, *Minhāj al-Ummiyyah*, the first page.

¹² Abdul Jalil, *Minhāj al-Ummiyyah*.

¹³ Abdul Jalil, *Minhāj al-Ummiyyah*, 13

¹⁴ The explanation on the three channels of knowledge and its relationship with previous *ulama*, including the text of ‘*Aqā’id al-Nasafi* and the influence of *Umm al-Barāhin* for Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil would be further explained thoroughly in the section “The Epistemology of Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil” and “The Epistemology of Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil, the Islamic Intellectual Tradition, and the Modern Epistemology.”

¹⁵ Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *al-Fiqh al-Islāmī wa Adillatuhū*, Vol. I (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1984). 630.

works of *ulama* below the winds. In the seventeenth century, there appeared a translation of *‘Aqā’id al-Nasafī*,¹⁶ a popular text in *‘aqida* in the Mātūrīdiyya madhhab, written by Imam al-Nasafī. Since the eighteenth century and onwards, the commentaries, translations, *bāshīya*, and *ta’līq* upon *Umm al-Barāhīn* of Imam Sanūsī widely appeared,¹⁷ reflecting the familiarity of the community in the region to the Mātūrīdiyya outlook. The *ulama* below the winds preferred the theology of Ashā‘ira on the twenty attributes from Imam Sanūsī. For example, in the eighteenth century, Shaykh Muḥammad Zayn ibn al-Faqīh Jalāl al-Dīn al-‘Āshī wrote *Bidāyat al-Hidāya*, a commentary upon *Umm al-Barāhīn* of Imam Sanūsī in Malay language in 4th Sha‘bān 1170 H/23rd April 1757,¹⁸ and Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ṣamad al-Falimbānī (1704 M-1789 M) wrote *Zabrat al-Murīd fī Bayān Kalimat al-Tawḥīd* in 1178 H/1764 M,¹⁹ Shaykh Nawāwī al-Jāwī al-Bantānī (1813-1897 M) wrote *Zarī‘at al-Yaqīn ‘alā Umm al-Barāhīn li al-*

¹⁶Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *The Oldest Known Malay Manuscript: A 16th Century Malay Translation of the ‘Aqā’id of Al-Nasafī* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya, 1988); For the translation of Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī entitled *Durr al-Farā’id* on this text, see Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud & Khalif Muammar, “Kerangka Komprehensif Pemikiran Melayu Abad Ke-17 Masihi Berdasarkan Manuskrip Durr Al-Fara’id Karangan Sheikh Nurudin Al-Raniri,” *Sari - International Journal of the Malay World and Civilisation* 27, no. 2 (2009): 119-146.

¹⁷Syed Muhammad Dawilah al-Edrus, “The Role of Kitab Jawi in the Development of Islamic Thought in the Malay Archipelago with Special Reference to Umm Al-Barahin and the Writings on the Twenty Attributes,” P.hD Dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1995; Mohd Fakhrudin Abdul Mukti, “The Background of Malay Kalam With Special Reference to the Issue of the Sifat of Allah,” *Afkar* 3, no. 1 (2002): 1–32; Faizuri Abd Latif and Muhammad Hazim Mohd Azhar, “Pengaruh Umm Al-Barahin Karya Al-Sanusi Terhadap Bakurah Al-Amani Karya Wan Ismail Al-Fatani Dalam Perbahasan Sifat 20,” *Afkar* 20, no. 2 (2018): 93–126.

¹⁸ Muḥammad Zayn ibn al-Fāqih Jalāl al-Dīn al-‘Āshī, *Bidāyat al-Hidāyah* (Fatani: Maṭba‘ah bin Halābī, tt)

¹⁹ ‘Abd al-Ṣamad al-Falimbānī, *Zabrat al-Murid fī Bayān Kalimat al-Tawḥīd* (Kuala Lumpur: Khazanah al-Fathaniyyah, 1999)

Sanūsī.²⁰ In the nineteenth century, Sayyid ‘Uthmān ibn Yahya al-Betawi (1822-1913 M) wrote *Sifat Dua Puluh* in 1886 M,²¹ Muḥammad Zayn al-Dīn ibn Muḥammad Badawī al-Sumbawī wrote *Sirāj al-Hudā Ilā Bayān ‘Aqā’id al-Taḥwā* in 1885-1886 M,²² Shaykh Zayn al-‘Ābidīn ibn Muḥammad al-Faṭānī wrote *‘Aqīdat al-Najm fī ‘Ilm Uṣūl al-Dīn* in Jumādī al-Ākhīr 1308 / January 1891 M,²³ Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Zayn ibn Muṣṭafā ibn Muḥammad al-Faṭānī in 12 Rabi‘ al-Awwal 1313 / 2 September 1895 wrote *Farīdat al-Farā’id fī ‘Ilm al-Tawḥīd*.²⁴ Furthermore, in the twentieth century, Zayn al-‘Ābidīn ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Faṭānī wrote *Qawā’id al-Dīn li Ikhwān al-Mubtadīn* in 18 Sha‘bān 1380 H / 4 February 1961.²⁵

Additionally, in *fiqh*, the Malay-Indonesian world has become the Shafī‘ī-established territory for centuries. Of the first records are provided by the account of Ibn Battuta, who visited the Pasai Kingdom in 1345, in which he attested that the Sultan

²⁰The actual published edition of the book seems to fail to survive. However the information about the book is available in biography book such as ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mu‘allimīn *A‘lām al-Makkiyyin Min al-Qarn al-Tāsi‘ ilā al-Qarn al-Rābi‘ ‘Ashar al-Hijrah*. See ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mu‘allimī, *A‘lām al-Makkiyyin Min al-Qarn al-Tāsi‘ ilā al-Qarn al-Rābi‘ ‘Ashar al-Hijrah*, Vol. II (Mekkah al-Mukarramah: Mu‘assasat al-Furqān Li al-Turāth al-Islāmī, 2000), 9269-9270.

²¹ Sayid Usman Betawi, *Sifat Dua Puluh* (Singapura, Jedah, Indonesia: Haramayn, tt)

²² Muḥammad Zayn al-Dīn ibn Muḥammad Badawī al-Sumbawī, *Sirāj al-Hudā Ilā Bayān ‘Aqā’id al-Taḥwā* (Fatani: Maṭba‘ah bin Halābī, tt)

²³ Zayn al-‘Ābidīn ibn Muḥammad al-Faṭānī, *‘Aqīdat al-Najm fī ‘Ilm Uṣūl al-Dīn* (Fatani: Maṭba‘ah bin Halābī, tt).

²⁴ Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Zayn ibn Muṣṭafā ibn Muḥammad al-Faṭānī, *Farīdat al-Farā’id fī ‘Ilm al-Tawḥīd* (Fatani: Maṭba‘ah bin Halābī, tt).

²⁵ Zayn al-‘Ābidīn ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Faṭānī, *Qawā’id al-Dīn Li Ikhwān al-Mubtadīn* (Petani: Maktabah wa Maṭba‘ah Muḥammad al-Nahdī wa Awlādah, tt)

Malik al-Zahir adhered to the Shafi‘i madhab²⁶ and the inscribed stone of Terengganu that reflect the Shafi‘i madhhab.²⁷ The works of *ulama* distributed in the Pasai and Melaka kingdoms provided us with more convincing data. Those works are *Minhāj al-Ṭalibīn* of Imam al-Nawāwī (631-676 H/1232-1277 M), *al-Muhadbdhab* of Imam al-Shirāzī (393-476 H/1002-1083), *Fath al-Wahhāb* of Abū Zakariyā al-Anṣārī (1422-1518 M), *Fath al-Mu‘in* of Zayn al-Dīn al-Malībairī (d. 1564), etc.²⁸ In addition to that, several local *ulama*s writings drew upon Shafi‘ite *fiqh* in their Malay-written works, such as Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī (d. 1658 M) with his *Ṣiraṭ al-Mustaqīm*—considered as the first *fiqh* work in the Malay language—and ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Fanṣūrī (1615 M – 1693 M) who wrote *Mir’at al-Ṭullāb*, an account of *mu‘āmala* written in Malay language. The *ulama* of the next generation followed the Shafi‘i tradition, such as Muḥammad Arshad al-Banjārī (1710-1812 M) who wrote *Sabil al-Muhtadīn li al-Tafaqquh fī Amr al-Dīn* in 27 Rabī‘ al-Awwal 1195 H/1781 M.²⁹

The Epistemology of Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil

Epistemology is the theory of knowledge. The word epistemology is rooted from the Greek word, *episteme*, meaning

²⁶Ibn Batutah, *Pengembaraan Ibnu Batutah* (Terj) (Kuala Lumpur: Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia (IKIM), 2003), 730.

²⁷Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, The Correct Date of the Terengganu Inscription: Friday, 4th Rejab, 702 AH (Kuala Lumpur: Muzium Negara, 1984); Rahimin Affandi Abdul Rahim et al., “Batu Bersurat Terengganu: Satu Tafsiran Terhadap Pelaksanaan Syariah Islam,” *Jurnal Fiqh* 7 (2010): 107–48; Ayang Utriza Yakin, “Dialectic Between Islamic Law and Adat Law in the Nusantara: A Reinterpretation of the Terengganu Inscription in the 14th Century,” *Heritage of Nusantara: International Journal of Religious Literature and Heritage (E-Journal)* 3, no. 2 (2015): 293–312.

²⁸Mahmood Zuhdi Haji Abd Majid, “Mazhab Syafi‘i Di Malaysia: Sejarah, Realiti Dan Prospek Masa Depan,” *Jurnal Fiqh* 4 (2007): 1–38.

²⁹ Muḥammad Arshad al-Banjārī, *Sabil al-Muhtadīn Li al-Tafaqquh fī Amr al-Dīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, tt).

knowledge, and *logos*, which means discourse or theory. Epistemology investigates several questions, according to Titus, and Smith and Nolan, that could be further classified into three categories. *First*, questions about the appearance of knowledge and reality: what is knowledge? Is there reality outside reason? If there is, how can one know about it? *Second*, questions about the origins of knowledge: what are the sources of knowledge? Where does the right knowledge come from, and how can one know it? *Third*, questions about the validity of knowledge or truth: is knowledge valid? How can one differentiate between truth and erroneous?³⁰

Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil addresses all of the three groups of questions, yet he forms it into one question: what is possible to be known and how? This question points to the issue of the theory of knowledge and its main variations—whether knowledge or truth can be obtained or not—as well as the methodology—how are the strategies as well as what are the prerequisites to obtain knowledge. To put it simply, Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil summarizes the topic into the sources of knowledge, *taṣawwur* and *taṣdiq*, and the intellectual judgment.

1. Channel of Knowledge

The discussion on this topic starts with several questions: where does knowledge come from, how are the strategies, with what sort of things it can be validated? The answer to those questions is that knowledge comes from three channels: the sound five senses (*al-ḥamās al-khamsa*), the true report (*al-khabar al-ṣādiq*), and the intellect (*al-‘aql*).³¹

³⁰On the discourse about epistemology, see Richard Nolan Harold Titus, Marilyn Smith, *Persoalan-Persoalan Filsafat (Living Issues in Philosophy)*, trans. H.M. Rasjidi (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1984), 20-21.

³¹Mahmood Zuhdi Haji Abd Majid, “Mazhab Syafi’i Di Malaysia: Sejarah, Realiti Dan Prospek Masa Depan,” *Jurnal Fiqh* 4 (2007): 1–38.

The sound sound five senses refers to the perception and observation of human beings through the five primary faculties involving external senses, namely sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste, all of which function to perceive particular things in the external world. The true report is also a significant basis in Islamic epistemology. This aspect makes knowledge exists, grows, and develops up to this day. The primary sources of this report are the report that is transmitted through uninterrupted chains between people, for which it is impossible that they are in a consensus of untruth, and the report brought by the Prophet Muhammad *ṣallallāhu ‘alayh wa sallam*.³² Finally, intellect or *‘aql*, is also a channel of knowledge. The data obtained from senses are rational and *a priori*, and intellect interprets information using the logical framework. For example, as al-Ghazālī suggests, eyes see the month small like a coin, yet intellect denies it, attesting that the month is big.³³

Following the previous *ulama*, Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil categorizes sources of knowledge into three things:

And all of the channel of knowledge, that is the channel by which (one) grasp the new knowledge, is three—based on *istiqrā’*, which means the investigation of the *ulama*. The first is *hawās* (senses) that are sound... The second is the true report, that is the report that corresponds to reality. The third is the intellect, that is, the light put in its place. So that, (with intellect) people are in disputes; accordingly, the perfect intellect belongs to our Prophet Muhammad *ṣalla’l-Lāhu ‘alayh wa sallam*. (Dan segala sebab bagi pengetahuan yakni sebab yang mendapatkan bagi ilmu yang baharu ini tiga sebab dengan *istiqrā’*, artinya dengan diperiksa oleh sekalian *ulama’*, pertamanya hawās [pancaindra] yang sejahtera... Keduanya khabar yang *ṣādiq* yakni khabar

³²Mahmood Zuhdi Haji Abd Majid, “Mazhab Syafi’i Di Malaysia: Sejarah, Realiti Dan Prospek Masa Depan,” *Jurnal Fiqh* 4 (2007): 1–38.

³³Al-Ghazālī, *Mishkāt al-Anwār* (Beirut: Dār Qutaybah, 1990), 33.

yang benar yang muwafaqat bagi wāqī'. Ketiganya, 'akal, yaitu nur yang ditaruh dalam satu badahnya, maka adalah bersalahan-bersalahanderajatnya, ada yang sedikit dan ada yang banyak. Maka bersalahan-bersalahan manusia, maka yang terlebih sempurna akal itu, nabi kita Muhammad *ṣallāllhu 'alayh wa sallam*).³⁴

Although the three channel of knowledge explained by Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil is by no means new in the Islamic intellectual tradition, it is interesting that he conveys it as *ilmu yang baharu* (the new knowledge). This diction reflects his understanding as well as rigor in explaining a principle that the knowledge of Allah and that of human beings are different. The knowledge of Allah is *qadīm*, while that of human beings is the new knowledge. For it is the new knowledge, in order to obtain it, three things are necessary: senses, true report, and intellect.

According to Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil, there are five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. Hearing sense is an ability to detect sound through ears. Sight sense is the ability of the eyes to perceive colors and shapes. Smell sense is the potential of the nose that is capable of grasping scents. The taste sense manifests through the tongue, by which one can detect tastes. Touch sense is the ability of the skin to detect heat and cold.³⁵

As for the true report or *al-khabar al-ṣādiq*, according to Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil, there are two kinds of it. The first is *khabar mutawātir* (successive report) and the *khabar* brought by the Messenger of Allah, that is supported by the *mu'jiza*. The first kind of report is the report transmitted by a group of people that it is unlikely that they have agreed on untruth. The examples of this kind of report, Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil suggests, are the story of the kingdom of King Sulayman and Dhu al-Qarnayn, the story of the land of Rum, Shām, Baghdād, etc., that are acquired

³⁴ Abdul Jalil, *Minhaj al-Ummiyyah*, 13

³⁵(Majid 2007)

as *ḍarūrī* without any investigation needed.³⁶ In the modern context, this kind of report can be juxtaposed with knowledge about the existence of Monas in Jakarta or the Twin Tower in Kuala Lumpur. Despite one never visit both cities, he is inclined to believe that both exist in respective cities for the *mutawātir* transmitted report. However, not all widely transmitted report can be accepted due to its significant epistemological implication. Several ulamas, such as Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ṭayyib al-Ṭabarī, al-Samʿānī, etc. formulate some criteria to fulfill. First, the narrators should know of what they are informing, saying, or reporting (not a conjecture). Second, the narrators see, watch, hear, or experience the things they are reporting by themselves without distortion, illusion, or the likes. Third, the narrators should be numerous, for which it is inconceivable that any mistake would be left out as it is without correction.³⁷ As for the second kind of report, the report brought by the Prophet Muhammad *ṣallallāhu ʿalayh wa sallam* that is supported by *muʿjiza*, according to Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil, is the report that spoken by the Prophet himself.³⁸ The nature of this report is *kaşbi*, which means that in order to get the validity of this kind of report, reasoning through religious texts (*istidlāl*) is needed.

Finally, the last channel of knowledge is the intellect. According to Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil, the knowledge obtained by intellect is either *ḍarūrī* (definitive without reasoning) or *iktisābī* (requires reasoning). $1+1 = 2$, or 1 is lesser than 10, or 1 is half of 2, is *ḍarūrī*. On the other hand, that we assess nature as new for it is continuously changing is one example of *iktisābī* knowledge.³⁹

³⁶Abdul Jalil, *Minhāj al-Ummiyyah*, 14.

³⁷ Cited by Muḥammad al-Shawkānī, *Irshād al-Fuḥūl ilā Taḥqīq al-Ḥaqq min ʿIlm al-Uṣūl* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1994), 73-75.

³⁸Abdul Jalil, *Minhāj al-Ummiyyah*, 14.

³⁹Abdul Jalil, *Minhāj al-Ummiyyah*, 15.

2. *Taṣawwur* and *Taṣḍiq*

Taṣawwur is the *maṣḍar* (verbal noun) of *taṣawwara-yataṣawwaru-taṣawwuran*, which means to imagine or to illustrate. Accordingly, *taṣawwur* is etymologically an image or illustration. Terminologically, *taṣawwur* is knowledge or an image of something before any judgment on it (*idrāk al-shay' ma'a 'adami al-ḥukm 'alaiḥ*). *Taṣḍiq*, on the other hand, is the *maṣḍar* of *ṣaddaqa-yuṣaddiqu-taṣḍiqan*, which means to validate or to approve. While *taṣawwur* is an uncertain image of a particular object, *taṣḍiq* is *taṣawwur* completed with validation. The further explanation of Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil on this topic is as follows:

Know that that knowledge is either *taṣawwur* or *taṣḍiq*. *Taṣawwur* is to obtain about something without validation on it, either *nafī* (denial) or *ithbāt* (approval), such as our *taṣawwur* on the meaning of nature, that is everything *maujud* (exist) other than Allah ta'ālā. *Taṣḍiq* is to obtain something along with our validation on it, either *nafī* or *ithbāt*, such as our words: nature is new, and it is not *qadīm*. (Ketahui bahwasanya ilmu itu adakalanya *taṣawwur* dan adakalanya *taṣḍiq*. Maka makna *taṣawwur* itu mendapat kejadian sesuatu dengan tiada dihukumkan atasnya dengan *nafī* atau *ithbāt*, seperti kita *tasawwur*kan makna alam, yaitu tiap-tiap yang *mawjud* yang lain daripada Allāh Ta'ālā. Maka makna *taṣḍiq* itu yaitu mendapatkan kejadian sesuatu serta kita hukumkan atasnya dengan *nafī* atau *ithbāt*, seperti kita kata: alam itu baharu dan alam ini bukan *qadīm*).⁴⁰

In short, what we know is classified into two categories. The first is something occurring as a concept or idea, such as the concept of “human being,” “animal,” “tree,” etc. The second is that has transformed into utterances, statements, or sentences which are already clear either its validation or disproof, such as

⁴⁰Abdul Jalil, *Minhāj al-Ummiyyah*, 15.

“Muhammad is the messenger of Allah,” “there is no God but Allah,” “nature is new instead of *qadīm*,” “human beings need to eat,” “trees grow and develop,” etc. The first kind of knowledge is *taṣawwūr*, while the second is *taṣdīq*. For example, when one has told you that there is a chair in the room, and in your mind, it is yet to be clear about the shape, color, or other attributes of the chair, either it is white, made of wood or steel, big or small, this is the knowledge classified as *taṣawwūr*. On the other hand, if one’s mind is already capable of picturing and confirming the shape, kind, or other attributes of the chair, such as “it is a small red steel chair,” he is in the state of *taṣdīq*.⁴¹ Accordingly, in the state of *taṣawwūr*, one can grasp every object before her/him, such as animals or human beings, apart from specific attributes or categories bond to the respective object. That is because whatever the shapes, skin colors, circumstances of a human being, he/she is still called “human being,” from which he/she is different from animals. Likewise, an animal is called animal with all of its characterization, from which it is different from human beings and other objects. On the other hand, *taṣdīq* is a statement that has the value of truth or false and recognition of truth, which in modern logic is called “proposition.”⁴²

3. The Intellectual Judgment

In the discourse of *kalām*, there are three kinds of judgment (*al-ḥukm*): the legal judgment (*al-ḥukm al-shar‘i*), the habitual

⁴¹Further on this concept, see Marwān ‘Alī Ḥusayn Amīn, “Al-Taṣawwūr Wa Al-Taṣdīq Fī Al-Manṭiq Al-Islāmī: Dirāsah Wa Taḥlīl,” *Majallat Adāb Al-Kuffāb* 1, no. 27 (2016): 517–32; Abdelhamid I Sabra, “Avicenna on the Subject Matter of Logic,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 77, no. 11 (1980): 746–64; Miquel Forcada, “Ibn Bājjā on Taṣawwūr and Taṣdīq: Science and Psychology,” *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 24, no. 1 (2014): 103–26.

⁴²Albert Visser, “A Propositional Logic With Explicit Fixed Points,” *Studia Logica* 40, no. 2 (1981): 155–175.

judgment (*al-ḥukm al-‘ādī*), and the intellectual judgment (*al-ḥukm al-‘aqlī*).⁴³ Like other *kalām* ulamas, Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil divides the judgments into three categories.⁴⁴ With regard to the intellectual judgment or *al-ḥukm al-‘aqlī*, Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil defines that the intellectual judgment is to affirm (*ithbāt*) or to negate (*nafī*) upon a datum (*amr*).⁴⁵ What he means by this is that the intellectual judgment is to affirm a datum and denies the other, or on the other hand, denies a datum and affirms the others repeatedly. For example, the intellect affirms that sugar is sweet, and at the same time, denies that it is salty. The other example, the intellect understands that human being is capable of moving and idling; therefore, it denies that human being is not capable of moving and idling. For that matter, the argument that sugar is sweet, according to the intellectual judgment, is compulsory, and the argument that sugar is salty is impossible. Likewise, the argument that human being is capable of moving and idling is possible. On this basis, the *ulamas* of *kalām* are right in their division that there are three categories of the intellectual judgment: compulsory (*wujūb*), impossibility (*istihālā*), and possibility (*jawāz*).⁴⁶ Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil follows this classification. For him, like the definition proposed by Imam Sanūsī, compulsory is something that its inexistence is inconceivable by the intellect, and otherwise, its existence is inevitable (*mā lā yataṣawwar fī al-‘aql ‘adamuhu*). For example, for every object, the existence of the potency of moving or idling is inevitable. Impossibility is something that its existence is inconceivable by the intellect, and otherwise, its inexistence is inevitable (*mā lā yataṣawwaru fī al-‘aql wujūduhu*). For example, a *jirm* (body) is impossible to be idle at the same time it is moving, or vice versa. While possibility is

⁴³ Maḥmūd ibn Šāliḥ al-Baghdādī, *Irshād al-Anām fī ‘Aqā’id al-Islām* (Baghdad: Dār al-Barrā’, 1985), 25.

⁴⁴ Abdul Jalil, *Minhāj al-Umniyyah*, 15.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

something that the intellect can conceive its existence and inexistence (*mā yaṣīḥu fī al-‘aql wujūdahu wa ‘adamuhu*, such as a body can either move or idle.⁴⁷

Epistemology of Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil, the Intellectual Tradition of Islam, and the Modern Epistemology

It is worthy of attention that in *Minhaj al-Ummiyya*, Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil does not explain or provide a comprehensive relationship between the mentioned three aspects in epistemology to acquire knowledge. Against this backdrop, this section analyzes the epistemology of Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil based on the Islamic intellectual legacy, particularly the tradition of Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamā‘a, to ensure that all of the three work, before further being elaborated to reveal the bewilderment of the modern epistemology.

Philosophers like al-Kindī, al-Fārābī, and Ibn Sīnā are in consensus that senses are the channel of knowledge.⁴⁸ *Mutakallimūn* are also on the same board with them, such as al-Jūwaynī, al-Ghazālī, and al-Nasafī.⁴⁹ Al-Nasafī suggests that senses are a good channel of knowledge if they are in good condition. On the contrary, in the situation of a particular illness, they are incapable of acquiring information well and

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Shāh Walī, *al-Kindī wa ‘Arā’uh al-Falsafīyyah* (Islamabad: Majma‘ al-Buhūth al-Islāmiyyah, 1974), 418-418; Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, *‘Arā’ Ahl al-Madīnah al-Faḍīlah* (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1968), 87-89; Ibn Sīnā, *al-Najāh fī al-Mantīq wa al-Ilāhiyyat*, ed. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Umayrah, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Jayl, 1992), 5-8.

⁴⁹ Al-Jūwaynī, *al-Burhān fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1997), 24; Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulum al-Dīn*, vol. 2 (Beirut-Libanon: Dār al-Qalam, tt), 300; Sa’d al-Dīn Mas’ud ibn ‘Umar al-Taftazanī, *Sharh al-‘Aqā’id al-Nasafīyyah*, 30.

perfectly.⁵⁰ This makes sense because the five senses, or otherwise known as the external senses, are in a stable relationship to the internal senses that function to perceive sensory images and its meaning, uniting or separating them, grasping ideas about them, saving the result of the grasping, and doing intellection upon them. All of the five senses are the common sense⁵¹ (*al-ḥiss al-mushtarak*) that have the power of representation (*al-qunwa al-khayālīyya*), estimation (*al-qunwa al-wahmiyya*), retentive or recollection (*al-qunwa al-ḥāfiẓa wa al-dhākira*), and imagination (*al-qunwa al-mutakhayyila* or *al-qunwah al-mufakkira*).⁵² Something perceived is a form of a physical object, namely the representation of the physical object or sensory object, not the reality itself. Physical reality is something that upon it senses do abstraction, the result of which is its form. The form is no other than what has been previously explained as *taṣawwur*. When the *taṣawwur* proceeds to the level of negation (*naḥī*) or affirmation (*ithbāt*), it becomes *taṣdīq*, in the process of which intellect represent form as *wujūb*, *istihāla*, or *jawāz*.

What is the relation of this with the knowledge acquiring? There are two kinds of objects in an attempt to acquire knowledge,

⁵⁰ Sa'd al-Dīn Mas'ud b. 'Umar al-Taftazānī, *Sharḥ al-'Aqā'id al-Nasafīyyah*, 30.

⁵¹ The terminology of common sense (*al-ḥiss al-mushtarak*) in this context does not mean '*akal sehat*' as the popular meaning of the term in the Indonesian language. It is instead used in the psychological context of the Muslim philosophers, which signifies an internal sense that is related to external senses, and for that matter, is named the common senses. In psychology, common sense receives the result of the perception of the external senses and abstracts them into forms of physical objects. Through this sense, one can have a common response (*al-idrāk al-mushtarak*), that is the response by which one can capture images in our mind. Wan Suhaimi Wan Abdullah, "Kreativiti dan Imajinasi dalam Pengamatan al-Baghdadi," dalam Mohd Zaidi Ismail (ed.), *Kreativiti dan Imajinasi dalam Psikologi Islami* (Kuala Lumpur: IKIM, 2012), 46-47.

⁵² Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Islam and The Philosophy of Science* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1989), 9-10.

namely the image (*form/ṣūra/taṣawwur*) and meaning. The form is the representation of physical reality filtered by external and internal senses. Whereas meaning is something perceived by internal senses from the sensory object without previously perceived by physical senses. For that matter, the process of a human being to acquire knowledge is through phases of perception, abstraction, and intellection that are intuitive. The object of knowledge is initially perceived by the external senses and is further channeled to the first internal senses, namely the common sense, in which the abstraction upon the form of the respective object of knowledge to become a particular image takes place. The ability to conduct this process is called representative capability. Once the respective object of knowledge has gone from the external sense, the non-sensory meaning of the image of the object is captured by the estimative power and forms an imaginative decision, such as true or false, right or wrong, and so on. The non-sensory meaning will further be recorded and stored by the retentive power or power of recollection, so it reaches imaginative faculty.⁵³ The duty of the imaginative faculty is to fuse or separate particular meanings stored in the retentive faculty that is based on the practical or the theoretical ratio. There are two aspects in imaginative faculty: a sensitive aspect from the sensory forms and the rational receiver of the visible (*ẓāhir*) forms.⁵⁴ In this phase, the sensory perception (*idrāk al-ḥawāss* or *al-ḥawāss al-khamsa*) provides the source of information as well as knowledge for the human being. They are the channel of knowledge by which human beings know what things outside themselves are. To negate it means to negate the certainty of knowledge, just like what has happened to those who are infected with *sūfashā'iyya* or Sophism.

⁵³Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Prolegomena to The Metaphysics of Islam: an Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Worldview of Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 2001), 151-155.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Sūfastā'īyya is an Arabic word whose origin is from a Greek word, 'sophisma' (eng: sophist). According to Plato and Aristotle, the people of *sūfastā'īyya* do not want to seek for truth, but rather disputes, and to win them even though with underhanded methods.⁵⁵ In Islamic intellectual tradition, *sūfastā'īyya* occupies a particular discussion, because of their rejection upon the capability of the human being to acquire knowledge and truth. There are three kinds of *sūfastā'īyya*: agnosticism (*al-lā adriyya*), subjectivism (*al-'indiyya*), and skepticism (*al-'inādiyya*). Agnosticism is those who do not know and do not want to know the objective truth of knowledge. For them, all of the knowledge is subjective, depending on personal opinions ('*indī*'). Skepticism is those who object the essence of being, even more, what we are calling 'being' is, for them, just fantasy and imagination.⁵⁶

In this era, known as the postmodernist era, Sophism spreads out to Muslims communities in several forms. This situation is possible because postmodernism and subjectivism are one-package things. Subjectivism would always negate the certainty of knowledge and would always be skeptic upon it. They always assert that "it is our opinion" or "it is just your opinion," because they do not want to consider the valid argumentation based on knowledge.⁵⁷ This is what happens to the proponent of religious pluralism, such as John Hick or Seyyed Hossein Nasr from Muslims who consider that all religions are the same; they are all

⁵⁵Gordon Haddon Clark, *Thales to Dewey: A History of Philosophy* (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1957), 44.

⁵⁶Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *The Oldest Known Malay Manuscript: A 16th Century Malay Translation of the 'Aqa'id of Al-Nasafi* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya, 1988), 48.

⁵⁷ Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *The Oldest Known Malay Manuscript: A 16th Century Malay Translation of the 'Aqa'id of al-Nasafi* (Kuala Lumpur: Department of Publications, University of Malaysia, 1988), 48; Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *Falsafah dan Amalan Pendidikan Islam Syed M. Naquib al-Attas* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Universiti Malaya, 2013), 75-79.

the paths to the same God.⁵⁸ The concept of God in Islam is evident. That is also what happens to the defenders of LGBT rights who distort the *tafsīr* and religious propositions of the Qur'an and hadith or the texts of the previous *ulama* such as what Siti Musdah Mulia has been doing.⁵⁹

Certainly, we are not saying that they are ignorant, the antonym of knowledgeable, people. They are in fact the well-educated figures, blessed with outstanding intellect, whose works are read and discussed by people; only the way they assess a matter (worldview) and the excellence of their mind are not controlled, leading to *al-jarbaḥ*—that is a situation of hardship to accept truth—instead of *ḥikma*—that is one that a controlled mind will acquire. The occurrence of *al-jarbaḥ* implies the tendency to Sophism (*al-sūfashṭā'īyya*) in the form of subjectivism (*'indīyya*) in a person.

Against this backdrop, from the perspective of Islamic intellectual tradition, the *ulamas* reject Sophism (*al-sūfashṭā'īyya*). Al-Nasafī in his text on *'aqīda* suggests that “*ḥaqā'iq al-ashyā' thābitah wa al-'ilm bibā mutahhaqqiq khalāfan li al-sūfashṭā'īyya*” (the essence of a matter is permanent, while the knowledge on it is certain, different from the Sophism).⁶⁰ This is to say that the essence or the quiddity

⁵⁸ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Need for a Sacred Science* (Surrey: Curzon Press Ltd, 2005), 28-31; John Hick, *The New Frontier of Religion and Science: Religious Experience, Neuroscience and the Transcendent* (New York: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2006), 152-153, 162 & 172-179; Adnan Aslan, *Religious Pluralism in Christian and Islamic Philosophy: The Thought of John Hick and Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, pent. Munir (Bandung: Alifya, 2004), 317-318; Abdulaziz Sachedina, *Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism (Beda Tapi Setara: Pandangan Islam Tentang Non-Islam)*, pent. Satrio Wahono (Jakarta: Serambi, 2004), 50-51, 63-64 & 79; Komaruddin Hidayat & Muhamad Wahyu Nafis, *Agama Masa Depan Perspektif Filsafat Perennial*, (Jakarta: Gramedia, 2003), 6-7.

⁵⁹ Edi Kurniawan, “Distorsi Terhadap Maqasid al-Syari'ah al-Syatibi di Indonesia,” *Al-Risalah* 18, no. 2 (2018): 181–184.

⁶⁰ Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *The Oldest Known Malay Manuscript: A 16th Century Malay Translation of the 'Aqā'id of al-Nasafī*, 53.

of something is permanent (and therefore is knowable), does not change (what changes are instead its attributes, *a'rād*, *lawāḥiq*, or *lawāẓim*), so that it is capable being known, recognized, selected, categorized, differed, and assessed either true or false, *ḥaqq* or *bāṭil*, right (*ṣawāb*) or wrong (*ḵhaṭa'*), etc. through senses, the true report and intellect that is used in the way of *holistic* and *put in the right place*.

Holistic means that there is no separation between the three axes in analyzing an object. While being put in the right place refers to the use of the three channel of knowledge in its proportional position and portion. The reason behind this is that the competency of senses is limited, and therefore they need intellect. Senses and intellect are both limited, and therefore they need revelation (*wahy*). Revelation does not function without senses and intellect. The stars are small, as perceived by senses. However, intellect negates this perception; they are not small. Likewise, the information about the resurrection day, heaven, hell, genie, and other metaphysic beings are not the object of senses, nor they are the object of intellect; they are instead informed by the revelation, and senses and intellect are submissive before it. "What will explain to you what the Inevitable Hour is?" (Q.S. al-Ḥāqqa [69]: 3), "Who believe in the unseen..." (Q.S. al-Baqara [2]:3), among other Qur'anic verses, tell about the unseen affairs, including heaven and hell, that is not comprehensible through senses nor is it able to be rationalized through reason. On the contrary, the revelation also challenges intellect to be used, reflected in the phrase of *afalā ta'qilūn* (do not you not think!) that is mentioned repeatedly in the Qur'an.⁶¹ The problem with the western epistemology is that all of the three channel of knowledge are used disequibratedly. The first school, empiricism, proposed by David Hume (1711-1776 M), suggests that what perceived by

⁶¹For example, al-Baqarah [2]: 44 & 76; Ālī 'Imrān [3]: 65).

senses is the only legitimate channel of knowledge and truth.⁶² In fact, not only are senses limited to understand God and unseen matters, they are not enough to understand natural phenomena. Red color zoomed in 2000 times, for example, will disappear, and what appears then are molecules. Molecules zoomed in 2000 times will disappear, and appear atoms afterward. An atom will disappear when zoomed in 2000 times and appears then hadron. A hadron will also disappear when zoomed in 2000 times, and then appear quarks. A quark zoomed in 2000 times will disappear, and what occurs then is, according to Fritjof Capra, the hidden connection.⁶³ How to understand the hidden connection empirically? It is true what Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil asserts:

that do not perceive (upon something) [sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste] with themselves, but with the [power] of Allah *ṣubḥānahu wa Ta'ālā*. (bahwasanya tiada didapat [penglihatan, pendengaran, penciuman, peraba, dan pencicip] melainkan dengan demikian itu, tetapi [karena] kuasa Allah *ṣubḥānahu wa Ta'ālā*).

The second school, rationalism, proposed by Rene Descartes (1595-1650 M, suggests that intellect is the only channel of knowledge and truth.⁶⁴ Intellect needs senses, and it is also true the other way around. The intellect, as explained by philosophers, is *al-ma'qūlāt al-thānī* (the second category) that functions to remember, memorize, think, and imagine something, which is unlikely to happen without *al-ma'qūlāt al-ūla* (the first category, such as what perceived by senses). It is like the husband and wife; the more they live together, the more their minds memorize, remember, and think about what his/her couple likes and dislikes.

⁶²Robert Audi, ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 262-263.

⁶³Fritjof Capra, *The Hidden Connections: A Science for Sustainable Living* (New York: Anchor, 2004).

⁶⁴Robert Audi, ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 772-773.

In addition to that, this group also develops the method of skepticism in order to acquire knowledge.⁶⁵ In fact, knowledge can be acquired through certainty, not uncertainty or doubt, as suggested by Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil:

The result of *i'tiqād* is nothing other than following the Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam, so that following them both will lift up the veils, namely *shakek*, *ẓann*, *wahm*. [With that matter] (one) acquires the definite [*jāzim*] and absolute knowledge. (Tiada hasil i'tiqadnya itu melainkan mengikuti bagi Qur'an dan hadis Nabi ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam, maka mengikuti keduanya mengangkat hijab yaitu *shakek*, *ẓann*, *wahm*. [Dengan demikian], maka didapatkan ilmu yang putus [*jāzim*] dan yang yaqin).

Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil might specifically talk about *'aqida* in this context. However, it is also relevant to other disciplines. Here is an anecdote to illustrate the point. Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil provides three different words—*shakek*, *ẓann*, *wahm*—with a similar meaning, hesitation. A single person, for example, is hesitant in his preference over Fatimah or Aisyah to be his wife. If (a) his hesitation is equal to both of them, he is in the state of *shakek*. If (b) he slightly prefers Fatimah to Aisyah, he is in the state of *ẓann*. If (c) his tendency to reject one is more significant over the other, he is in the state of *wahm*.⁶⁶

⁶⁵Marjorie Grene, "Descartes and Skepticism," *The Review of Metaphysics* 52, no. 3 (1999): 553–71; Lesley Friedman, "Doubt & Inquiry: Peirce and Descartes Revisited," *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 35, no. 4 (1999): 724–46; Sami M Najm, "The Place and Function of Doubt in the Philosophies of Descartes and Al-Ghazālī," *Philosophy East and West* 16, no. 3/4 (1966): 133–41.

⁶⁶On the elaboration on the meaning of *shakek*, *ẓann*, and *wahm*, see Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Idrīs al-Qarāfī, *Sharḥ Tanqīḥ al-Fuṣūl fī Ikhtisār al-Maḥṣūl fī al-Uṣūl* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1971), 86; 'Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī, *Sharḥ al-*

The question in this context is: can all the above three cases of hesitation reach certainty? The answer is: no, they cannot. He will remain single as long as he is hesitant to decide between Aisyah and Fatimah. His unmarried situation will end only if he has achieved certainty. The condition of certainty is no other than the conviction that emerges from the investigation: who are they, how are their characters, how are their families, etc.? The conviction emerging from the investigation is called *yaqīn*. The Qur'an expresses it with the term '*ilm al-yaqīn*'. According to Imam al-Rāzi in his *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*:

If a conviction (*al-i'tiqād*) is incompatible with (*ghayr mutābiq*) [the guidance of religion], it is called ignorant. If (it is) compatible (with it) and based on *yaqīn*, it is called '*ilm al-yaqīn*... If (it is) compatible (with it) but not based on *yaqīn*, it is called *muqallid* (*i'tiqād al-muqallid*)...⁶⁷

Above '*ilm al-yaqīn*', there is '*ayn al-yaqīn*', that is the conviction after the thorough investigation and is further proven by experience. Like the mentioned single anecdote, '*ayn al-yaqīn*' is when he eventually decided to marry Aisyah and has passed through marriage life together for years, encountering the sweetness and bitterness of life.

Thirdly, not only do they employ senses and intellect in the dichotomist approach, the modern epistemology reduces the aspect of the divine in sciences, for they believe that God is not an empirical nor rational object of scientific investigation. Immanuel Kant suggests that metaphysics is irrelevant to science because it is not based on senses, nor it has epistemological value.⁶⁸ Because the

'*Aḍud 'Alā Mukhtaṣar al-Muntabā al-Uṣūlī*, ed. Fādī Naṣīf & Ṭāriq Yahyā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2000), 14-15.

⁶⁷Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr wa Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, Vol. 16 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr 1981), 80. Tafsīr Surah al-Tawbah ayat 44.

⁶⁸Justus Harnack, *Kant's Theory of Knowledge*, ed. M. Holmes Hartshome (London: Macmillan, 1968), 142-145.

discourse of God is classified into metaphysic, it is, by logic, impossible. As a result, science becomes secular, that it works without the guidance of religion. Eventually, as suggested by Victor J. Stenger, science becomes one of the gates to atheism.⁶⁹

Stranger's suggestion has value. Let see thinkers such as Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872). Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1890), Charles Robert Darwin (d. 1882), Karl Marx (d. 1883), Auguste Comte (1798-1857), Stephen Hawking (d. 2018), among others, who proclaimed to be anti-God⁷⁰ are the great scientists. Ludwig Feuerbach was known as one of the forerunners of atheism in the modern age. For him, it is the religion (Christianity) that worships human beings, not the other way around.⁷¹ Taking inspiration from Feuerbach, Karl Marx concluded that religion is opium, and religion is only the second factor, while the primary factor is the economy.⁷² Marx himself praised the work of Charles Darwin about the evolution that the origin of species was not from God, but rather from the adaptation against the environments.⁷³ In psychology, Sigmund Freud dismissed the existence of God in the soul of human beings, because God, for him, is an illusion.⁷⁴

Conclusion

After investigating *Minhaj al-Ummiyya fi Bayān 'Aqīdat Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamā'a*, it is found that apparently, Tuan Guru Abdul

⁶⁹Victor J Stenger, *The New Atheism: Taking a Stand for Science and Reason* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2009).

⁷⁰Victor J Stenger, *The New Atheism: Taking a Stand for Science and Reason* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2009). The book is republished by Gregg International Publishers Limited, Westmead, 1970.

⁷¹John William Draper, *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* (London: Henry S. King & Co, 1875).

⁷²Cf. Franz Magnis Suseno, *Pemikiran Karl Marx* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2016), 71-76.

⁷³Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (New York: New American Library, 1958), 437.

⁷⁴Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1961), 40.

Jalil was not only expert in *fiqh* but also *'aqīda*. Despite the fact that his elaboration reflects nothing new in the intellectual tradition of the *ulama* below the winds, his attempt to synthesize the *kalam* vision of *al-Māturidiyya* and *Ashā'ira* inspires to a relevant epistemology in the current context. His epistemology covers the elaboration on channel of knowledge (senses, true reports, and intellect), *taṣawwur* and *taṣdiq*, and the intellectual judgment that are interconnected to each other in order to acquire knowledge. The interconnection between those aspects is detected in his explanation that the internal senses (the power of representation estimation, retentive or recollection, and imagination) perceive and abstract a *ṣūra* (form) of a physical object, and later comes to the phase of negation and affirmation, from which occurs *taṣdiq* that represents the intellectual judgment, namely *wujūb*, *istiḥāla*, and *jawāz*.

However, because the modern (western) epistemology situates the three channels of knowledge (senses, true reports, and intellect) in a dichotomist approach, the result of this is an unbalanced epistemology. For example, empiricism considers that what is perceived by senses is the legitimate and authentic channel of knowledge. On the other hand, rationalist considers that intellect is the only channel of knowledge and truth. In addition to that, modern epistemology dismisses the aspect of divinity in sciences, leading to the situation in which science runs without guidance from religion or otherwise known as secularization. As a result, the knowledge that should have been able to differentiate between true and false, *ḥaqq* and *batil*, right (*ṣawāb*) and wrong (*khata'*) has been out of control. It is becoming more problematic that the hegemony of western values and modern epistemology has led to inferiority complex amongst Muslims with regards to their intellectual tradition, leading them to become “the Aladdin” in the story of the Arabian Nights who sells the old lamp for his fascination with the new one. In fact, the old one is not always bad. For example, despite Tuan Guru Abdul Jalil being not as

popular as other names of the *ulamas* below the winds such as Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānirī, Raja Ali Haji, etc., in fact, many in Jambi do not recognize him, however, because he sticks to “the old lamp” of the intellectual tradition of Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamā‘a, his epistemological formulation remains relevant to be developed as a basis of Islamic epistemology in order to answer the dichotomist and modern secular epistemology.

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