Transcendental Communication in MH Saifurrahmi's Nerve Reflex Therapy: An Epistemological Perspective of Irfani

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Abstract
Transcendental communication is a relatively new concept in the realm of communication studies. It refers to communication between a servant and God, characterized as transcendent or vertical. One instance of this is observed in the phenomenon of nerve reflex therapy by MH Saifurrahmi, where transcendental communication is utilized. Transcendental communication is also a recent development in the field of communication studies. This article examines the transcendental communication phenomenon present in MH Saifurrahmi's nerve reflex therapy in Mayang, Jambi City. The research adopts a qualitative descriptive approach, collecting data through observations, interviews, and documentation. The research findings reveal that in the nerve reflex therapy conducted by MH Saifurrahmi in Mayang, Jambi City, the phenomenon involves the use of "tawasul" (mediation) as a means of transcendent communication directed toward his mentors and elders, ultimately reaching out to Allah. Additionally, prayer gatherings (sholat hajat) and supplications serve as measures for healing, advised by MH Saifurrahmi before administering nerve reflex therapy. The outcome of this mediation manifests as intuitive insights experienced by MH Saifurrahmi, enabling him to diagnose conditions and recommend herbal remedies tailored for treatment.

Keywords: Transcendental Communication; Neural Acupressure; Irfani Epistemology
Introduction

The understanding and practice of "tawasul" in Islam exhibit variations that influence their implementation, evident in religious rituals and alternative therapies such as MH Saifurrahmi's nerve reflex therapy. This article aims to provide a detailed explanation of MH Saifurrahmi's nerve reflex treatment method and analyze its connection with the concept of transcendental communication, particularly from the perspective of epistemological "irfani". This endeavor is crucial to comprehend the role of transcendental communication in religiously-based alternative treatments and address misunderstandings related to this concept.

As a multidisciplinary field, communication studies evolve with support from various disciplines, including sociology, anthropology, linguistics, psychology, and religious studies. Transcendental communication serves to bridge human limitations in the process of achieving social communication. In such situations, fostering a vertical relationship with God becomes crucial to attaining inner peace. However, Islamic teachings emphasize that transcendent communication between Allah and humanity has occurred since the spiritual realm. Transcendental communication depicts the relationship between humans and their Creator. In this context, the communication process involves not only humans but also the social roles they play, determining the needs of other individuals. In this regard, the vertical transmission process highlights that humans require higher and more perfect power. The vertical relationship through various paths or "thoriqoh" leads individuals towards becoming complete communicative beings from a holistic perspective.

Transcendental communication involves the communication between humans and God through various transcendental communication practices. Surrendering (tawakkal) in facing "problems" is a step in transcendent communication, thereby allowing humans to experience communication with their Creator. Simultaneously, the goal of humans to communicate with their Creator transcendentally is to seek truth based on the knowledge and experiences they acquire. This communication is interpreted as an initial agreement that signifies faith and individuals' faith in understanding Allah as the universal essence governing the universe. Based on this, "tawasul" is a religious matter of great importance explicitly stated in the Qur'an. However, "tawasul" has many practices that are not consistently organized in its implementation. In worship, undoubtedly, humans desire that their deeds reach the pleasure of Allah. Hence, individuals strive to draw closer to Him, finding it challenging, even reprehensible, to approach Him directly. Consequently, they seek a means known as "wastalah" or an intermediary between Allah and themselves, referred to as "tawasul." The tradition of making "tawasul" has existed since the pre-Islamic era, when people sought to draw closer to Allah or hoped for Allah's mercy. They would use intermediaries in the form of idols. Most Muslims also do not understand the essence of "tawasul," typically due to their lack of knowledge about it. The misunderstanding about "tawasul" often leads to errors in determining the correct path of "tawasul." According to Syed Muhammad Maliki Hassan, "tawasul" is one of the ways of prayer and a gateway to facing Allah. In this context, transcendent communication and "tawasul" are interrelated in vertical communication, such

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as in MH Saifurrahmi’s nerve reflex therapy in Jambi City. During the nerve reflex therapy, MH Saifurrahmi utilizes transcendental communication and "tawasul" as mediums to communicate with Allah, leading to intuitive insights derived from this communication.

Here is a summary of several studies on transcendental communication and epistemology in Islam: (1) In a study by D.I Ansusa Putra, the research delves into Sufi epistemology by interpreting natural phenomena. The primary focus is on the causal relationship between God, humans, and nature in understanding the global perspective of Sufi epistemology. Understanding natural phenomena is considered a way to reach the core or essence of God within Sufism. The approach used in this study combines esoteric and exoteric dimensions in a balanced manner, considered an appropriate method to comprehend Sufi epistemology related to natural phenomena. (2) Research by Nur Ainuyah and colleagues highlights transcendental communication and Islamic epistemology from an empirical-methodical standpoint, mainly using the burhani and irfani approaches. They affirm that transcendental communication generates inner experiences for humans. Islamic epistemology is a method of bayani, burhani, and irfani thinking. Burhani involves logical thinking based on text and experience, while irfani is a thinking model rooted in direct experience. The intuition or irfani method is utilized by individuals to unite with God in practices like tawasul, prayer, salah, and other forms of worship as part of the transcendental communication process. (3) Ejang As and the team’s research reviews transcendental communication in the religious rituals of the Qodiriyyah wa Naqsabandiyah tarekat at Pesantren Suryalaya, Tasikmalaya, using the Lasswell communication model. (4) M. Ulil Anshor’s study explores irfani epistemology in Sufistic interpretation studies, known as terms of Sufistic interpretation, which encompasses al-Nazari and al-Isyari Sufi interpretations. Historically, Sufistic interpretation has evolved from the 2nd century H until now. The former interprets Quranic texts with mystical theories, while the latter uses a set of qalb (inner) devices. (5) Umar Abdur Rahim’s research focuses on prayer as transcendental communication from the perspective of Islamic communication. It emphasizes the essence of prayer as a means of transcendental communication between humans and their Creator. The essence of prayer in Islamic teachings isn’t merely a religious ritual; instead, it serves as a means of communication—a means for humans to communicate with their Creator, playing a pivotal role in delivering messages and fulfilling prayer requests. The research primarily focuses on understanding the therapeutic method of nerve pinpoint therapy by MH Saifurrahmi and examining this nerve therapy from the standpoint of Abed al-Jabiri’s epistemology of irfani. Furthermore, the writer explicates the concepts under review using the analytical framework of Abed al-Jabiri’s epistemological approach. According to Abed al-Jabiri, irfani epistemology is a methodological thinking model based on direct approaches and experiences. Thus, through intuition or irfani, individuals use their hearts to sense spiritual or inner experiences encountered in every aspect of their lives. Unification with their Creator through tawasul, prayer, salah, and other worship practices becomes integral to the transcendental communication process.

The nerve pinpoint therapy by MH Saifurrahmi in Jambi City is one form of nerve therapy that employs transcendental communication. In the healing process, MH Saifurrahmi utilizes

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6 Ainuyah and Zainuddin, “Komunikasi Transendental Dan Epistemologi Islam.”
7 Ejang and Rustandi, “Komunikasi Transendental Ritual Keagamaan Tarekat Qadiriyyah Wa Naqsabandiyyah Pesantren Suryalaya Tasikmalaya.”
tawasul to communicate with Allah. Consequently, an intuition arises within MH Saifurrahmi's soul or qalb, which is then implemented in the nerve pinpoint therapy. This leads to the Revelation of inner knowledge (kashf) and eventually identifies the patient's ailment or discomfort, enabling MH Saifurrahmi to advise the patient regarding their recovery. Furthermore, MH Saifurrahmi provides advice on herbal remedies based on these intuitions. Hence, in this research, the writer proposes two problem formulations: how is MH Saifurrahmi's nerve pinpoint therapy conducted? Secondly, how does MH Saifurrahmi's nerve pinpoint therapy align with the perspective of irfani epistemology?

This research employs a qualitative descriptive research method. It was conducted at MH Saifurrahmi's nerve pinpoint therapy in Mayang City, Jambi. The data sources were derived from MH Saifurrahmi's nerve therapy and the patients. Data collection techniques encompassed four variants: observation, interviews, documentation, and literature review. The research employed participant observation, engaging actively in MH Saifurrahmi's activities, such as assisting patients who could not walk and communicating with them regarding their complaints. Interview sources included MH Saifurrahmi, patients, and the local community surrounding the nerve pinpoint therapy. Supporting data comprised documents such as photos, videos, and audio recorded during the nerve therapy process. The literature study involved using articles and books as research references. The objectives of this article are twofold: firstly, to understand the methodology of MH Saifurrahmi's nerve pinpoint therapy, and secondly, to analyze MH Saifurrahmi's nerve pinpoint therapy from the perspective of Irfan epistemology.

Result and Discussion
Overview of Islamic Epistemology
Epistemology can be defined as the study or origin of a theory, sources, and the limits of knowledge. Furthermore, the term "knowledge" (ilm) in Islamic scholarship is understood as knowledge about something (ma'rifah al-syai' ala ma hawa bibi). The scope of knowledge in this context is vast and encompasses everything, including experiences – sensory perception, rationality, and even metaphysics. This is where the meaning of Islamic knowledge differs from Western scholarship. In Islam, the word 'ilm, meaning knowledge, does not differentiate between material and immaterial aspects. This differs from knowledge in the scientific sense and as distinguished by Western scientists.

The Qur'an explains that there are three sources of knowledge: hearing (al-sam'), sight (al-absar), and intellect (al-af'idah). The first two sources are the means of knowledge acquired from experiential objects. The third source, in this case, intellect and intuition, is the tool for understanding non-physical or metaphysical entities. What the Qur'an says about these instruments of knowledge does not inherently favor one over the other. The Qur'an intends to convey that these knowledge instruments are balanced and possess their respective domains of objects. However, the difference in domains does not imply different subjects.

Structure of Arab Rational Epistemology

Epistemology is closely related to philosophy and remains relevant. In epistemology, it concerns the acquisition and subsequent development of knowledge. Additionally, there is an assumption that epistemological issues are part of psychological issues. The emergence of differing views (both psychological and philosophical) regarding the existence of epistemology can be one form of consideration for evaluating and justifying the nature of epistemology, which is laden with controversy and complexity.

Epistemology is a branch of philosophy related to the theory of knowledge. The term "epistemology" originates from the Greek language, composed of the words 'episteme' (knowledge) and 'logos' (knowledge, thought, speech, or word). Thus, epistemology is the discourse, text, thought, or science responsible for the breadth and nature of knowledge, its foundation, and presuppositions, as well as texts about one's knowledge about knowledge. There are three problematic issues in this regard: (1) About the sources of knowledge and the process of acquiring knowledge. (2) Regarding the nature of knowledge, creating a world that genuinely transcends human thought and how humans can comprehend it. (3) About a truth.

Epistemology of Irfan

Etymologically, "Irfan" originates from the Arabic word "arafa," which means recognition or knowledge, although it differs from "ilm" (knowledge). Irfan is related to direct knowledge obtained through experience. However, terminologically, Irfan can be understood as the disclosure of knowledge gained through the divine light acquired from Allah to His servants (kashf) after a spiritual process (riyadlah) performed based on His pleasure. Irfan is an extension of "bayani," yet both forms of knowledge have distinct characteristics: bayani emphasizes texts, whereas irfani is grounded in kashf, Allah's unveiling of knowledge or secrets. Therefore, irfani is not acquired through textual analysis but through the heart, the inner conscience, or intuition, thus allowing Allah to reveal knowledge. Irfani knowledge is acquired through spiritual processes, where with a clear heart, Allah bestows direct knowledge (kashf) upon an individual. Methodologically, inner knowledge is acquired through three stages.

Firstly, Preparation: To receive the direct influx of knowledge (kashf), an individual following a spiritual path must complete various stages of spiritual life. There are different opinions among scholars regarding the stages to be undergone. However, at least seven stages are traversed, from the most basic to the highest level. (1) Tawassul is a method used in supplication or request to Allah. Tawassul is done through a means or anything that can serve as a cause or intermediary to draw closer to Allah so that requests can be granted. (2) Salah (prayer) is a mandatory act of worship for Muslims. Besides being an obligatory act, prayer

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13 Hafid.
15 Baharun and Alawiyah.
also serves as a means of requesting prayers and hoping that Allah will fulfill a servant's prayers. Additionally, (3) Dua (supplication) is a means for Muslims to request Allah to grant their pleas. Thus, all three are interlinked among tawassul, salah, and dua to draw nearer to Allah.

Secondly, the Acceptance stage is reached when an individual attains a certain level. It intuitively receives the direct bestowal of knowledge (kashf) from Allah. At this stage, a person achieves absolute self-awareness (kashf), enabling them to perceive their reality (mushahadah) as an object of knowledge. In this context, self-awareness and self-reality are not separate but are the same form of existence.

Thirdly, in the journey toward Irfani knowledge, there is the stage of Revelation. During this stage, the mystical experiences undergone by an individual are interpreted and communicated to others through words, writings, or actions.

**Method of Nerve Reflex Therapy by MH Saifurrahmi**

In performing nerve reflex therapy, MH Saifurrahmi employs Tawassul to communicate with Allah. Additionally, MH Saifurrahmi uses secret prayers during nerve reflex therapy as his transcendental communication to Allah, resulting in intuition arising within Saifurrahmi's heart. Furthermore, Saifurrahmi advises incoming patients for nerve reflex therapy to first perform Tahajjud prayers or Hajat prayers as a means of supplication and as a means to reach out to Allah to seek healing for their illnesses or complaints.

MH Saifurrahmi's nerve reflex therapy sessions are open from Monday to Sunday and closed on Fridays from 11:00 in the morning until midnight. Apart from the therapy sessions, Saifurrahmi advises patients to pray for each other and always maintain reasonable assumptions about one another. This nerve reflex therapy by MH Saifurrahmi may be challenging to comprehend for the layman due to its non-empirical treatment process, involving only touching the big toe to diagnose illnesses and their remedies. It is hoped that this nerve reflex therapy can offer a solution to the public as an effort toward curing diseases.

**Nerve Reflex Therapy by MH Saifurrahmi from the Perspective of Irfani Epistemology**

The author's analysis of nerve reflex therapy by MH Saifurrahmi using the Irfani epistemology theory can be categorized into three parts: preparation, acceptance, and disclosure. Initially, MH Saifurrahmi prepares by implementing Tawassul, which is crucial because Tawassul holds great significance in the nerve reflex therapy process. Historically, the tradition (method) of Tawassul has been regarded as a means to achieve life goals. During the time of the Prophet, there was a blind person who approached the Prophet and asked him to guide him in reciting Tawassul. Consequently, the companions were able to witness the outcome directly. This was due to the blessings of Tawassul received through the Prophet's guidance. Tawassul involves using the prophets, messengers, and righteous individuals as intermediaries, not to ask from them but to collectively ask for their prayers to Allah, seeking His acceptance of our intentions and goals. Utilizing Tawassul through a mediator—a believer, someone righteous and close to Allah—does not conflict with Islamic teachings. Indeed, this tawassul is even instructed by the Quran, as mentioned in Surah Al-Maidah verse 35. This method does not involve worshiping living beings but only serves as a means or tool to achieve goals. Allah is the only entity revered in tawassul, for He created the heavens, the earth, and all therein. He governs this world, provides light, and grants life to all creatures, seen and unseen. Imam Nawawi, in his book Al-Adzkar, explains that the method of tawassul

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was used by the companions of the Prophet Muhammad SAW during learning processes or when they had specific needs:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِي أَسْأَلُكَ وَأَتَوَجَّهُ إِلَيْكَ بِنَبِيَّ الَّذِي رَحَمَهُ الَّذِي أَتَوَجَّهُ بِنَبِي ِكَ مُحَمَّدٍ

"O Allah, I ask and direct my plea to You through Your Prophet Muhammad, the Prophet of Mercy. O Muhammad, I plead to your Lord by mentioning you."

This demonstrates that Prophet Muhammad SAW taught tawassul by mentioning his essence during his lifetime. This is substantiated. Furthermore, mentioned in the Quran, Surah Al-Maidah verse 35:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ اٰمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّٰهَ وَابۡتَغُوٰۡۤا اِلَيۡهِ الۡوَسِيۡلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوۡا فِىۡ سَبِيۡلِهٖ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تُفۡلِحُوۡنَ

"O believers! Be mindful of Allah and seek what brings you closer to Him and struggle in His Way, so you may be successful."

The word "tawassul" encompasses 3 meanings: tawassul bi Asmaillah (seeking nearness through the Names of Allah), tawasul bi 'amal shalihat (seeking nearness through righteous deeds), and tawassul bis shalihin (seeking nearness through righteous individuals). Firstly, tawassul bi Asmaillah (seeking nearness through the Names of Allah) is the highest form. For instance, phrases like "I seek refuge in the might of Allah" or "I seek refuge in the glory of Allah," etc. Healing from illnesses is sought through tawassul to Allah. Tawassul can be performed by referring to all or some of the Asmaul Husna. Additionally, tawassul can be done through righteous deeds ('amal shalihat). Kiai Wazir explained in the book Riyadus Salihin, where three companions found a cave along their way. Out of curiosity, they entered the cave, and a strong wind blew, causing a large rock to block the entrance. They experienced hardship, fasting for a week, calling out without response, and collectively reflecting. One of them prayed and considered performing a righteous act for their parents. Eventually, the strong wind pushed the stones away, and the sun shone. Then, the others prayed with great charity, and gradually the rocks moved. Lastly, tawassul bis shalihin (seeking nearness through righteous individuals who are alive).

The essence of the purpose of tawassul is to supplicate to Allah. Tawassul is not obligatory, so prayers are not rejected without it. Tawassul serves as a medium or method to pray to Allah. No Muslim rejects the use of good deeds as a form of tawassul.22 Every person who fasts, performs prayers, reads the Quran, or gives charity has employed these good deeds as tawassul. In the second stage, MH Saifurrahmi acquires knowledge from Allah in the form of intuition derived from the results of tawassul. Intuition is knowledge that emerges spontaneously through whispers of the heart, appearing suddenly without prior learning because it arises through whispers of the heart (qalb). 23 Furthermore, in the context of MH Saifurrahmi's nerve therapy, intuition can be obtained if an individual maintains a close relationship with Allah. In the context of MH Saifurrahmi's nerve therapy, intuition can be acquired through tawassul and prayer. Additionally, MH Saifurrahmi advises patients undergoing nerve therapy to perform tahajud prayers initially as a request for healing from the illness to Allah. When the human mind encounters difficulties in understanding emotional life, the heart can comprehend it. A trained heart can understand someone's feelings just by hearing their voice or seeing their eyes. The mind tends to focus on the level of consciousness. At the same time, the heart can transcend those limits and enter the subconscious realm or the spiritual dimension known in the context of religion. Thus, the heart can understand experiences that

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23 Farih.
the senses cannot sense or what is known as ESP (Extra-Sensory Perception), including mystical or religious experiences. Another aspect of MH Saifurrahmi’s nerve therapy is a prayer to connect to Allah, thereby generating intuition within MH Saifurrahmi's heart. Essentially, prayer is a form of etiquette because, in any circumstance, we will always need our desires to be fulfilled by Allah. Fundamentally, humans always have desires lifted to Allah through prayers, tawassul, and prayers. Furthermore, MH Saifurrahmi advises all future patients undergoing nerve therapy to perform tahajud or hajat prayers as a means of spiritual connection and as a prayer request to Allah for the removal of illnesses suffered by the patients. MH Saifurrahmi also advises patients who have undergone nerve therapy to pray for each other so that Allah answers all their needs.

The Tahajud prayer can be considered a ritual of worship that opens the gates of heaven, as Allah pays excellent attention to the supplications and prayers offered by His servants. The Tahajud prayer is also an extremely effective means of communication because it is performed in the third part of the night when most people are fast asleep. During this time, one can easily concentrate, unify their heart (qalb) and tongue in remembrance, and contemplate the verses of the Quran being recited. According to Rajab Al Hambali, the time of Tahajud in the third part of the night is the best time for performing voluntary acts of worship. During this time, a worshipper becomes closer to their Lord, the gates of heaven are opened, and Allah answers prayers. The wisdom behind performing the Tahajud prayer is to calm the soul and dispel pessimism and feelings of inferiority, as the prayer can shape a Muslim’s character, refine their morals, and instill discipline.

Furthermore, prayer is a form of remembrance because we feel close to Allah and constantly mention His divine names. It is hoped that after performing the Tahajud or Hajat prayers, patients feel peace within themselves and are optimistic about their healing process. With firm conviction, the human spirit becomes calmer and more optimistic about recovery. The third stage is the expression. After all the processes have resulted in intuition within the heart and the insights gained by MH Saifurrahmi, medications emerge that need to be sought and consumed by patients undergoing nerve therapy. Therefore, as servants of Allah, we must have strong faith in our hearts and consider acts of worship as a means of connection to Allah. This brings peace to our souls and enhances our closeness to Allah, enabling Him to grant us greater knowledge.

Conclusion
It can be concluded that the transcendental communication in MH Saifurrahmi’s nerve reflex therapy, based on the epistemological perspective of Irfani, primarily involves tawassul, prayer, and salah as connections or means to Allah, forming the core pattern in MH Saifurrahmi's nerve reflex therapy. This leads to direct knowledge (intuitive) and results in medications that patients must consume. Secondly, it emphasizes the importance of spiritual values as a link between a servant and their Lord, enabling one always to remember and be close to their Lord regardless of the situation. Aligned with its name, nerve reflex therapy is a place for striving towards healing from ailments. Therefore, it is fitting for a person to have strong faith in Allah when undergoing treatment, as healing from illnesses is ultimately in the hands of Allah.

26 Zakiyah Ahmad, Pedoman Shalat Tahajud Dan Shalat Hajat Bagi Wanita: Disertai Doa-Doa Pemanggil Rezeki (Pustaka Media, 2019).
27 Saifurrahmi, Wawancara hasil komunikasi transendental.
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