THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF BAYANI, BURHANI AND IRFANI 'ABID AL JABIRI AND ITS RELEVANCE IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION

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Abstract

This paper describes one of the masterpieceof modern Islamic philosophical thought initiated by Muhammad Abid Al Jabiri. He is an Islamic scientist from Morocco who has used the epistemology method as his analytical knife in studying Arabic-Islamic reasoning. This was the topic of his study because he felt that one of the problems of the destruction of thought, ambiguity and doubt in understanding the knowledge experienced by humans, was a result of epistemological errors. In this paper, we will explain how the epistemology built by Al-Jabiri and its tendency towards the model of the burhani epistemology and how his understanding in his reading of Arabic-reasoning, which he said contained fundamental problems.

Keywords :*Epistemology, Al Jabiri, Islamic Education*

A. INTRODUCTION

Epistemology is a branch of philosophy that specifically addresses the theory of science. Epistemology comes from Greek, episteme, which means knowledge.[1] Knowledge is all that is known. Epistemology reaches problems that extend to the extent of metaphysics, besides that it is a very abstract matter and rarely used as a scientific problem in everyday life.[2]

In the world of thought, epistemology has an important position, because it determines the style of thought and statement of truth that it produces. The basic building of epistemology differs from one civilization to another.The difference in viewpoints in epistemology has a great influence in the construction of buildings of

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[1]M. Amin Abdullah, *Studi Agama Normativitas atau Historisitas?*, Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2002, p. 243.
[2]P. Hardono Hadi, *Epistemologi (Filsafat Pengetahuan),* Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1994, p. 6-7.

human thought. The human view will be affected and formed by its conception of epistemology.[3]Therefore, it is necessary to develop empiricism in a whole dimension that contains spirituality and morality.

Discourse on epistemology is an interesting term to be discussed because epistemology is the main basis for the development of science. The methods, systems and models of understanding used determine the product of knowledge. Therefore, the problem of damage to a thought, confusion and doubt in understanding the knowledge experienced by humans is a result of epistemological errors. Therefore, it is necessary to develop empiricism in a whole dimension that contains spirituality and morality. So that it is hoped that the Islamic epistemology will be born and give an answer to the people's anxiety today.[4]

In contemporary thinking, some scholars consider it serious to study epistemology on Islamic scientific treasures. By studying epistemology, it will find the roots and the building of thought it has. One of the serious figures in this field is Abed al-Jabiri. A Moroccan thinker who has used the epistemological method as his analytical knife in studying Arabic-Islamic reasoning. Its seriousness can be seen from its efforts to dismantle the Arab-Islamic tradition.The results of his analysis of epistemology are detailed in most of his works, especially the grand project of *Naqd al-'Aql al-'Arabi*.

This paper will explain how the epistemology built by Al-Jabiri and its tendency towards the burhani model of epistemology and how its understanding of Arabic senseing according to him contains a fundamental problem. Therefore, it is important that his thoughts be discussed to find his idea of Arab-Islamic reasoning..

B. DISCUSSION

1. 'Abid Al Jabiri Biography

Among contemporary Muslim intellectuals his name is no stranger. Al Jabiri was born in Figuig or Fejij (Pekik) southeast of Morocco in 1936. During his

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[3]M. Amin Abdullah, *Studi Agama Normativitas atau Historisitas?,* p. 261.
[4]*Ibid,* p. 262.

education in his own city, he was initially sent to a religious school, then to a private nationalist school (*Madrasah Hurrah Wathaniyah*) founded by the independence movement. From 1951-1963 he spent two years in high school in Casablanca. After Morocco gained independence, al Jabiri obtained a diploma from an Arab University in the field of science.[5]

The greatness of Al Jabiri is indeed inseparable from the environment and the political world that surrounds him as well as his family who are also party activists. One of the leaders of the fractured Istiqlal party, Mehdi ben Barka, who in the development of this party fraction later founded The Union NationaleDecesPopulaires (UNFP) and changed its name to Union Socilieste Des Forces Populaires (USFP), was a person near al Jabiri who accompanied and guiding al Jabiri during his youth. He also channeled al-Jabiri to be able to work in one of the official publishing houses of the Istiqlal party, the Al 'Alam Journal, which at that time became the information center for the Istiqlal party.[6]

In 1958 Al Jabiri continued his studies and intends to deepen philosophy at Damascus University in Syria. But he did not last long in Syria, one year later he moved to Rabat University, which was then founded. During his education, he continued to wrestle with his political activities, until later in 1963 he was imprisoned on charges of treason against the country which at that time was attached to many other members of the UNFP party.[7]

After leaving prison, in 1964 al Jabiri returned to his academic environment by starting to teach philosophy at the baccalaureate level. In 1966 he and Ahmad as Sattati and Mustofa al Qamari collaborated to publish a text book on Islamic thought and philosophy intended for young scholars before completing their education. For about one period some of Al Jabiri's activities both in the intellectual realm and in several other forums have shaped him to be a very important intellectual of that era.

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[5]Muhammad Abed al Jabiri, *Kritik Kontemporer Atas Filsafat Arab-Islam*. (Moch. Nur Ikhwan, Trans.),Yogyakarta: Islamika, 2003, p. xviii.
[6]*Ibid.*
[7]Muhammad Abed al Jabiri, *Syuro, Tradisi, Partikularitas, Universalitas*, Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2003, p. 18.

Several articles with various exhaled issues were successfully published in Morocco.[8]

He continued his studies to obtain a master's degree until 1967, with the title thesis *Falsafah al Tarikh 'inda Ibnu Kholdun*, under the guidance of M. Aziz Lahbabi. And at that time he had begun teaching philosophy at V Rabat University in Morocco. The following year until 1970 al Jabiri completed his studies to obtain a Ph.D. with a dissertation on Ibn Kholdun's thoughts, under the guidance of Najib Baladi.[9]

In 1976 he began to introduce two of his works on epistemology (one about mathematics and modern rationalism and the other about empirical methods and the development of scientific thought), even though until then he could not abandon the political activities he had struggled. This was proven by his being a member of the USFP political bureau since 1975, as well as one of its founders. But anyway, he finally had to choose between in the academic or political world.[10]

In 1980–1981 after going through several considerations he finally chose to devote his energy and mind to intellectuality and explore the scientific field, as well as resign from the political bureau. Since then he has continued to concentrate on the scientific world some of his writings and articles he collected and published including several articles that he had presented in several seminar or conference forums.[11]

If we trace the intellectual journey of Al Jabiri, we will get enough results after publishing approximately 17 works and several writings spread in various publications, it is truly amazing. Al Jabiri's credibility as a front-line Islamic thinker is so recognized among contemporary Islamic thinkers, such as Mohammad Arkoun and FetimmaMernisi, both of whom are from Maghreb.[12]

2. Epistemology of Bayani, Irfani and Burhani 'Abid al Jabiri

[8]*Ibid.*
[9]*Ibid.*
[10]*Ibid.* p. 85.
[11]*Ibid.*
[12]Ahmad Baso, *Post Tradisionalisme Islam*, Yogyakarta : LKiS, 2000.

Muhammad Abid Al Jabiri, has put fresh ideas in the framework of a major project for the revival of the ummah through his project of thought which he called the Critical Reason of Arabic. The criticism of Arabic rasonis motivated by the spirit of revivalism (Islamic Awakening) in two ideas, namely as a reflection of the failure of Islamic revival as well as efforts to realize the rise of Islam that never came. Therefore criticism is the main thing in the project of the rise of the Arab nation by paying attention to the history of Islamic Arabic culture and the formation of Arabian reasoning, which in history has often occurred between the study of epistemology and ideology in the culture of Arabic sense.

The definition of the Al Jabiri Arabic sense critique isarabic sense in its capacity as an instrument of thought and understanding in the form of theoretical products whose characteristics are shaped by Arab civilization. With criticism of Arabic sense, it is hoped that the Arabs will be able to write back the history of their Arab civilization. Al Jabiri studied epistemology in Arabic sense through three things, namely Bayani, Burhani, and Irfani.

a. Bayani

The word "*bayani*" comes from Arabic, which means explanation.[13] For Al-Jabiry, the Bayani epistemology system is the earliest system in Arabic thought. This system is very dominated in basic sciences such as *fiqh*, *tafsir*, *kalam*, non-philosophical literary theory.[14]Bayani epistemology comes from the texts of the Qur'an and Hadith, *qiyas* and *ijma*.

In order to gain knowledge, the bayani epistemology takes two paths. First, hold on to the *lafaz* by using Arabic rules, such as *nahw* and *sharaf* as analysis tools. Second, using the qiyas method (analogy) which is the main principle of the bayani epistemology.[15]

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[13]A. Khudori Soleh, *Wacana Baru Filsafat Isla*m, Yogyakarta : Pustaka Pelajar, 2004, p. 177.

[14]Muhammad Abid al-Jabiry, *Bunyah al-'Aql al-Araby*, Beirut:Al-Markaz al-Tsaqafah al-Araby, 1990, p. 13.
[15]Al Jabiri in Khudori Sholeh, *Wacana...Ibid.,*p. 187.

In the study of *ushulfiqh*, *qiyas* is interpreted as giving a legal decision on a problem based on other matters that have legal certainty in the text because of the similarity of god by observing four things namely *al-ashl, al-far'*, the original law and *'illah*.[16] An example of *qiyas* is aboutthe law of drinking wine from dates. Wine from dates is called *far'u* (branch) because there are no legal provisions in the text, and it will be revealed to the *khamer*. *Khamer* is *ashl* (principal) because it is in the text (*nash*) and the law is *haram*, the reason (*'illah*) is intoxicating. As a result, wine is *haram* because there are similarities between wine and *khamer*, which are equally intoxicating.[17]

This bayani epistemology system produces a combinative standard for interpreting discourse and determining the terms of production of discourse. Al-Jabiry concluded that this system was built on two basic principles. First, discontinuity or separation (*al-infishal*), and second, the concept of contingency or possibility (*al-tajwiz*). These principles are manifested in the theory of individual substances (bodies, actions, sensations, and whatever is formed in them) based on coincidental relationships and associations, but do not influence and interact. This theory actually negates the theory of causality or the idea of the existence of natural law.[18]

The Bayani approach is a philosophical study of the system of building knowledge that places text as an absolute truth, whereas reason only occupies a secondary position, which explains and defends existing texts.In other words, bayani only works at the level of the text beyond the level of reason.Therefore the strength of this approach located in language both on the grammatical level and structure (*nahwu, sharaf*) and literature (*balagahah*). In this context, language is not only a means of

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[16]*Ibid.,* p. 187-188.
[17]*Ibid.*
[18]Muhammad Shofan, *Jalan Ketiga Pemikiran Islam*, Universitas Muhammadiyyah Gresik-UMG Press, 2006, p.369.

communication, but also as a medium for cultural transformation and forming a basic reference framework for the children. One of the implications, *lafazd* and *ma'na* occupy a respectable position, especially in the *ushulfiqh* discourse.

Al-Jabiry said that Arabic has a very significant influence in shaping Arab-Islamic thought and directing all the mechanisms and procedures of reasoning, although that is not the only element of its formation. Arabic reasoning is a product of Arabic-Islamic culture which consists of three systems of knowledge or epistime: episteme language originating from Arabic culture, episteme gnosis derived from Persian and Hermetic traditions, and rational epistemology (burhani) originating from Greece. When raising the theme of the relationship between language and Islamic-Arabic thought, al-Jabiry intends to underline one episteme or knowledge system that forms Arabic thought, episteme which is processed by a system of languages in which the thought finds its role and function.[19]

Based on the fact that bayani is related to the text and its relation to "reality", the main problems that are in it are around the problem of *lafazh-ma'na*, and *ushûl-furû* '. According to al-Jabiry, the problem of *lafaz-ma'na* contains two aspects; theoretical and practical. In terms of theory three problems arise, (1) about the meaning of a word, whether based on its context or original meaning (*tauqif*), (2) about the analogy of language, (3) the question of *al-asmã al syar'iyyah*, such as the word *salat, shiyam, zakat*, and others.[20]

In the first problem, the giving of meaning to a word arises from the debate between rationalists and hadith experts. According to the rationalist Mu'tazilah, a word must be given meaning based on its context and terms, while for *ahlussunnah*, a word must be interpreted according to its original

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[19]Muhammad Abed al-Jabiry, *Post Tradisionalisme Islam*, Ahmad Baso, Trans. Yogyakarta:LKis, 2000, p. 59.
[20]A. Khudori Soleh, *Ibid.,* p. 184.

meaning.This is in accordance with the basic assumption of Arabic knowledge that meaning and systems of thinking are born of words (text), not texts born of meaning and systems of thought. *Nahwu* (Arabic grammar) which is born from this assumption, has the duty to keep the text from the possibility of meaning irregularities. Furthermore, the nahwu discourse does not only contain language rules that arrangespeech and writing correctly, but at the same time also contains the rules of thought and then raises the knowledge of bayani.[21]

The second problem, about the analogy of language, such as the word *nabîdz* (squeezing wheat) with *khamr* (grape juice), or the word *sãriq* (stealer of objects) with *nabasy* (thief of the corpse buried). In this case the scholars allow an analogy, but only in terms of the logic of the language, not in the *lafazd* or editorial. Because, each language has its own term that has a different depth of meaning, so that if analogized it will be able to damage the language that exists among them.[22]

The third problem is the meaning of *al-asmã al-syar'iyyah*. Mu'tazilah argues that; in some cases, the Qur'an can be interpreted differently and with different meanings, not necessarily in accordance with the Arab culture in which it was revealed. Because not infrequently the Qur'an uses Arabic terms, but is interpreted differently from the original meaning. Whereas according to al-Baqilani, the Qur'an is meant to be in accordance with Arabic culture. Because the Qur'an is revealed in Arabic traditions and culture.[23]

The relationship of *lafadz-ma'na* at the practical level is related to the interpretation of the *syara* discourse. Many *fiqh* scholars have developed this problem, both from the aspect of the position of a word, usage, level of clarity and method. In terms of its relation to the question of *ushul-furû*,

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[21]*Ibid.*
[22]*Ibid.* p.185.
[23]*Ibid.*

according to al-Jabiry, *ushul* does not refer to the basics of fiqh law, such as, the Qur'an, sunnah, *ijma'* and *qiyas*, but the general understanding that it is the basis of the process of extracting knowledge. *Ushul* is the end of a reciprocal relationship with *furû*.

b. 'Irfani

The word irfani is the *mashdar* form of the word - - which is similar to *ma'rifah*. This word has the same meaning as *makrifat*, which means that knowledge is obtained directly through experience, whereas science is knowledge gained through transformation (*naql*) and rationality.[24] Therefore, in terms of terminology, irfan can be interpreted as a disclosure of knowledge obtained through the illumination of the essence of God to His servants after the practice of spirituality carried out on the basis of love.[25]

Irfani knowledge is not based on the text as the knowledge of a bayani, nor is it based on a ratio of such burhani knowledge, but in *kasyf* or intuition. Irfani as the knowledge acquired through sincerity and inspiration among Sufi is considered to be higher than the ordinary knowledge acquired through human effort with senses and intellect.

Irfani's approach is research and deep reflection accompanied by sharpness and sharpening of conscience, which was built through *munãjatwataqarrubilallãh*, carrying out *masyrû'ah* worship, *tadabbur* al-Qur'an, and having moral character is an effort to strengthen the potential of spiritual intelligence. Here we need deep understanding and practice of religion as a tool to understand and explain religion. In this irfani approach there is an element of humanity (a sense of humanity), divine humanity,

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[24]Mehdi Hairi Yazdi, *Ilmu Hudhuri*, M.Ahsin, Trans., Bandung :Mizan,1994, p.47-48.

[25]Reynold A. Nicholson, *Tasawuf Menguak Cinta Ilahi*, A. Nashir Budiman, Trans.,Jakarta: Rajawali, 1987, p. 68.

namely a sense of humanity that arises after much doing in *munajat*and *mujāhadah* to Allah swt.

Through the irfani approach, it is expected to be able to capture the meaning of the essence or the deepest meaning behind the text and context. If the basic assumption or the Bayani paradigm views text as a linguistic phenomenon, while the Burhani paradigm views text more as a context, the Irfani paradigm looks at text as symbols and signals that require reading and extracting the deepest meaning of these symbols and signals by involving emotional intelligence, social intelligence and spiritual intelligence.

The central issue of irfani is *zahir* and *bathin* which is a partner not as an opposite concept. If analogous to bayani, the concept of *zahir-bathin* is not different from *lafaz-ma'na*. The difference is, in the bayani epistemology, a person departs from *lafaz*to *ma'na*; whereas in irfani, one actually departs from the *ma'na* to *lafaz*, from *bathin* to *zahir*. According to al-Jabiri, *bathin* meaning is revealed by means of *i'tibar* or *qiyas*irfani.[26]

The way irfani works is a process of understanding that departs from *ma'na*to *lafaz* of the text. The question is how to uncover the inner meaning or dimension obtained from the *kasyf* process. Al-Jabiri said that the meaning can be revealed by using a method called qiyas 'irfani, namely the analogy of inner meaning revealed in *kasyf* to the *zahir*meaning in the text.[27]

c. **Burhani**

The need for the use of the burhani method is based on the emergence of many heterodox doctrines that come from Iran, Persia, India or the outskirts of Islam, such as Mazdiah, Manikiah, or even from the center of Islam itself as a result of free searches which changed into free thinking such as rejection of revelation and others that are categorized in the term '*zindiq'*. If the source of knowledge from the Bayani epistemology is text,

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[26]Abid Al Jabiri, *Bunyah...*, *Ibid.,* p. 306.
[27]Supaat Eko Nugroho, *Muhammad 'Abid Al-Jabiri: Studi Pemikirannya Tentang Tradisi Turast* Yogyakarta: Thesis of Adab Faculty, 2007, p. 95.

while Irfani is experience, then the burhani epistemology comes from reality, both natural reality, social, humanity and religious. The sciences that emerge from the burhani tradition are called the science of *al-husuli*, that is, science which is conceptualized, compiled and systematized through the premises of logic (*al-mantiq*) not through textual authority or intuition authority.

Burhani based himself more on the power of reason, which was carried out through logical propositions. Even religious propositions can only be accepted as long as they are in accordance with rational logic. Al-Jabiri asserted that the burhani produced knowledge through the principles of logic over the previously believed knowledge In addition, these logic propositions provide an assessment and decision on information that enters the senses, known as *tashawwur* and *tashdiq*. *Tashawwur* is a process of concept formation based on data from the senses, while *tashdiq* is the process of verifying the truth or concept.[28]

This burhani reasoning positions reason as a tool to validate science. Burhani reason emphasizes the correspondence or conformity between formulas created by human reason with natural laws. In addition to correspondence also emphasized the aspect of coherence to improve and refine the findings, formulas of theories that have been built and compiled by the work of human reason.

In the interpretation of the Qur'an Al Jabiri initiated a theory of *Al-Fashl* and *Al-Washl* to maintain the text of the Qur'an. This theory aims to find out between the purity of the content of the text and the analysis of the interpreter's pre-understanding. In doing interpretation, an interpreter must let the text speak to itself as it is, then analyzed with full understanding of the interpreter in determining the nature of meaning. The goal is that the text can be understood objectively.

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[28]*Ibid.* p. 97-98

Al-Fashl which means separate, has the aim that the purity of the text does not mix with thoughts from outside the text, the text must be separate from the interpreter. While *Al-Washl* is a theory used in analyzing the text a moment before an interpreter separated himself so that the text spoke with himself then here is the task of the interpreter in relating the text, the historicity of the text, and the sociological texts at the time of the decline of the Qur'an with the needs of this period.[29]

3. Relevance and Implications of Abid Al Jabiri's Thought Against Islamic Education

The offer of the bayani, irfani and burhani epistemology has a significant role in the development of science. There are several benefits that can be obtained from Al Jabiri's offer including; first, that education does not have to be stagnant education does not have to be stagnant without change. the contents of all material in an education should be adapted to the reality of the times. The rapid development of the times requires us to always be able to follow it. Our closeness to change will cause us to lag far behind..

Second, about the creativity of students who should be instilled early. Each student actually has different potential. This requires the teacher to always explore the potential of each student's, then try to develop it as much as possible. The thing that needs to be remembered by a teacheris learning in the classroom is not like watching sports or film shows. Students not only sit in the classroom listening to the teacher's explanation, memorize the material package, and then answer the teacher's question.. However, good learning is when the teacher understands the needs of students.

If it is applied in practical education, then the thinking of abid al jabiri is as follows:

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[29]Dwi Haryono, *"Hermeneutika al-Qur'an Abid al-Jabiri" in Syahiron Syamsuddin (ed.), Hermeneutika al-Qur'an dan Hadits*, Yogyakarta: Elsaq. 2010,p. 100.

a. **Basic Phase and Beginning Implications of Bayani**

In the learning process, this phase uses an empirical approach, while the teaching process according to educational theory uses a connectionist approach, because they are considered immature and inexperienced.

b. **Development phase and change in Implications of Burhani**

In this phase the learning process uses a logical approach, while in its teaching uses the conditioning approach (cognitive model) which is in the view of Islamic philosophy known as the burhany, because students have begun to think towards the process of maturity.

c. **The appreciation and awareness phase of the implications of Irfani**

In this phase students are considered mature and independent so that the learning process uses an ethical or intuitive approach, while in teaching uses a gestalt (humanistic) approach.

If al-Jabiri's thoughts are drawn in the world of education, then the concept of education will be found which views reality and modernity that continue to run and be oriented towards progress. Education is expected to be able to answer the challenges of the world which are increasingly progressing..

C. CLOSING

The idea of al-Jabiri was interesting to study because al-Jabiri was the first person to systematically introduce this critique of Arabic reasoning approach. So that research that emphasizes the relevance of the critical ideas of al-Jabiri's Arabic reasoning is an urgent matter. In relation to Indonesia, it can be explained that the problem faced by contemporary Arab intellectuals is the "reflection mirror" for Indonesian intellectuals to diagnose the problem of thinking in their country for reasons of its similarity. Although it cannot be denied that in some cases Indonesia has a difference with the habitat of the idea of al-Jabiri..

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