

IRFANI EPISTEMOLOGY AND THE PRACTICE OF *SHOLAT 40*: INTUITIVE KNOWLEDGE IN THE SYATTARIYAH TARIQAH OF WEST SUMATRA



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Abstract

This study examines the implementation of Irfani epistemology in the practice of *Sholat 40* (forty consecutive days of ritual prayer) within the Syattariyah Tariqah in West Sumatra, focusing on its role as a medium for attaining intuitive knowledge (*ma'rifah*). While previous studies on Sufi orders in Indonesia often emphasize ritual practices or social functions, few have analyzed their epistemological dimensions. Adopting a phenomenological approach, supported by literature review and in-depth interviews with followers and the *murshid*, this research identifies three key elements within *Sholat 40*: soul purification (*tazkiyah al-nafs*), mystical experience, and the attainment of intuitive knowledge of the Divine essence. The findings indicate that in Irfani epistemology, knowledge transcends rational cognition and emerges through inner experience, enabling practitioners to perceive the presence of God directly. This study argues that *Sholat 40* functions not only as ritual worship but also as a structured epistemic practice that facilitates spiritual transformation, moral refinement, and personal growth. By situating this practice within Irfani epistemology, the article contributes to broader discourses on Islamic mysticism, experiential knowledge, and the living tradition of Sufi epistemologies in Southeast Asia.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji implementasi epistemologi irfani dalam praktik *Sholat 40* (salat selama empat puluh hari berturut-turut) pada Tarekat Syattariyah di Sumatera Barat, dengan fokus pada perannya sebagai medium pencapaian pengetahuan intuitif (*ma'rifah*). Sementara kajian sebelumnya tentang tarekat di Indonesia umumnya menekankan aspek ritual atau fungsi sosial, hanya sedikit yang menyoroti dimensi epistemologisnya. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan fenomenologis, yang dipadukan dengan studi kepustakaan serta wawancara mendalam dengan para pengikut dan *murshid*, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi tiga elemen kunci dalam *Sholat 40*: penyucian jiwa (*tazkiyah al-nafs*), pengalaman mistis, dan pencapaian pengetahuan intuitif tentang hakikat Ilahi. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa dalam epistemologi irfani, pengetahuan melampaui kognisi rasional dan muncul melalui pengalaman batin yang memungkinkan praktisi merasakan kehadiran Tuhan secara langsung. Studi ini berargumen bahwa *Sholat 40* tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai ibadah ritual, tetapi juga sebagai praktik epistemik yang terstruktur untuk mendorong transformasi spiritual, pembentukan moral, dan pertumbuhan pribadi. Dengan menempatkan praktik ini dalam kerangka epistemologi irfani, artikel ini berkontribusi pada pengayaan diskursus tentang mistisisme Islam, pengetahuan pengalaman, dan tradisi epistemologi sufi di Asia Tenggara.

INTRODUCTION

The practice of tariqah is an essential element of spiritual activity. As is known, the tariqah itself emerged, grew, and developed in the Islamic world. As an established institution, tariqah activities are naturally aligned with the rituals performed by its followers (i.e., the *jama'ah*). A fundamental aspect and one of the primary objectives of a



tariqah is the approach toward closeness to Allah. It must be acknowledged that various previous studies have shown that tariqah teachers invite each follower to participate in the activities, both individually and collectively. Research on tariqah activities has indeed been widely conducted, even to the point of forming institutional structures that create strong emotional bonds between the teacher and the disciple, collectively practised under the guidance of the murshid or tariqah teacher.

The understanding of a tariqah can be seen as a journey taken by a sālik toward God through acts focused on self – purification (Depag RI, 1994, p. 66); (Arrasyid, 2020). A sālik may connect with the murshid through *rābiṭah*, *talqīn*, *bay'ah*, *sungkem*, and visiting graves (Yusuf, 2020). It is clear that the tariqah journey significantly influences the social transformation of a region, including in the Nusantara and Minangkabau areas (Adlan Sanur, 2016); (Rafiqah, 2006). It should be noted that the development of the tariqah peaked toward the end of the thirteenth century, as researchers observed its growth and expansion across different parts of the Islamic world, paralleling the spread of Islamic da'wah into various regions and territories.

In simple terms, the word tariqah literally means "path." It refers to a system of practices and meditative exercises such as wirid, *muraqabah*, and dhikr. This method is linked to many Sufi masters and the organisations that have developed around them. A tariqah is seen as a system of teachings and methods in taṣawwuf. Its followers progress through various levels of *ijazah* (spiritual authorisation) recognised by all members of the same tariqah, until they eventually become independent teachers (*murshid*) (Azyumardi, 2002).

Islamic scholars from Aceh may have introduced the Syattariyah tariqah to Indonesia. One prominent figure from Aceh, Abdurrauf al – Singkili, was the person who disseminated this tariqah throughout the Nusantara (Kacirebonan & Qursyayi, 2021). The *suraus* (small prayer houses) of the Syattariyah tariqah in Minangkabau during the 18th century played the role of pioneers in religious reform (Tarihoran, 2011). The organisation of the followers of the Syattariyah tariqah itself, in its historical development, demonstrates the strength of the Syattariyah tariqah's spiritual lineage (*silsilah*) (Al – Aziz, 1998). Historical accounts indicate that Shaykh Burhanuddin was the first to introduce the Syattariyah tariqah to Ulakan Pariaman, which became the starting point for its expansion to other regions up to the present day. Shaykh Burhanuddin travelled on his own in search of knowledge and arrived in Aceh, where he studied and learned about the *tariqah* from Shaykh Abdurrauf al – Singkili (Shadiqin, 2017).

Among the various teachings that continue to be practised by followers of the Syattariyah tariqah and have persisted to this day in Minangkabau is the *Sholat 40*. The Syattariyah congregation performs this *Sholat 40* from the end of *Sha'bān* until the end of Ramadan in congregation. It is conducted once a year, either in a mosque or in a *mushalla* (known locally as a *surau*). The *Sholat 40* among the Syattariyah congregation is regarded as equivalent to performing the *fard* (obligatory) prayers as well as the *sunnah* (supererogatory) prayers. Performing the *Sholat 40* in congregation from the end of *Sha'bān* until Ramadan is believed to yield greater merit, its reward being multiplied twenty – seven times compared to praying individually. In conclusion, performing the *Sholat 40* in a mosque or *mushalla* consecutively in congregation, following the *im m* (prayer leader) or the tariqah teacher, is considered a significant motivation for the congregation, in addition to other aspects inherent in its practice (Faslah, 2016).

As far as the author is aware, research on the *Sholat 40* has previously been conducted by other scholars. Such studies, in the form of undergraduate theses, articles, and journal papers, include those by Muhlil Musolin (Azizah et al., 2022), Khafidatul Baroroh (Baroroh et al., 2021), Dedi Irawan (Irawan, 2024), Sherly and Muallim Lubis (Lubis, 2024) (Halim & Halim, 2014). These existing works approach the topic from various perspectives, whereas the present study adopts an approach grounded in intuitive knowledge and relates it to *Irfani* epistemology. This constitutes the key point of distinction from previous research and serves as the main rationale for further investigation into the matter.

Practically, it is understood that the practice of *Sholat 40*, which was initially intended as a means of worship, in fact contains philosophical elements and values within it. *Sholat 40* is not merely a tradition, but also carries a sense of spiritual and mystical experience. Therefore, from a theoretical perspective, and even more profoundly, it encompasses not only the aspect of inner satisfaction but also knowledge of the ultimate reality of God. It is in this context that the author is interested in exploring the values embedded in *Sholat 40* through an '*irf nī*' epistemological approach. *Sholat 40*, thus, involves not only spiritual dimensions but also rational aspects aimed at attaining knowledge of God through intuitive means.

This study examines *Irfani* epistemology in the practice of the *Sholat 40* among followers of the Syattariyah Tariqah in West Sumatra as a way to facilitate access to intuitive knowledge. To date, no research has explored the medium of intuitive knowledge embedded in the practice of the *Sholat 40*. For data collection, a comprehensive investigation was conducted into both written and in – depth sources relevant to the topic. The author also conducted in – depth interviews with respondents who participated as congregation members in the *Sholat 40* and with mursyid or tuanku, the figures who lead the *Sholat 40* activities.

This is a field study, and data were gathered from various literature and documents related to the research subject. The research locations were Surau Sjech Angku Alluma'di Koto Tuo Agam and Sjech Burhanuddin Ulakan in Pariaman. These two sites serve as centres of the Syattariyah Tariqah and as strong bases for its congregation, and are believed to represent the community that regularly performs the *Sholat 40*. One of the data collection tools was interviews with three members of the congregation who participated in the *Sholat 40* and two mursyids as key informants.

The number of interviewees was limited because these individuals were considered key informants for this study, and the questions already elicited the necessary responses from the researcher. After the interviews, an in – depth analysis was conducted on the experiences shared and the values present in the *Sholat 40*. The study aims to understand human or social phenomena by providing a detailed and complex description, reporting the informants' perspectives within their natural setting. Once the findings were collected, they were described and then analysed in detail. cted data.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Irfani Epistemology

It is observed that the '*irf nī*' phase once experienced a period of advancement before eventually undergoing a decline (Aqidah & Ushuluddin, 2022). Considering historical events, the presence of Ibn Rushd in the Western Islamic world enabled the revival of philosophical thought (Urvoy, 2000). The fear of philosophy among Muslims could not be

eliminated by Ibn Rushd's philosophical works available in the East. However, Ibn Rushd's brilliant ideas were well absorbed by European society, which later led Europe into a period of scientific advancement (Dewi, 2013). In essence, '*Irf nī* is understood as a source of knowledge derived from inner perception. There are at least three models to obtain such knowledge: *bay nī*, *burh nī*, and '*irf nī* (Farhan & Arafat, 2021). Terminologically, '*irf n* or *ma'rifah* refers to knowledge obtained directly from God, which is called *ma'rifah* (Jurnal At-Tibyan Volume 3 No. 2, Desember 2018, 2018).

If examined more closely, the meaning of *Irf nī* itself places greater emphasis on inner experience and spiritual intuition in understanding the reality of God. Ibn 'Arabī first introduced the term 'Irfānī. *Irf nī* refers to a model of illuminative knowledge known among Shi'ah circles. Thus, ideologically, this term is closely associated with the Shi'ah tradition. Among Sunnis, there is also the term *ladunī*, popularised by al-Ghazālī. Nevertheless, in essence, this term denotes a form of illuminative knowledge derived from mystical experiences practised by the '*uraf* ' (people of '*irf n*). *Irf nī* may also refer to knowledge attained through the purification of the human soul and the mystical experiences of a servant of God (Yazdi, 1994). *Irf nī* itself can be classified into two types: practical '*irf n* and theoretical '*irf n* (Al-Bustomi et al., 2020). *Irf nī* is fundamentally distinct from human rational experience (Kartanegara, 2006).

From an epistemological perspective, *Irf nī* is part of Islamic philosophy that examines how human beings acquire knowledge, particularly knowledge about God and spiritual reality. This differs from general epistemology, which focuses more on reason and logic (Muhammad, 2021). Linguistically, epistemology itself refers to the science of knowledge. Epistemology is defined as the theory of knowledge. Therefore, according to the *Irf nī* perspective, knowledge is obtained through at least three stages: preparation, reception, and disclosure, either orally or in writing (Hasyim, 2018).

Therefore, Irfānī, as a school of thought infused with Sufi nuances, rooted in mystical experiences, and derived from *zauq*, can serve as a source of truth in knowledge or be aligned and justified through a philosophical approach. The Irfānī perspective can be examined through methodological, ontological, and cosmological lenses, all of which aim to show that the Irfānī tradition can be considered a legitimate source of knowledge or approached from an Irfānī standpoint. This validation is achieved by analysing the spiritual experiences of the Sufis. In more detailed studies, criticisms of Irfānī philosophy inevitably arise, not to highlight its weaknesses but to strengthen its position by acknowledging its positive aspects and elements that can be philosophically justified. The ongoing exploration of the ever-evolving body of knowledge also opens the door for other schools of thought to emerge and develop in line with advancements in science and intellectual discourse.

Intuitive Knowledge

From various literature, as previously stated, intuitive knowledge is a type of knowledge obtained through intuition or direct understanding without going through deep reasoning or analysis by an individual (Hasan, 2012). Intuition usually arises suddenly and without warning. This knowledge does not require empirical evidence or formal logic to be validated. Intuitive knowledge is often subjective and varies between individuals. The process of acquiring intuitive knowledge is also much faster compared to reasoning, which takes longer. In terms of knowledge, the epistemology of the Sufi community is always based on the use of intuition and the reality of the spiritual world,

which can only be experienced by them. The positivist – empiricist view greatly influences the concept of intuitive knowledge and raises questions about how this knowledge can occur and how it can be scientifically justified (Nur, 2012).

Therefore, the author intends to examine *Sholat 40* by applying a spiritual approach through intuitive knowledge. This form of understanding is obtained directly and spontaneously, without going through logical reasoning or empirical proof. It appears as a "knowing feeling" or *firasah* (intuitive insight) that often cannot be explained rationally, yet holds significant value in daily life. Its characteristics include not involving logic or analysis and emerging suddenly, without planning. It may be based on personal experience and emotions, and is very difficult to communicate because it is not data – based. Intuitive knowledge is often understood as a "whisper of the heart" and can serve as an important basis for decision – making, especially when time or data is limited.

In the Syattariyah tariqah tradition, intuitive knowledge is closely related to profound spiritual experiences through the practices of *dhikr*, Prayer, and spiritual meditation. One form of this is the *Sholat 40*, believed to be a path to open inner awareness and divine intuition. The *dhikr* in this tariqah is not merely a ritual but a means to achieve *mush hadah*, direct experience of the presence of Allah SWT. Practices of withdrawal from the world (*uzlah*) and simple living (*zuhud*) help purify the heart, making spiritual intuition more accessible.

Although not explicitly mentioned in Syattariyah sources, repetitive *shal h* performed in specific numbers (such as 40 times) is often used in the *tariqah* as an intensive training to open the inner eye and strengthen spiritual connection. Regarding *dhikr* focused on the attributes of Allah (such as *Al-Qahhar*, *Al-Jabb r*), the aim is to instil divine qualities within the *salik* (disciple), so that spiritual intuition becomes part of everyday consciousness.

THE SYATTARIYAH TARIQAH IN WEST SUMATRA

Anyone who speaks of Sufism as one of the Islamic cultural traditions appears to draw inspiration or incentive from various sources. This influence subsequently reflects the type of movement that emerges (Agus Riyadi, 2014) In addition to the Syattariyah Tariqah, the Naqshbandiyah and Sammaniyah Tariqahs are also highly esteemed among Sunni adherents. In West Sumatra, this Tariqah is renowned for the contributions of a *mursyid* (spiritual guide) named *Shaykh Ismail Khalid al-Kurdi* (Hadi, 2011).

In its teachings, the Syattariyah Tariqah emphasises the practice of *dhikr*. Members of this order pursue mystical goals by adopting an ascetic lifestyle, or *zuhud*. The Syattariyah Tariqah itself engages in practices such as *tawbah*, *zuhud*, *tawakkul*, *qanā'ah*, *uzlah*, *murāqabah*, *ṣabr*, *riḍā*, *dhikr*, and *mushāhadah*. Within Syattariyah teachings, there are three categories of *dhikr*. The first involves reciting the Names of Allah SWT related to the attributes of Majesty (*jalāl*) and Beauty (*jamāl*); the second is reciting the Names of Allah SWT that specifically describe one of these two attributes; and the third is reciting the Names of Allah SWT that perfectly combine both attributes (*kamāl*).

The role of the Syattariyah Order in the history of Islam's arrival in Minangkabau is closely connected to the region's historical development. In the practice of the tariqah, the position of the *surau* is very important. At that time, the *surau* was closely associated with the presence of 'ulama in Minangkabau, who provided education and gathered congregations. The Syattariyah Tariqah developed in Minangkabau before spreading to several other parts of Sumatra. Additionally, in these small *suraus*, an educational process

occurred where senior students taught junior students with the teacher's permission. The days of the santri were spent in these small suraus, where they participated in various activities to foster their maturity.

From the explanation above, it can be understood that the Syattariyah Tariqah is one of the Sufi orders that developed rapidly in Minangkabau, especially since the 17th century, through prominent figures like Shaykh Burhanuddin Ulakan. This tradition combines the teachings of *taṣawwuf* with local Minangkabau values, such as the philosophy of *adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah* (Custom is based on Sharia, and Sharia is based on the Book of Allah (the Qur'an)). The order originated from the teachings of 'Abd al – Ra'uf al – Sinkili, a disciple of Syattariyah scholars in India and the Middle East. Its activities were focused in Ulakan, Pariaman, which became the spiritual and pilgrimage centre of this order before expanding to various regions in West Sumatra. Their practices highlight *dhikr khafī* (silent or inward remembrance of God) and do not require *fanā'*, the complete annihilation of the ego, unlike some other *turuq*. Instead, they emphasise harmony between *adat* (custom) and *sharī'ah*.

Sholat 40

For the followers of the Syattariyah Tariqah, the performance of *Sholat 40* (*Sumbayang Ampek Puluah*, in Minangkabau terms) has a basis or scriptural proof. In addition to being an annual tradition that has been routinely practised and serving as a distinctive identity for them, the basis of the *Sholat 40*, known as *ṣalāt arba'in*, is derived from the *ḥadīth* of the Messenger of Allah (SAW), which states:

مَنْ صَلَّى لِلَّهِ أَرْبَعِينَ يَوْمًا فِي جَمَاعَةٍ يُدْرِكُ التَّكْبِيرَ الْأَوَّلَى كُتِبَتْ لَهُ بَرَاءَتَانِ بَرَاءَةٌ مِنَ النَّارِ وَبَرَاءَةٌ مِنَ النِّفَاقِ

Anas ibn *Mālik* reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Whoever performs prayer for Allah, for forty days in congregation, catching the first *takbīrah*, there will be recorded for him two absolutions: an absolution from the Fire and an absolution from hypocrisy." (HR by al – Tirmidhī)

According to the text of the *ḥadīth*, those who perform prayer in congregation at the mosque for forty consecutive days will be saved from the Fire and from the attribute of hypocrisy. Those who do this prayer for forty days will achieve these two types of salvation. The Qur'an mentions that hypocrites are threatened with disgrace and a severe punishment in Hell. Hypocrisy may develop in a Muslim who neglects worshipping Allah SWT, including by abandoning prayer.

Procedurally, in the implementation of the *Sholat 40*, if a member of the congregation encounters a situation that prevents them from being present at the designated place of the *Sholat 40* at its start, it is allowed for them to perform the prayer elsewhere with the local imam. This is why some may move to another surau or mosque. Typically, participants of the *Sholat 40* stay at a specific surau, except for those whose homes are nearby and who can return after the prayer. The participants of the *Sumbayang Ampek Puluah* do not perform this tradition simply by following their ancestors' practices. However, they also often hear the scriptural proofs (*dalīl*) in sermons delivered at the beginning of Ramadan by the prayer hall committee of the *mushallā*. (Halim & Halim, 2014).

It can be said that the tradition of the *Sholat 40* is one of the teachings of the Syattariyah Tariqah that continues to be preserved and practised today. Although it is not explicitly mentioned in classical tariqah texts, it forms part of the intensive spiritual

practices undertaken by the *salik* (spiritual seeker). It aims to strengthen the relationship with Allah (SWT), open the inner vision (*baṣīrah*), and deepen intuitive knowledge. It also serves to train concentration and patience in worship. This practice is usually performed in a surau or a designated place, under the guidance of a tariqah teacher. It is often associated with uzlah (spiritual seclusion) and *riyāḍah* (spiritual discipline). Specifically, this practice is carried out in the Minangkabau surau.

SHOLAT 40 AS A MEDIUM FOR ATTAINING INTUITIVE KNOWLEDGE

In gathering data to examine the *Sholat 40* as a means for attaining intuitive knowledge, the writer interviewed with Maisyarah, a member of the Syattariyah Tariqah who has repeatedly participated in the *Sholat 40* at Ihsan Mosque, Koto Tuo, next to the Surau of Inyiak Angku Alluma. She came to the surau and stayed there throughout the *Sholat 40*. Maisyarah is already elderly. She mentioned that many of the participants in the *Sholat 40* are women and older adults. They cook in the surau and shop in the surrounding area, as during the month of Ramadan, many stalls are set up nearby.

During her participation in the *Sholat 40*, she felt deeply grateful to be still able to take part in the event, especially under the guidance of the *Tuanku* or *mursyid* of the Syattariyah Tariqah. In her view, the *Sholat 40* holds many spiritual values, inner experiences, and a sense of fulfilment. For example, the *Sholat 40* brings calmness and order to the soul. She also expressed satisfaction in terms of the quantity of worship performed. Moreover, this activity is integrated with and conducted during the month of Ramadan, in which rewards are multiplied. In addition to the *Sholat 40*, it is also combined with *dhikr* and *pengajian* (religious study) related to acts of worship, thereby increasing one's religious knowledge (Maisyarah, 2024).

An interview was also conducted with Nurhayati, who is also a follower of the Syattariyah Tariqah and intentionally comes every year to Ihsan Mosque to perform the *Sholat 40*. When asked about her understanding of the values in the *Sholat 40* activity, she said that by performing the *Sholat 40*, one becomes used to prayer and feels the sweetness of being close to God. It also cleanses the soul from the stains of sin, increases rewards (*pahala*), and makes the heart feel pure.

Prayer shields a person from committing sins and wrongdoings. Those who perform sholat are kept away from immoral acts. The writer did not seek confirmation by comparing it with other acts of worship, so the respondent's answers were based solely on her personal spiritual experience in performing the *Sholat 40*. She stated that maintaining sholat and being accustomed to the obligatory prayers will improve one's moral character (Nurhayati, 2024).

The interview to gather data was conducted with Nursyamsi. In her explanation, when asked about the benefits of *Sholat 40*, she stated that she regularly performs *Sholat 40* at Ihsan Mosque. For her, *Sholat 40* serves as a way to know and stay close to God. She explained that this practice brings safety and peace of mind and heart, fostering a sense of closeness to God. During *Sholat 40*, she feels that communication with God becomes very personal. Additionally, she mentioned that God's presence feels near, her heart becomes calm, and her soul is cleansed. *Sholat 40* also helps develop daily habits, discipline in worship, and sincerity in religious duties. However, she noted that some congregants participate without genuine engagement (Nursyamsi, 2024). A limitation of this study is that the researcher did not compare or confirm with other acts of worship,

so the respondent's answers were based only on her spiritual experiences with *Sholat 40*. Similar values or elements might also be found in other forms of worship.

When the interview with Buya Bustanul Arifin, who serves as Tuanku Imam or mursyid of the Syattariyah Tariqah, was conducted, he explained that the practice of *Sholat 40* serves as a way for the congregation participating in it to come to know God. This is because, according to him, a person who wants to know themselves must first know their God. *Sholat 40*, he stated, contains many hikmah (wisdoms) within it. Many lessons can be learned from this practice. In his view, the congregation will find joy in performing *Sholat 40* and experience deep inner satisfaction. They are also guided in performing dhikr and given knowledge about religious matters, thereby fulfilling their spiritual needs (Bustanul Arifin, 2024). According to him, if explored more deeply, the aspects or values inherent in *Sholat 40* will strengthen the congregation's faith, religious devotion, and their conviction in the truth of the religion they follow.

The interview with Hamzah Bilal, a teacher of the Syattariyah Tariqah, revealed that *Sholat 40* is performed to seek the merits (*faidah*) of congregational prayer. For those who sincerely perform *Sholat 40* for the sake of Allah (*lillāhi ta'ālā*), the reward is multiplied many times over. This practice is typically carried out at the end of the month of Shawwal or before entering the month of Ramadan, as these are periods of free time suitable for performing congregational prayers. However, it is not restricted to those months alone; ideally, congregational prayer can and should be performed every day.

The connection between *Sholat 40* and the teachings of the Syattariyah Tariqah relates to fiqh and sharī'ah because a tariqah is primarily a "path." To reach Allah, one must progress through the stages of sharī'ah, tariqah, haqīqah, and ma'rifah. The ultimate goal in life is ma'rifah, truly knowing Allah, and without passing through the first three stages, this cannot be achieved. For example, neglecting sharī'ah, being unaware of tariqah, and lacking knowledge of haqīqah make it impossible to attain ma'rifah. Therefore, all four stages serve as pathways toward Allah SWT. From this perspective, *Sholat 40* is closely linked to the teachings of the Syattariyah Tariqah, helping practitioners stay consistent and committed to the practice (Hamzah Bilal, 2022).

Based on the explanations provided by the informants, it is clear that intuitive knowledge in tasawwuf and the practice of *Sholat 40* in the Syattariyah Tariqah in West Sumatra holds deep meaning and importance for spiritual growth. Intuitive knowledge is gained through worship, specifically *Sholat 40*, which offers a direct and profound understanding of God and reality through mystical experience and meditation. By consistently engaging in dhikr activities, members of the Syattariyah Tariqah can achieve a higher spiritual state and gain direct insight into God. Additionally, there is an understanding that the activity of soul purification linked to intuitive knowledge is also obtained through the process of cleansing the soul from sins and mistakes, known as tazkiyah al – nafs. Therefore, *Sholat 40* is a spiritual practice involving performing prayer for forty consecutive days without interruption, aimed at increasing closeness to Allah and strengthening self – discipline. By practising *Sholat 40*, a member can attain intuitive knowledge of God and reality, which is acquired through deep mystical experience and meditation.

Therefore, in the context of the Syattariyah Tariqah, *Sholat 40* still functions as an epistemological medium because *Irfani* epistemology does not rely solely on the legality of the *sharī'ah*, but rather on direct spiritual experience that shapes inner knowledge. This is because *Irfani's* epistemology prioritises experience over formal law. In *tariqah* such as

Syattariyah, knowledge is acquired through *dhawq* (inner taste), *kashf* (unveiling), and *shuhūd* (witnessing). *Sholat 40*, although not obligatory in *fiqh*, creates a stable and clear inner state, which is a primary requirement in *Irfani* epistemology. This is what is conveyed and experienced by the congregation members who perform *Sholat 40*.

In addition to the previously mentioned value, *Sholat 40* functions as a form of spiritual *riyāḍah*, where the Syattariyah Tariqah emphasises *riyāḍah* (spiritual training) to achieve spiritual *maqāmat*. *Sholat 40* becomes a form of *mujāhadah* (spiritual struggle) that trains disciples to be fully present in worship, opening the way to ma'rifah. There is also the charismatic authority of the ṭarīqah master. Within the ṭarīqah, the authority of the master (murshid) often serves as a basis for legitimising certain practices. Even without specific *fiqh* evidence, the *ijāzah* and guidance of the murshid make *Sholat 40* valid and meaningful within the epistemological framework of the ṭarīqah. Lastly, there is the deeper significance of the union between shari'ah and ḥaqīqah. The Syattariyah Tariqah does not reject shari'ah but transcends it inwardly. *Sholat 40* acts as a bridge between the outward and inward dimensions, reinforcing the spiritual awareness that underpins 'irfānī knowledge.

IMPLEMENTATION OF IRFANI EPISTEMOLOGY IN SHOLAT 40

The implementation of the epistemological dimension can be seen in the values embedded within *Sholat 40*. Naturally, the first virtue is for followers who can perform the prayer in congregation, which embodies the value of togetherness, allowing participants to adapt to one another. This requires the congregation to blend harmoniously, standing in straight and tight rows (*shaf*), thereby strengthening *hablum min an-nas* (human relations) (Elsa Maulidia, 2022).

Secondly, it provides spiritual value, as performing *Sholat 40* offers a complete package that starts with the full set of sunnah prayers, the five daily obligatory prayers done on time, tarawih, witir, dhikr, and supplication (*du'ā'*). This encourages tranquillity of heart, free from worries about worldly matters, because Allah SWT has arranged everything; therefore, one only needs to put in effort (*ikhtiar*) and stay committed (*istiqamah*). Thirdly, *Sholat 40* reflects the value of discipline, as it requires consistent dedication to complete it from start to finish.

Through the consistent performance of prayer, followers of the Syattariyah tariqah strive to draw closer to Allah. *Sholat 40* helps to cultivate self – discipline and a steadfast commitment to worship. This practice is also regarded as a means of purifying the soul from sins and transgressions. For adherents of the Syattariyah tariqah, *Sholat 40* holds profound spiritual significance. It is an expression of devotion and sacrifice that reflects sincerity in upholding religious teachings. Epistemologically, the *Sholat 40* of the Syattariyah tariqah in West Sumatra embodies deep spirituality and the pursuit of higher meaning in religious practice.

This practice involves performing prayers for forty consecutive days without interruption, carried out by the *jama'ah* of the Syattariyah tariqah in West Sumatra, with the clear aim of increasing closeness to Allah and strengthening self – discipline. *Sholat 40* enables followers of the Syattariyah tariqah to attain intuitive knowledge of God through mystical experience and deep meditation. The practice of *Sholat 40* essentially functions as a means of purifying the soul from sins and transgressions, as well as attaining a higher spiritual state. Through consistency and sincerity in performing *Sholat 40*,

followers of the Syattariyah tariqah strive to draw closer to Allah through the path of prayer and to gain a deeper understanding of the divine reality or the essence of God.

For followers of the Syattariyah tariqah in West Sumatra, integrating the practice of *Sholat 40* into their daily lives serves as a form of devotion and sacrifice. This creates a spiritual environment that supports the development of strong moral and ethical values. There are, of course, several spiritual values found in *Sholat 40*, which include honesty, trust, humility, forgiveness, compassion, gratitude, service, and peace, as ways to grow and develop through the practice of *Sholat 40*. (Nirmala et al., 2023)

The practice of *Sholat 40*, which refers to performing congregational prayer for forty consecutive days without missing the takbiratul ihram, is not merely an outward act of worship but also a means of inner transformation that closely aligns with *irfani* epistemology, namely an approach to knowledge based on spiritual experience and inner witnessing. Several ways in which the teachings and practice of *Sholat 40* contribute to *Irfani* epistemology include consistency as a path of *tazkiyah* (self – purification).

Over forty days of spiritual discipline, *Sholat 40* practitioners undergo an intense process of *tazkiyah* (self – purification). In *irfani* epistemology, purification of the soul is a primary requirement for the heart to become a mirror capable of reflecting the light of truth (al – Haqq). Strengthening of *dzaug* (spiritual taste). *Sholat 40* trains the inner sensitivity to the Divine Presence in every movement and recitation of prayer. This enhances *dzaug*, the inner taste that serves as one of the main tools in attaining *irfani* knowledge.

The journey toward *ma'rifah*. Within the *irfani* framework, true knowledge (*ma'rifah*) is acquired through direct experience (*shuhud*) of the Divine Reality. *Sholat 40* becomes a means for reaching higher spiritual stations (*maqām*), such as *fana'* and *wushūl*, as explained by Sufi figures like Imam al – Qushayri and Shaykh 'Abd al – Qadir al – Jilani. It involves transforming from *sholat shari'at* to *sholat hakikat*. The practice of *Sholat 40* can serve as a bridge from external (*syari'at*) prayer to internal (*hakikat*) prayer, where the practitioner not only "performs" the prayer but "becomes" the prayer itself. In *Irfani's* thought, this is the highest form of worship, when the heart is fully present before Allah, and not merely the body in motion.

As previously explained, *Irfani* epistemology is grounded in *ma'rifah* (inner or intuitive knowledge), which is attained not merely through reason but through spiritual experience, self – purification, and closeness to God. Therefore, spiritual value serves as the primary foundation of *irfani* epistemology. To acquire '*irfani* knowledge, one must purify the heart and distance oneself from base desires. This is a long and profound spiritual process. Moreover, closeness to God (*taqarrub*) can be cultivated through acts of worship and inner contemplation, whereby a person draws nearer to God, and true knowledge (*ma'rifah*) emerges as a divine illumination.

This is clearly reflected in practices such as *dhikr*, *tafakkur*, and *muraqabah*, which help to open the "inner eye" to directly witness the truth, not just understand it through reason. Discipline is equally important, serving as a spiritual vehicle. The discipline of worship, like praying on time, fasting, and consistently engaging in *dhikr*, helps maintain an inner connection with God. Another crucial aspect is the consistency of worship as part of *riyāḍah*. In the *Irfani* tradition, *riyāḍah nafsaniyyah* (spiritual training) requires extraordinary discipline to develop patience, sincerity, and spiritual sensitivity. Moral discipline prepares the heart to be worthy of receiving the light of *ma'rifah*. All these values are embodied in the practice of *Sholat 40* carried out by followers of the Shattariyah

order in West Sumatra. These values represent positive elements filled with deeply uplifting spiritual meaning.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that the *Irfani* epistemology embedded in the practice of Shalat 40 includes various aspects, such as the purification of the soul (*tazkiyah al-nafs*), mystical experiences, and the achievement of intuitive knowledge about the Divine Reality. Knowledge within 'irfani epistemology is viewed as more than just the product of rational thought; it involves inner experiences that enable individuals to sense God's presence and gain direct understanding, ultimately leading to spiritual and moral growth.

These findings enhance the reader's understanding of *irfani* epistemology as a philosophical concept within the context of religious practices in Nusantara. The study shows that Shalat 40 within the Shattariyah Order is not just a ritual act of worship but also a vital means of gaining deep inner knowledge, which ultimately guides its practitioners toward spiritual enlightenment and positive personal growth. As a medium for intuitive knowledge, Shalat 40 carries profound meanings and values that go beyond simply cognitive aspects.

The author recognises several limitations of this study, including the difficulty in measuring or directly accessing the participants' spiritual experiences and the need for a deeper exploration of the *irfani* epistemology they develop. Additionally, the limited sources and references available add further constraints. These limitations create opportunities for future research to examine alternative perspectives and specific aspects of the Shalat 40 practice carried out by the Shattariyah community in West Sumatra.

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Interview

Arifin, Bustanul (Murshid of the Tariqah), Interview, December 29, 2024.

Bilal, Hamzah (Murshid of the Tariqah), Interview, March 10, 2024.

Maisyarah (Participant of Sholat 40), Interview, December 28, 2024.

Nurhidayati (Participant of Sholat 40), Interview, December 28, 2024.

Nursyamsi (Participant of Sholat 40), Interview, December 29, 2024.