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ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY EPISTEMOLOGY: INTEGRATION OF BAYANI, BURHANI, AND IRFANI IN JAMAAH TABLIGH'S DA'WAH TRADITION, CIREBON

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ABSTRAK

Studi ini meneliti bagaimana epistemologi bayani, burhani, dan irfani, sebagaimana dikonsepkan oleh Mohammed Abed al-Jabiri, beroperasi dalam praktik khuruj fi sabilillah Jamaah Tabligh di Cirebon dan apa implikasinya bagi pemahaman khuruj sebagai proses pendidikan agama Islam. Penelitian sebelumnya sebagian besar mendekati gerakan ini melalui perspektif sosiologis, antropologis, dan komunikasi dakwah, sehingga dasar epistemisnya kurang dieksplorasi. Studi deskriptif-analitis kualitatif ini menggunakan observasi partisipatif, wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan informan yang dipilih secara purposif mewakili amir halaqah, anggota dengan pengalaman khuruj yang berbeda-beda, tokoh agama lokal, dan akademisi, serta tinjauan pustaka. Data dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña, serta diperiksa melalui triangulasi sumber, pemeriksaan anggota, dan debriefing sejawat. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa bayani menyediakan sumber legitimasi normatif: sesi ta'lim dimulai dengan pembacaan Al-Qur'an dan hadis, sementara karya referensi seperti Fadhail al-Amal berfungsi sebagai sumber motivasi, bukan sebagai sumber hukum yang independen. Burhani muncul sebagai rasionalitas praktis dalam shura sebelum keberangkatan dan evaluasi setelah khuruj, di mana pengalaman lapangan menjadi pengetahuan kolektif. Irfani muncul sebagai pengalaman spiritual yang anggota kaitkan dengan ketulusan, kesabaran, dan tawakkul, dipahami dalam kaitannya

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dengan teks agama dan praktik komunitas. Ketiganya terintegrasi secara tidak simetris: otoritas tekstual membingkai deliberasi dan praktik spiritual, sementara pengalaman dan refleksi kembali memberi kontribusi pada praktik, dengan adanya ketegangan ketika praktik yang diwariskan membatasi adaptasi rasional. Khuruj dengan demikian berfungsi sebagai proses pembelajaran Islam non-formal yang membentuk karakter religius. Studi ini menawarkan penjelasan yang berbasis empiris dan berfokus pada bayani tentang integrasi epistemik dalam da'wah kontemporer.

Keywords:
Bayani; Burhani; Da'wah of Jamaah Tabligh; Epistemology; Irfani.

ABSTRACTS

This study examines how bayani, burhani, and irfani epistemologies, as conceptualized by Mohammed Abed al-Jabiri, operate in the khuruj fi sabilillah practice of Jamaah Tabligh in Cirebon and what this implies for understanding khuruj as a process of Islamic religious education. Previous research has mostly approached the movement through sociological, anthropological, and da'wah communication perspectives, leaving its epistemic foundations underexplored. This qualitative descriptive-analytical study draws on participant observation, semi-structured interviews with purposively selected informants representing halaqah amirs, members with varying khuruj experience, local religious figures, and academics, and a literature review. The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña and examined through source triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing. The findings show that bayani provides the normative source of legitimacy: ta'lim sessions begin with Qur'anic recitation and hadith, while reference works such as Fadhail al-Amal serve as motivational resources rather than independent sources of law. Burhani appears as practical rationality in pre-departure shura and post-khuruj evaluation, where field experience becomes collective knowledge. Irfani appears as spiritual experience that members associate with sincerity, patience, and tawakkul, understood in relation to religious texts and communal practice. The three are integrated asymmetrically: textual authority frames deliberation and spiritual practice, while experience and reflection feed back into practice, with tensions where inherited practices limit rational adaptation. Khuruj thus functions as a non-formal Islamic learning process that shapes religious character. The study offers an empirically grounded, bayani-centered account of epistemic integration in a contemporary da'wah movement.

A. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Islamic da'wah movements in Indonesia have become increasingly diverse in their intellectual orientations, methods of religious propagation, and religious practices. One movement with distinctive characteristics is Jamaah Tabligh, a transnational movement (Masud 2000; Noor 2025) that emphasizes da'wah through spiritual development, moral cultivation, and the practice of khuruj fi sabilillah, the temporary departure of members to preach and live communally, as a primary means of individual and social transformation (Metcalf 1993; Sikand 2002). In Indonesia, the movement has developed within local religious cultures (Achmad 2021; Susanto, Fajri, and Kuswiyanto 2025). Cirebon, a region with strong Islamic traditions whose historical roots extend to the era of the Wali Songo, offers one such setting.

Despite this scholarly attention, the movement's epistemological foundations have received limited examination. First, many studies have concentrated on the movement's history, da'wah strategies, and communication patterns (Achmad 2021; Busral et al. 2025; Cucu 2017; Nuraedah and Mutawakkil 2020; Rusdiana and Utari 2019; Sembiring and Surya 2023; Yono 2019). Second, the khuruj tradition has rarely been examined as a source of religious knowledge and as a process that shapes members' religious consciousness. Third, the relationship among textual authority, rationality, and spiritual experience in the da'wah practice of Jamaah Tabligh in Cirebon has not been analyzed.

Recent studies illustrate both the progress made and the remaining gap (Table 1). Rochman (2021) studied khuruj through a Living Qur'an perspective at a mosque in Tangerang and found that khuruj is understood as the implementation of Qur'anic values. Bukhori (2025) used Max Weber's theory of social action to examine khuruj in the Nizamuddin community in Bandung. Hasanah et al. (2025) analyzed the transformation of Tablighi Jamaat da'wah in Indonesia in terms of digital adaptation and political engagement. Other studies approached khuruj through the experience of members' families (Kashvi 2024; Ismail, Nurhikmah, and Nurkidam 2025), ritual and reform (Razak and Asrori 2024), living zuhd (Nurhayati et al. 2025), and spiritual and economic resilience (Dayyan, Mardhiah, and Sembiring 2019). Widodo et al. (2026) examined the movement as a vehicle of inclusive Islamic education for vulnerable urban groups. Meanwhile, the bayani-burhani-irfani framework has been applied in Islamic education mainly in formal educational settings (Intan Karisma and Husni 2025; Marjuki et al. 2024).

Table 1. Selected Previous Studies and the Aspects Not Yet Examined

Study	Focus	Aspect not yet examined
Rochman (2021)	Khuruj as Living Qur'an practice, Tangerang	Epistemic structure of knowledge construction and validation
Bukhori (2025)	Khuruj as social action (Weber), Bandung	Interplay of text, reason, and spiritual experience as an epistemic system
Hasanah et al. (2025)	Digital adaptation and political engagement	Epistemic basis of da'wah practice
Kashvi (2024); Ismail et al. (2025)	Families of members during khuruj	Knowledge formation among the participants of khuruj

Study	Focus	Aspect not yet examined
Razak and Asrori (2024); Nurhayati et al. (2025); Dayyan et al. (2019)	Ritual and reform; living zuhd; spiritual and economic resilience	Relation between spiritual experience and textual and rational sources of knowledge
Widodo et al. (2026)	Inclusive Islamic education for vulnerable urban groups	Internal learning and epistemic processes of members
Intan Karisma and Husni (2025)	Bayani-burhani-irfani thinking among santri in a modern pesantren	Application to a da'wah movement outside formal education

Based on this comparison, the research gap is twofold. Empirically, the epistemic dimension of khuruj as a way of learning and knowing has not been sufficiently described. Analytically, the three epistemologies have rarely been used together to explain how they interact in the lived practices of a da'wah community, rather than being identified separately. This study addresses that gap through a focused review of the studies discussed above and an empirical examination of the khuruj tradition in Cirebon. The novelty claim is therefore limited to the literature reviewed for this study and does not imply that every publication or database has been exhaustively searched.

Epistemology is relevant to Islamic education because questions about the sources, methods, and validation of knowledge determine what is taught, how it is learned, and who holds authority (Abas and Mabrur 2022; Azizah and Soleh 2025; Marjuki et al. 2024). Da'wah movements such as Jamaah Tabligh operate through learning practices, namely ta'lim, jaulah, shura, and khuruj, that transmit knowledge and cultivate sincerity, patience, and tawakkul. Khuruj can therefore be examined as a non-formal Islamic educational process whose epistemic structure can be analyzed with al-Jabiri's framework of bayani (textual authority), burhani (demonstrative reasoning), and irfani (experiential knowledge) (Al-Jabiri 2011; Bahri 2015; Ridwan 2016). This conceptual link between epistemology, da'wah practice, and character formation guides the analysis.

The novelty of this study lies not only in applying al-Jabiri's framework to a new object but in the empirical account it produces: how the three epistemologies are enacted in specific practices, how they relate to one another, and where they are in tension. The study is guided by three research questions: (1) How are bayani, burhani, and irfani epistemologies manifested in the khuruj practice of Jamaah Tabligh in Cirebon? (2) How do these epistemologies relate to and influence one another in practice? (3) What does this imply for understanding khuruj as a process of Islamic religious education and character formation? Practically, the findings may help da'wah practitioners and Islamic educators understand the movement's learning practices and reduce stereotypes about it.

B. METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-analytical qualitative design to examine the epistemology of Jamaah Tabligh's da'wah in Cirebon through the khuruj fi sabilillah tradition (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña 2014). A qualitative approach was selected because the study seeks an in-depth understanding of how knowledge is constructed, how religious experience is understood, and what meanings participants attach to khuruj. The study does not measure variables statistically; it interprets the phenomenon from participants' perspectives within its socio-religious context. The descriptive dimension portrays how khuruj, religious learning, and the internalization of Islamic values are carried out. The analytical dimension interprets the empirical data through the bayani, burhani, and irfani framework developed by Mohammed Abed al-Jabiri (Al-Jabiri 2011; Irfani, Habibi, and Rifqiyansyah 2025).

Research Setting and Informants

Fieldwork focused on Jamaah Tabligh activities in Cirebon, including activities conducted at local da'wah centers and mosques. The source manuscript does not specify the exact fieldwork dates or duration. Primary data came from informants with direct experience of, or close familiarity with, Jamaah Tabligh activities in Cirebon. Informants were selected purposively based on their involvement in Jamaah Tabligh activities, experience of khuruj where relevant, knowledge of the movement's practices in Cirebon, and willingness to participate in interviews. The informant categories are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Informant Profile

Category	Code	n	Characteristics
Halaqah amirs	H1	Not reported	One quoted halaqah amir reported more than twenty years of khuruj experience; age and other details are not reported.
Members with varying khuruj experience	M1–M3; YM1	Not reported	Members with varying experience; one quoted member reported more than fifteen years of khuruj, another more than thirty experiences, and one was described as a young member. Ages and frequencies are not fully reported.
Administrators of the local markaz	Not separately identified	Not reported	The source manuscript does not provide a separate profile or count for local markaz administrators.
Local religious leaders	CF1	Not reported	A local community figure who regularly interacts with the movement; further demographic details are not reported.
Academics	Not separately identified	Not reported	Academics are mentioned as an informant category, but individual profiles and counts are not provided in the source manuscript.
Total		Not reported	

Recruitment continued until data saturation, understood as the point at which interviews produced recurring patterns and no substantially new themes emerged (Guest, Bunce, and Johnson 2006). The source manuscript does not record the interview at which saturation was reached or the specific procedure used to determine it. Secondary data consisted of al-Jabiri's writings on Islamic epistemology, reference texts used within Jamaah Tabligh (Fadhail al-Amal, Hayat al-Sahabah, and Muntakhab Ahadits), and previous studies on Jamaah Tabligh, Islamic epistemology, and da'wah movements.

Data Collection

Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and a literature review. Observation used a moderate participatory approach: the researchers took part in ta'lim, jaulah, shura, and the implementation of khuruj fi sabilillah. The source manuscript does not specify the number of observation sessions or their total duration. Field notes documented patterns of interaction, religious learning, and the dynamics of da'wah activities. The original manuscript does not provide further details about the timing or format of note-taking.

Semi-structured interviews were guided by a flexible interview guide covering sources of religious knowledge, belief formation, decision-making, and spiritual experiences during khuruj. Interviews were conducted with purposively selected informants from the categories described in Table 2. The source manuscript does not specify the number or average duration of interviews, the interview language, whether interviews were audio-recorded, or the transcription procedure. Quotations were presented in English in the revised manuscript, but the source manuscript does not describe a translation or back-translation procedure. Documentation complemented the empirical data by providing contextual information about the observed activities and da'wah programs. The literature review informed the theoretical analysis (Noor 2025).

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Kalpokaite and Radivojevic 2019). Analysis began during data collection and continued iteratively. The interview narratives and field notes were read repeatedly to identify recurring ideas and patterns relevant to the research questions. Initial categories concerned sources of religious knowledge, decision-making in shura, evaluation of da'wah experience, and spiritual experience during khuruj. These categories were then interpreted through al-Jabiri's framework using the operational indicators in Table 3. The analysis also examined relationships among the three dimensions by tracing episodes in which more than one dimension was present. The source manuscript does not specify whether coding was conducted manually or with qualitative-analysis software; no software is therefore identified here.

Table 3. Operational Indicators of the Three Epistemologies

Dimension	Epistemic question	Indicators in the data
Bayani	What is the source and criterion of valid knowledge?	Justification of action by explicit reference to the Qur'an, hadith, or the Companions' example; use of reference texts; conformity with the text stated as the criterion of validity
Burhani	How is knowledge or a decision derived from observable reality through reasoning?	Decisions based on assessment of conditions; reasons given beyond textual citation; evaluation of experience; adaptation of strategy based on results
Irfani	How does inner experience become a way of knowing?	Reports of inner transformation; practices of dhikr, mujahadah, and communal worship; claims of closeness to God, sincerity, patience, and tawakkul; self-reflection

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was supported through source triangulation by comparing information from different informants with field observations and relevant literature. The original manuscript also reports the use of member checking with selected key informants and peer debriefing with fellow researchers. It does not specify the number or roles of informants involved in member checking or identify the peers involved in debriefing. These procedures were intended to support credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Lincoln and Guba 1985). An audit trail was maintained through research notes and the records used during data analysis; the source manuscript does not describe its specific format.

Research Ethics

The source manuscript does not provide sufficient detail about the consent procedure, the form of consent, or whether formal ethics approval or a research permit was obtained. These details must be confirmed by the authors before submission. The revised manuscript states that participation was voluntary, that informants could withdraw at any time, and that identities were protected through codes; these procedures should be retained only if they accurately reflect the research process. The source manuscript also does not specify whether the researchers were insiders or outsiders in relation to the community, so the researchers' positionality should be clarified by the authors.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings are presented along the three epistemological dimensions and then brought together in an analysis of how the dimensions relate. The discussion that follows each dimension engages previous studies, and the final subsections consider khuruj as an educational process and the theoretical position of the findings relative to al-Jabiri's framework. Informants are identified by code (see Table 2).

A. Bayani Epistemology: Textual Authority as the Source and Criterion of Knowledge

The khuruj fi sabilillah tradition in Cirebon is built on a system of knowledge derived from the Qur'an, the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, and the reference books used by the movement: Fadhail al-Amal, Hayat al-Sahabah, and Muntakhab Ahadits. Da'wah activities, from shura and jaulah to ta'lim and khuruj itself, were consistently grounded in the authority of religious texts. Members saw the success of da'wah as determined less by rhetorical ability or academic knowledge than by how well a person translates the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah into practice.

Observation of ta'lim sessions at one of the Jamaah Tabligh centers in Cirebon showed a consistent sequence: recitation of Qur'anic verses on the virtues of da'wah, faith, and morality; reading of hadith, including accounts of the Companions' struggles in da'wah; and then a reading from Fadhail al-Amal by the amir or instructor. The book was not treated as an independent source of Islamic law but as a medium for cultivating motivation to do good and strengthening commitment to da'wah. Learning emphasized implementation rather than theological discourse or legal disputation (ikhtilaf fiqh). A halaqah amir with more than twenty years of khuruj experience put it this way:

"We always begin every activity with the Qur'an and hadith. Books such as Fadhail al-Amal only help us understand how the Companions practiced the Prophet's teachings. What matters most is not how much we read, but how what we read can be practiced during khuruj."(Informant H1, halaqah amir).

Another informant, who had participated in khuruj for more than fifteen years, linked text and practice in the same way:

"We study religion not to become people with the greatest amount of knowledge, but so that knowledge can be transformed into practice. What we read in Fadhail is then practiced when we go out in the path of Allah. Therefore, learning and practicing cannot be separated."(Informant M1, member).

These statements show that knowledge is considered valid when it has a clear basis in the Qur'an, hadith, and the practice of the Prophet and his Companions, and that it is meaningful only when embodied in behavior. This matches al-Jabiri's description of the bayani system, in which authority rests on the text (nash) and on interpretive tools developed by Muslim scholars, such as linguistic principles, ijma', and qiyas, so that the validity of knowledge is judged by its proximity to revealed sources rather than by reasoning or experience alone (Al-Jabiri 2011; Fadhilah 2023; Azizah and Soleh 2025).

The pattern extended to decision-making. Deliberations before khuruj began with recitation of hadith on the virtues of da'wah rather than with program effectiveness or quantitative targets. When deciding the destination, group composition, or duration of a journey, members referred to the da'wah experience of the early generation as narrated in Hayat al-Sahabah and to practices inherited from earlier generations of the movement, framed as ittiba' to the Sunnah. In jaulah, messages emphasized improving the quality of religious practice, using verses, hadith, and narratives of the Companions, rather than presenting rational arguments on social issues. Informants also described khuruj not as a distinctive ritual of the movement but as spiritual training to emulate the struggle of the Prophet and his Companions.

The findings also indicate two consequences of this textual primacy. On the one hand, reliance on shared texts and exemplars produces a relatively uniform orientation across regions, which helps explain the movement's continuity over time. On the other hand, the emphasis on inherited practices may leave limited room for critical

examination of changing social contexts. This tension is visible in the reliance on the examples of earlier generations when members determine the destination, composition, and duration of khuruj. It is discussed further in Section C.4.

These findings are consistent with Rochman (2021), who found that khuruj is understood as implementing Qur'anic values, and with Metcalf's (1993) account of how the movement seeks to embody the Prophetic example in everyday conduct. The present study adds that the text does more than motivate action: it also operates as the criterion by which decisions and practices are judged valid, and it frames the deliberations and spiritual practices described below. In this sense khuruj is an epistemic process that carries textual knowledge into lived practice, and not only an implementation of normative teachings.

B. Burhani Epistemology: Practical Rationality in Planning and Evaluation

The findings In contrast to bayani, which locates epistemic legitimacy in the text, burhani rests on reasoning that derives conclusions from premises grounded in observable reality, without severing the link with revelation (Al-Jabiri 2011; Ulliyah et al. 2024; Siregar and Zalnur 2025). Although Jamaah Tabligh is widely regarded as a text-oriented movement, khuruj in Cirebon also involved reasoning about planning, organizing, and evaluating da'wah.

Observation of shura showed that khuruj decisions were not made spontaneously. Members discussed the destination, number of participants, task allocation, members' economic circumstances, timing, and the characteristics of the communities to be visited, drawing on earlier da'wah experience. A group amir described the process:

"Before we leave, we deliberate first. We look at the condition of the village we are going to visit, who the local figures are, what the people's habits are, and when the appropriate time to come is, so that the da'wah can be received well. So we do not simply leave without consideration."(Informant GA1, group amir).

Reasoning also continued after the journey. A member who had participated in khuruj in several areas of West Java described a standing evaluation:

"After returning from khuruj, we always deliberate again. We share what we experienced in the field, how the community responded, and the difficulties we encountered. These experiences then become lessons for the next group."(Informant M2, member).

Individual experience thus becomes collective knowledge through deliberative forums and is used to improve later strategies, forming a cycle of experience, reflection, and reapplication. The same orientation appeared in members' relations with local communities. Members did not immediately deliver religious messages in a new environment but first built relationships through silaturahmi, participation in community activities, and respectful communication, which informants described as grounded in accumulated experience of how da'wah is accepted. A community figure in Cirebon who interacts regularly with the movement observed:

"They come politely and do not immediately criticize the community. Usually, they start by having a conversation, joining the congregational prayer, and only afterward inviting people to ta'lim. This approach makes the community more open."(Informant CF1, community figure).

Treating this practical rationality as burhani requires justification, because it differs from the demonstrative reasoning al-Jabiri associates with burhani, which is derived from Aristotelian logic and the scientific tradition (Bahri 2015; Ridwan 2016). Shura deliberation is not formal demonstration. We classify it as burhani-oriented practical rationality because it shares three features with burhani: observable conditions serve as premises, decisions are inferred from experience and accumulated evidence, and the reasons are open to collective evaluation and revision. It lacks, however, formal demonstrative argument and is not independent of the text: the opening of deliberation by hadith and the reference to the Companions' experience (Section C.1) place it within a bayani frame. Burhani in this study is therefore a limited, practical form, and this limitation is part of the finding rather than a flaw to be explained away.

The findings challenge the assumption that Jamaah Tabligh is a purely textual movement with little attention to social dynamics (Yono 2019). Members adapted to their surroundings, considered community characteristics, managed disagreement peacefully, and evaluated their experiences. Bukhori (2025), who analyzed khuruj with Weber's theory of social action, interpreted it as religious action that shapes behavior and commitment to da'wah. Our analysis complements this by showing the epistemic basis of such action: knowledge about how to do da'wah is produced through experience, deliberation, and reflection, but remains subordinate to the textual criterion.

C. Irfani Epistemology: Spiritual Experience and Its Epistemic Status

In contrast Irfani epistemology is oriented toward inner experience gained through spiritual practice, such as purification of the soul (tazkiyat al-nafs), spiritual discipline (riyadhah), remembrance of God (dhikr), and spiritual struggle (mujahadah) (Akbar and Soleh 2024; Ulliyah et al. 2024; Malik and Barizi 2022). The data show that khuruj in Cirebon is understood not only as preaching but also as a medium of spiritual transformation that redirects members toward a simpler, more hereafter-oriented life.

During khuruj, members lived together in mosques, increased congregational prayer, recited the Qur'an, attended ta'lim, engaged in dhikr, conducted jaulah, and reduced worldly activities. This communal life created an atmosphere distinct from members' routines and allowed sustained self-reflection. Members repeatedly said that the primary purpose of khuruj is not to increase the number of followers but to improve the quality of faith and cultivate sincerity. An informant who had participated in khuruj more than thirty times described the change:

"Before participating in khuruj, I thought that da'wah was about inviting other people. After going out several times, I realized that the first person who needs to change is myself. We learn patience, sincerity, reliance upon Allah (tawakkul), and how to become closer to Allah. So, in reality, khuruj educates us."(Informant M3, member with more than thirty khuruj experiences).

Temporarily leaving occupation, family, and material comforts was understood as training to reduce attachment to worldly life and to cultivate reliance on Allah, not as withdrawal from social life. A younger member described its effect:

"What I feel most after participating in khuruj is that my heart becomes more peaceful. I used to become angry easily and was always occupied with work. After spending several days in the mosque, listening to bayan, engaging in dhikr, and being

together with fellow members of the da'wah, I feel that life has become lighter because I entrust all matters to Allah."(Informant YM1, young member).

A distinction is needed between spiritual experience as a subjective state and knowledge with epistemic validity. Tranquility, patience, and closeness to God are experiences reported by individuals; in al-Jabiri's critique, irfani knowledge is problematic precisely because intuition is difficult to verify through reason (Ridwan 2016; Al Walid et al. 2025). The available data show that members interpret these experiences in relation to religious texts and the communal setting of worship. Informants describe their experiences as consistent with Qur'anic and hadith teachings, and the young member's account is explicitly situated in activities such as listening to bayan, engaging in dhikr, and living with fellow members. The findings also associate these experiences with expected changes in conduct, including greater discipline in worship and a simpler way of life (Razak and Asrori 2024). The source manuscript does not provide direct evidence that an amir or fellow members explicitly assessed or validated individual spiritual experiences. The epistemic status of irfani experience in this study is therefore understood as normative and communal in its framing, rather than demonstrative, and it relies on informants' self-reports, which could not be independently verified.

Within this study's data, spiritual experience was consistently described in collective and text-bound terms rather than as individual mystical experience. This is in line with studies that describe the movement's spirituality in terms of zuhd and simple living (Nurhayati et al. 2025) and spiritual resilience (Dayyan, Mardhiah, and Sembiring 2019), but it also qualifies accounts that emphasize the individual character of irfani knowledge (Akbar and Soleh 2024).

D. Interrelations among the Three Epistemologies: Mechanisms and Tensions

The presence of each dimension does not by itself demonstrate integration. Integration requires evidence that the dimensions affect one another. Tracing episodes in which more than one dimension was present revealed the mechanisms summarized in Table 4.

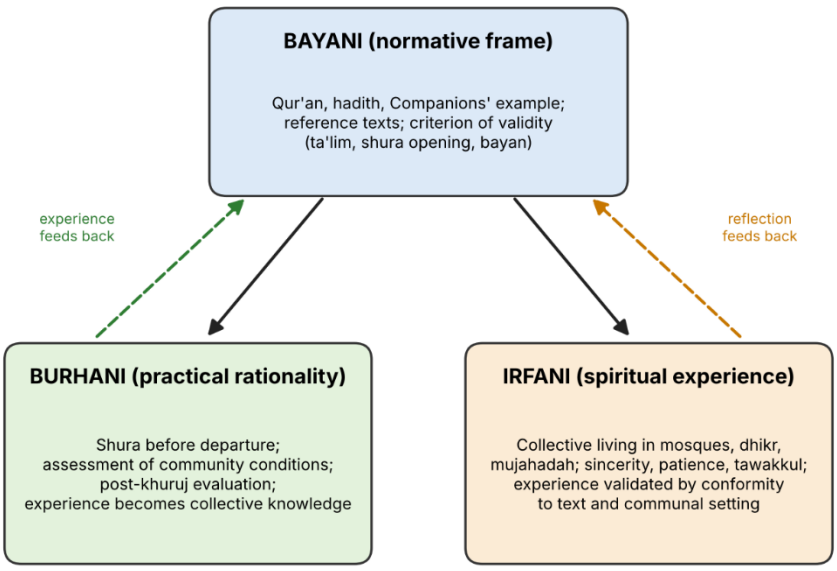
Table 4. Mechanisms Linking Bayani, Burhani, and Irfani in Khuruj Practice

Mechanism	Evidence from the data	Interpretation
Text frames deliberation (bayani to burhani)	Shura opens with hadith on the virtues of da'wah; decisions on destination, group, and duration refer to the Companions' experience and inherited practice, and then consider field conditions	Reasoning operates inside a normative frame
Experience becomes collective knowledge (burhani within the normative frame)	Post-khuruj deliberation turns field experience into lessons for the next group	Rational learning accumulates over time but is directed to implementing the text
Text mediates spiritual experience (bayani to irfani)	Bayan, ta'lim, and dhikr in the mosque are the settings in which members report tranquility; learning from Fadhail is "practiced when we go out"	Spiritual experience is textually guided, not free-floating

Mechanism	Evidence from the data	Interpretation
Spiritual transformation redirects da'wah conduct (irfani to practice)	Informants stress that "the first person who needs to change is myself"; a community figure describes polite, non-confrontational visits.	Inner change shapes the manner of da'wah; this link is an interpretation and not an explicit informant claim
Tension: inherited practice limits adaptation (bayani constrains burhani)	Some informants acknowledged reliance on practices inherited from earlier generations	Integration is not frictionless

These mechanisms show that the three epistemologies are not merely coexisting categories. They are linked through concrete practices, and the links are asymmetrical. Textual authority supplies the frame within which deliberation and spiritual practice take place, whereas experience and reflection return to practice within that frame, and in some cases are limited by it. Integration in this community is therefore better described as bayani-centered than as an equal or purely harmonious synergy. Figure 1 summarizes the pattern.

Figure 1. A Bayani-Centered Model of Epistemic Integration in the Khuruj Tradition



Solid arrows: textual authority frames deliberation and spiritual practice. Dashed arrows: field experience and reflection return to practice within the normative frame; inherited practice may in turn constrain rational adaptation (tension).

Source: authors' analysis.

E. Khuruj as a Non-Formal Islamic Educational Process

The epistemic pattern described above has educational significance. When the components of khuruj are read through the lens of Islamic education, they form a recognizable, though non-formal, learning process (Table 5). Informants themselves

said that “khuruj educates us,” and that its aim is the quality of faith rather than the number of followers.

Table 5. Components of Khuruj as an Educational Process

Component	Practice in khuruj (from the data)	Dominant epistemology
Aims	Improving quality of faith; cultivating sincerity, patience, and tawakkul	Irfani, framed by bayani
Content	Qur’an, hadith, Fadhail al-Amal, Hayat al-Sahabah, Muntakhab Ahadits, narratives of the Companions	Bayani
Methods	Ta’lim, jaulah, bayan, dhikr, communal living, learning by doing during khuruj	Bayani and irfani
Educators	Amirs and experienced members who guide sessions and decisions	Bayani (authority) and burhani (guidance)
Evaluation	Post-khuruj deliberation and self-reflection	Burhani and irfani

Three points follow. First, learning is practice-oriented: text, reasoning, and experience are interleaved in the same activities, rather than separated as in classroom instruction. Second, character outcomes reported by informants, such as discipline in worship, a simpler life, stronger ukhuwah, and commitment to da’wah (Razak and Asrori 2024), are linked to this integrated process, although these outcomes are based on self-reports and were not measured. Third, the dependence on inherited practice indicates a limitation: evaluative deliberation exists, but it is exercised within a frame that gives limited room for questioning the frame itself.

These points relate to existing work in Islamic education. Azizah and Soleh (2025) and Marjuki et al. (2024) discuss the use of bayani, burhani, and irfani in learning materials and the philosophy of Islamic education, and Intan Karisma and Husni (2025) apply the trilogy to santri in a pesantren. Our findings show the same trilogy operating not as a curriculum lens but as a lived structure of a community-based practice. Widodo et al. (2026) examine the movement as a vehicle of inclusive Islamic education for others; the present study turns to the learning of the members themselves. A comparison with character formation in pesantren through collective ritual (Harifah and Sofa 2025) suggests that shared practice is a common route of internalization in Islamic settings, although the settings differ.

E. Khuruj as a Non-Formal Islamic Educational Process

Al-Jabiri analyzed bayani, burhani, and irfani as historically distinct systems of Arab-Islamic reason, with different assumptions and a relationship marked by tension and competition, and he was notably critical of the irfani strand (Al-Jabiri 2011; Bahri 2015; Ridwan 2016). Recent work has also stressed the fragmentation between the systems (Al Walid et al. 2025). The present findings do not refute this analysis. They show that in a lived, practice-oriented community the three can co-occur in a

hierarchical arrangement under the normative primacy of the text, and that tension remains visible within this arrangement (Section C.4).

The integration found here should therefore be understood as a characteristic of the practice of Jamaah Tabligh in Cirebon, and not as a theoretical correction of al-Jabiri. Its contribution is an empirically grounded, middle-range model (Figure 1) that uses al-Jabiri's categories as analytical tools for a contemporary da'wah community, and that can be tested in other settings. Two caveats apply. Al-Jabiri's categories were designed for historical-critical analysis of Arab-Islamic thought, so their application to the practice of a contemporary movement is an analytical adaptation. And the classification of practical rationality and communal spiritual experience as burhani and irfani is a limited, interpretive use of those concepts, as explained in Sections C.2 and C.3.

D. CONCLUSION

This study shows that khuruj fi sabilillah among Jamaah Tabligh in Cirebon is not only a method of da'wah but also a process in which members acquire, validate, and practice religious knowledge. Bayani supplies the source and criterion of legitimacy, expressed in ta'lim, shura, and the use of reference texts. Burhani appears as practical rationality in pre-departure deliberation and post-khuruj evaluation. Irfani appears as spiritual experience that members associate with sincerity, patience, and tawakkul and that is validated through its conformity with the text and the communal setting. The three are linked through identifiable mechanisms, but the integration is asymmetrical and bayani-centered, and it contains tension where inherited practice limits rational adaptation.

Theoretically, the study offers an empirically based model of epistemic integration that applies al-Jabiri's categories to a contemporary da'wah community without claiming to revise his theory. For Islamic education, the findings suggest that khuruj functions as a non-formal learning process in which text, reasoning, and experience are interwoven in practice. Three implications follow. Educators and institutions designing character education may draw on the practice-based, community-embedded character of this learning. Structured evaluative deliberation after field practice, similar to the post-khuruj shura, could be adopted in religious learning programs to turn experience into shared knowledge. And such programs should also build in mechanisms that allow the inherited frame itself to be examined, since this is the point at which the studied practice is weakest.

The study has limitations. It covers one region, and the source manuscript does not report the total number of informants; the findings are therefore not statistically generalizable. Reports of spiritual experience and character change come from informants' self-reports and were not independently measured. The use of an a priori framework may have shaped the interpretation, despite the use of operational indicators and attention to contrasting evidence, and quotations were translated into English. Future studies could compare communities across regions, follow members longitudinally, combine qualitative and quantitative measures of character outcomes,

include the perspectives of women and families, and test the proposed model in other da'wah movements.

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