ISLAMIC THEOSOPHY IN THE THOUGHT OF NASARUDDIN UMAR

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the Islamic theosophical thought in the works and ideas of Nasaruddin Umar, one of Indonesia's intellectual ulama figures with a particular focus on developing Islamic spirituality. Theosophy in Nasaruddin Umar's context is centered on how the understanding of Islamic spirituality can be integrated with contemporary social realities to address the challenges of the times. Umar adapts metaphysical and esoteric concepts from classical thinkers such as Ibn Arabi, reinterpreting them to present a moderate, inclusive, and relevant Islam in the modern context. Nasaruddin Umar's Islamic theosophical approach emphasizes the revitalization of religious teachings, which he believes can shape a community's behavior and character to be harmonious, broad-minded, and tolerant of diversity. This study aims to explore Umar's ideas on spirituality as a centripetal force in building a harmonious and peaceful society, while also critiquing and evaluating the role of theosophy in addressing contemporary issues such as radicalism and identity crises in the Muslim community. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to religious studies and enrich discourse on Islamic theosophy as a path toward moderation and the revitalization of religion in Indonesia.

Keywords: Theosophy; Nasaruddin Umar

1. INTRODUCTION

Departing from the phenomenon of awakening spirituality and the need for a relevant understanding of religion in the face of social dynamics and modernity in Indonesia is increasingly diverse (Saprillah et al., 2020). In the midst of various moral and identity crises, especially among Muslims, challenges arise to interpret religious teachings that can answer contemporary problems, without leaving the essence of noble spirituality.

Globalization has opened up the flow of information and diverse associations, but it has also caused conflict between rigid religious views and the need to adjust to social change (Anwar, 2023: 1). In Indonesia, a country with a very diverse society, conflicts due to differences in religious views often arise. Religious diversity and differences are nothing new. Since time immemorial, the world has been inhabited by diverse faiths, far from uniformity. However, we are now facing a new form of diversity. Religious differences are so closely embedded in our daily lives, on every side, that it is no longer possible to ignore or avoid discussion. The challenge is that religious differences often lead to conflicts ranging from tension and hostility to violent

disputes. History records that interfaith encounters are oftenovershadowed by rivalry and opposition (Sirry, 2024: 290). Departing from the various discourses that developed, a new approach was born in the study of contemporary Islamic epistemology. This approach aims to offer a fresh perspective, especially for Muslim scholars and Muslim communities in general, in understanding religious texts (Syafaq, 2015: 20).

Among the figures who popularized the model of contemporary Islamic studies is Nasaruddin Umar, as a modern Islamic thinker and intellectual, has developed a distinctive approach through Islamic theosophical thought. His thinking brings together the metaphysical and spiritual dimensions in Islam with a rational approach,making it relevant in a modern context. This Islamic theosophy, in his view, acts as a way to revitalize religious values, by offering a deep spiritual perspective but still promoting tolerance, inclusiveness and moderation. This is important considering theplurality of Indonesian society which faces various conflicts and challenges due to thepolarization of religious understanding.

Nasaruddin Umar emphasized the importance for every religion to review its holy book with a focus on the principle of equality (principle of identity), not on aspects of difference, let alone opposition (principle of negation). This positive re-reading of the holy book is urgently needed in Indonesia, a country with diverse religious communities who hold fast to their respective teachings. The role and position of religious communities in Indonesia is a very large force, and this potential needs to be directed as a unifying force (*centripetal*) that maintains harmony, not as a divisive force(*centrifugal*) that causes division (Umar, 2014: 2-4).

However, the thought of Islamic theosophy promoted by Nasaruddin Umar still needs to be understood and studied more deeply so that the values contained in it can make a positive contribution to Muslims in building people's spirituality and responding to current social and political issues. Islamic theosophy, with its emphasison the essence of spirituality, moderation, and universal humanity, has the potential to encourage the creation of harmonization between religious understanding and modern diverse social life. This research also becomes relevant to explore how the concept of theosophy can be applied in everyday life and provide an alternative to more exclusive and rigid religious understanding.

Amid the realities of the modern world, these liberating Islamic values remain relevant, providing a new direction for Muslims to achieve glory in line with the principles of moderation, wasathiyyah, and respect for humanity (Umar, 2019: x). The spirit of revival, which once brought the ummah to the peak of glory, now needs to beexplored and revived as a guide to face the challenges of today.

In the discourse of contemporary Islamic thought, there are variousepistemological flows that become references, including the Ghazâlîan model (a termpinned to followers of Abu Hamid al-Ghazali's thinking model) which emphasizes aspects of spirituality and Sufism, and the Rushdian model (pinned to followers of Ibn Rushd's thinking model) which prioritizes a rational approach (Syafaq, 2015: 21). Thesetwo models are often considered opposites in the study of Islamic thought, although that does not mean ruling out other schools. Muslim scholars' reliance on these two models shows that Islamic studies today still continue the tradition of classical thought,as if bringing back the great thinkers of the past in modern intellectual dynamics. In fact, the efforts to integrate religious studies and philosophy that have been initiated by contemporary Muslim scholars are also rooted in the approach pioneered by earlyMuslim philosophers, such as al-Kindi, which proves the continuity of this tradition in responding to the challenges of the times (Syafaq, 2015: 21).

This background will explore how the concept of theosophy in the thought of Nazaruddin Umar can contribute to the revitalization of religion, and assess itsrelevance and implications. This research is expected to make a significant contributionto the understanding and application of religion in the context of modern society. By exploring the concepts promoted by Nasaruddin Umar, this research seeks to find anapproach that is able to address

contemporary challenges and promote social harmony and explore the ways in which Nasaruddin Umar's theosophy plays a role inresponding to issues such as radicalism and exclusivism, as well as how this theosophical approach can be a tool for building religious moderation. Amidst the challenges of globalization and social fragmentation, the idea of theosophy seeks to bring together religious understandings that promote the principles of harmony, compassion, and intercultural dialogue.

2. METHODS

A research method is a series of steps, guidelines, or practical procedures that are systematically designed to understand the object of research more deeply. This method is closely related to the data required, so there are a number of important things to consider related to data collection and analysis, as explained below.

First, this type of research is qualitative-analytic chosen as the most appropriatemethod to explore and interpret the nuances of Nazaruddin Umar's theosophical thinking. The analysis process involves careful selection of information that is significant, innovative, distinctive, and relevant to the established research focus. A thorough evaluation was conducted of all data collected through various methods of information gathering. These methods included direct observation, in-depth dialoguewith interviewees, searching for relevant documents, as well as triangulation techniques to validate the findings. This comprehensive approach allows the researcher to gain a deep and holistic understanding of the research subject, and ensures the validity of the results of the analysis conducted.

This research also uses qualitative methods, in this case using the library method (library research) as the main means of data collection, which is an effort to study, understand, analyze data contained in various written literature without conducting direct field research, the data sources are categorized into two, namely primary data sources and secondary data sources (UIN Alauddin, 2023: 13). This method involves an in-depth review of various sources such as books, scientific journals, research articles, theses, dissertations, archival documents, and credible online sources.

Second, the approach in this study is a specific perspective used by researchersto interpret and explain the research data (Nata, 2016: 190). This study uses several approaches to provide a comprehensive analysis of Nasaruddin Umar's Islamic theosophical thinking, namely: Theosophical approach and Interdisciplinary approach.

Third, this research data analysis uses descriptive-analytic method. This analysisis carried out by selecting data that is relevant, up-to-date, and unique and related tothe formulation of problems or research questions. This analysis is based on all data that has been collected through various data collection techniques (Sugiyono, 2020). The step of this method is to describe Nazaruddin Umar's theosophical ideas regardingreligious revitalization, then analyze and criticize. In addition, this research uses an elective-eliminative method, namely this process is carried out by studying various theories from various schools of thought and schools that have developed throughoutthe history of a discipline. After these theories are found and studied, the next step isto compare and analyze them until the most appropriate theory is found to be appliedto the object of research being studied (Waston, 2019: 64-65). The research approachalso aims to simplify and focus the analysis by filtering out the most relevant data. This process involves two main stages: an elective stage, where the researcher selects datathat has the greatest potential to answer the research question or support thehypothesis, and an eliminative stage, where data that is less relevant or does not fit the research context is removed. Through this method, the researcher can focus moreon significant data, resulting in sharper analysis and more accurate research results, while avoiding bias that may arise from the use of irrelevant data.

For the writing technique of this dissertation, the writing uses the Guidelines for Writing Scientific Papers of the State Islamic University (UIN) Alauddin Makassar (UIN Alauddin, 2023: 60). For Arabic-Latin transliteration guidelines and abbreviations use the transliteration system according to the Joint Decree of the Minister of Religion and the Minister of Education and Culture Number 158 of 1987 and Number 0543b/U/1987 which has been used by the State Islamic University (UIN) Alauddin Makassar.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. Definition of Theosophy

Theosophy comes from the Greek word "Theosophia," which literally means "divine wisdom." It is a system of philosophy that is deeply rooted in inner experience and deeper mystical practices. In the theosophical view, the understanding of life is not only focused on God, but also includes knowledge of wisdom, life in the spirit realm, and the mysteries of the supernatural (Fathoni, 2016). Theosophy literally means "divine wisdom." This definition refers to a speculative attempt to explore knowledge about the metaphysical world, especially in explaining the relationship between "Being" and "existent". "There is" with a capital "A" refers to God as the source of existence, while "there is" with a lowercase letter includes creatures, humans, and the universe. This study focuses on understanding the relationship between Microcosmos (humans) and God in a deep metaphysical framework (Abdullah, 2021: 5; M. Irfan Riyadi, 2012: 132).

One of the main tenets of theosophy is the view that all religions are of equal value and truth. All religions are seen as having existed for a long time, bringing messages of goodness, salvation, and compassion, regardless of differences in doctrine or ritual. This principle puts all religions on an equal footing, recognizing that each has universal values that are able to enrich the soul and bring humans to a more harmonious life (Niwandhono, 2017).

In this context, theosophy tends to shift the concept of absolute truth from a particular religion and emphasizes the diversity of complementary values (Fathoni, 2016). This understanding seeks to foster deep tolerance between religious communities and teach nationalism (Yolanda et al., 2022). Through this view, theosophy encourages the creation of a respectful common life, where everyone can live peacefully without feeling the need to conflict with each other's beliefs, but rather respect each other and learn from the wisdom that exists in each religion (Stang, 2021).

b. History and Development of Theosophy

The Theosophical movement was first founded in New York, United States, in 1875 by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky or Madame Blavatsky, a Russian mystic and writer who founded the Theosophical Society in 1875 with Henry Steel Olcott and William Quan Judge in New York. Born on August 12, 1831 in Yekaterinoslav, Russian Empire (now Dnipro, Ukraine), Blavatsky went on to become a pioneer in the modern spiritual movement through her work in esotericism and spiritualism. Her books, such as Isis Unveiled (1877) and The Secret Doctrine (1888), illustrate her theosophical views that bring together universal wisdom from various religious traditions. Blavatsky claimed to derive these teachings from the "Masters of the Ancient Wisdom," spiritual teachers she met on trips to Asia, including India and Tibet. Through concepts such as reincarnation, karma, and spiritual evolution, Blavatsky and the Theosophical movement she led became a major influence in the development of modern spirituality, inviting seekers to understand divinity through inner experience and intuitive wisdom. (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2024) a noblewoman of Russian descent. Along with Blavatsky, two Americans, Henry Steel Olcott and W.Q. Judge, co-founded the movement.

After this organization was formed, H.S. Olcott was appointed president and the organization was named the Theosophical Society, an organization that aims to explore and

spread an understanding of spiritual wisdom, which is considered to be the core of all religions, but is not limited to certain religious dogmas or teachings (Syafaq, 2015: 25). The organization has three main principles, namely: first, Promoting Universal Brotherhood, creating a universal brotherhood that cuts across differences of race, religion, caste, or creed, with a focus on unity and harmony. Second, exploringphilosophical and religious studies to delve into the various studies of philosophy, religion, and science, and integrate the spiritual aspects of knowledge. Third, Developing human spiritual potential and seeking to understand the laws of the universe in greater depth (Theosophical Publishing House, 2024). The Theosophical Society also plays an important role in introducing Eastern teachings to the Western world, such as Hindu and Buddhist philosophy, and encourages interfaith dialog.

Theosophy focuses on achieving spiritual enlightenment through liberation of the mind and control of the passions. Members of the Theosophical Society are encouraged to think freely and work for social transformation, especially in inner waysthat counter selfish and materialistic tendencies. For theosophists, conventional religion is no longer considered capable of having a significant impact on the betterment of the human mind and the world.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, many intellectual and spiritual figuresbegan to adopt theosophy as a method of understanding divinity. This approach emphasizes intuitive or inner knowledge as a complement to rational understanding, so theosophy is often considered to combine philosophy, religion and mysticism. Instead of seeing God only through the dogmas and rituals of a particular religion, theosophy encourages a freer and deeper search for the concept of divinity, which is considered to transcend the boundaries of a particular culture and religion (Theosophical Publishing House, 2024).

In Indonesia, the theosophical outlook began to gain attention in the early 20thcentury. The movement had actually been established in Pekalongan, Central Java, since 1883, but its influence was only felt significantly a few decades later, precisely inthe early 20th century (Kusumo, 2020). It introduced a new way of looking at spiritualityand divinity, especially among indigenous elites and intellectuals who sought a more inclusive and universal perspective on religion.

Theosophy spread its teachings in Indonesia by utilizing Javanese traditional arts, such as *wayang*, as a propaganda medium. Through this approach, theosophy managed to attract attention, especially among Javanese *priyayi*, who increasingly joined the movement. Apart from *wayang*, in 1914 the theosophical movement also actively held public lectures as an effort to expand its influence (Kusumo, 2020).

c. Key Principles of Theosophy

A discussion of the basic principles of theosophy, such as divine unity, the search for universal truth, self-purification, and the importance of love and wisdom. These principles often include *wahdat al-wujud* (unity of existence) in Islam, Christian Gnosticism or Advaita (non-dualism) in Indian philosophy.

The principles of Sufism, Advaita Vedanta, and Gnosticism can be adapted into Islamic discourse by emphasizing similarities in the search for spiritual truth, oneness with God, and an esoteric understanding of life. In the Islamic context, Sufism or *tasawwuf* focuses on the purification of the soul and the search for closeness to God through inner experience. The principle of Ihsan, which teaches worshipping as if seeing God, is at the core of Sufi teachings that are relevant in modern life, encouraging individuals to make every activity a spiritually conscious act of worship. In addition, the concept of *Tazkiyatun nafs* (self-purification) and the stages of *Maqamat* and *Ahwal* in Sufism can be translated as a process of personal growth towards love of God and spirituality in facing a challenging world (Umar, 2021: 73).

On the other hand, the Advaita Vedanta principle that emphasizes the absoluteunity between the individual and God, is reflected in the concept of *Wahdat al-Wujudin* Islamic

thought, which states that God is the sole source of all existence and all creation is a manifestation of Him (Nelson, 1998). This invites Muslims to see unity in diversity and understand that behind all forms of existence there is one God power that governs everything. In addition, in Islam, the quest for *makrifat* - inner knowledge gained through direct experience with God - is similar to the teachings of Gnosticism which sought esoteric knowledge to achieve spiritual enlightenment and liberation (Silaban et al., 2024).

In Islam, *makrifat* is achieved through *dhikr*, *tafakur*, and purification of the soul (*tazkiyah*), which helps individuals to detach themselves from worldly attachments and draw closer to God (Abshor, 2019). All these principles can be translated in contemporary Islamic discourse as a way to respond to the challenges of the modern world, which is often materialistic and focused on technological advancement, by inviting people to return to the search for a deeper meaning of life and a balance between the outer and inner dimensions. These principles can enrich spiritual understanding in Islam, open up space for dialogue between Islamic traditions and other spiritual teachings, and provide enlightenment in everyday life.

The foundation of Islamic theosophy is rooted in a combination of mystical knowledge and a deep philosophical understanding of Islam, which aims to uncover the inner meaning of religious teachings. Islamic theosophical thought attempts to explore the deepest essence of Islamic spirituality by emphasizing an understanding of the nature of God, the universe, and man, as well as the relationship between the three.

Islamic theosophy teaches profound foundational principles related to the understanding of God and spiritual life. Tawhid, as the main foundation, teaches not only to outwardly revere God, but also to permeate His presence in every aspect of life and the universe (Yazdi, 2003: 61). The knowledge of *makrifat*, or gnosis, is an inner knowledge gained through a spiritual journey, which transcends rational reason and provides an intuitive understanding of the nature of existence and God. The concept of *Wahdat al-Wujud*, popularized by figures such as Ibn Arabi, asserts that all existence comes from God and everything is a manifestation of Him, promoting a holistic understanding of reality (Arabi, 2018: 6-7). Ihsan in Islamic theosophy is more than just outward worship; it teaches a sense of God's presence in every action and behavior, inviting one to live in love and awareness of God. The search for truth through Sufism is a way to achieve inner knowledge, with spiritual disciplines such as *dhikr* and meditation. The process of introspection and *tazkiyah al-nafs* (self-purification) becomes an integral part of this spiritual journey, which involves purifying the heart of negative traits and raising spiritual awareness, in order to draw closer to God.

These foundations provide the direction for a theosophical understanding of Islam, which invites individuals to delve deeper into the spiritual and inner aspects of religion, beyond a purely ritual or legal understanding.

d. Nasaruddin Umar's Theosophical Epistemology

Humans carry out their responsibilities based on a purposeful understanding, not done carelessly. In order to carry out responsibilities well, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of oneself, the goals to be achieved, and the limits of one's responsibilities. This knowledge is an important basis for ensuring that every action taken is fit for purpose and has measurable value. Basically, humans need knowledge as a path to perfection. This knowledge is then known as epistemology. Before discussing further about the process of knowledge formation, it is important to first understand the meaning of epistemology itself.

Etymologically, the term epistemology comes from the Greek language which is formed from two words, namely episteme and logos. The word episteme means knowledge, while logos means theory. Therefore, epistemology can be interpreted as a theory of knowledge. In another sense, episteme also refers to knowledge or truth, while logos can be translated as

thought, word, or theory. Thus, epistemology is understood as the theory of true knowledge, which in English is known as Theory of Knowledge (Labib, 2011: 143-144).

Knowledge encompasses everything known to man, whether it has clear laws or is yet to be fully revealed. This knowledge can be something that can be expressed in language or something that is difficult to express, whether it is universal or particular. Humans gain knowledge because they interact with the reality around them all the time. The process begins with sensing objects outside of oneself, which then produces ideas in the human mind, forming a deeper understanding and knowledge of the surrounding world.

Theosophical epistemology is a theory of knowledge that combines reason and heart in an effort to understand nature. Throughout history, scientists have had long debates about this being and reality, with differing views between positivism and rationalism. Positivists argue that knowledge is based on sensory experience, with the five senses being the primary source. Anything that cannot be captured by the senses is considered non-existent, including the supernatural, so they are often associated with empiricism. In contrast, rationalists thought that reason was the most reliable source of knowledge (Dawing, 2020: 60). According to both schools, due to the limited and relative nature of the senses, the information obtained from them cannot be fully relied upon. The debate between the two has given rise to criticism and relativization, but at the same time, these differing views have also led to rapid advances in science, the impact of which we are still feeling today.

The Qur'an criticizes those who do not make optimal use of their senses and intellect. In the Qur'an Allah says:

وَلَقَد ذَرَأنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِنَ ٱلجِنِّ وَٱلإِنسِ لَهُم قُلُوب لَّا يَفقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُم أَعيُن لَّا يُبصِرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُم ءَاذَان لَّا يَسمَعُونَ بِهَا أُولَٰئِكَ كَٱلأَنعَٰمِ بَل هُم أَضَلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ ٱلغَٰفِلُونَ

Translation:

> And indeed, We have made for them of the Jinn and men, they have hearts, but they do not use them to understand; they have eyes, but they do not use them to see; and they have ears, but they do not use them to hear. They are like cattle, and they are even more astray. They are the ignorant ones (QS. Al-A'raf: 179).

They are described as ignorant, even lower than animals. This verse confirms that both human senses and intellect have limitations. The senses are limited in providing accurate information, while reason, although important, cannot function fully without the help of the senses and is incapable of understanding the entire nature of reality that is spiritual or metaphysical.

At this point, reason and the senses need guidance from revelation. Revelation is a gift from Allah given to His chosen servants, who have pure hearts and clear minds. They always combine their minds and hearts in deep contemplation (*tafakkur*), so that they are able to reveal the secrets of God that cannot be understood by relying solely on the five senses or reason alone (Dawing, 2020: 13-32). This is the fundamental difference between Western epistemology and Qur'anic epistemology. Qur'anic epistemology emphasizes the importance of the synergy of the three sources of knowledge: senses, reason, and revelation.

To understand the epistemology of Islamic theosophy developed by Nasaruddin Umar, it is necessary to refer to the definition proposed by Suhrawardi al-Maqtul, which states that theosophy is a combination of philosophy and Sufism, both of which produce wisdom. Thus, theosophical reasoning can be understood as a combination of philosophical reasoning, divine reasoning, and wisdom reasoning. This process is carried out by uniting the reasoning of

philosophy and Sufism to achieve an understanding that is full of wisdom (Mufid & Subaidi, 2021; Syafaq, 2015).

The concept of theosophy developed by Nasaruddin Umar offers a new way to understand and apply Islamic teachings. The concept emphasizes the importance of balance between spiritual (religious), philosophical (thought), and ethical (moral) aspects, all of which are relevant to the challenges and changes in modern society and culture. As such, theosophy helps us connect the teachings of Islam to everyday life in the context of today's times.

Epistemology is a branch of philosophy that discusses the nature, origins and limits of knowledge. In the philosophy of science, there are three main components that form the foundation of scientific studies, namely ontology, epistemology and axiology. These three rules are formulated from the thoughts of Ancient Greek philosophers, who tried to understand the fundamental dimensions of science.

Ontology, epistemology and axiology are the three main pillars in the philosophy of science, each of which has a specific role and function. Ontology answers the question of what, which is about the nature and object of something studied in research. It focuses on what exists and is the basis of reality. Epistemology, on the other hand, answers the question of how, which is about the process or way to achieve, reach, or understand knowledge. In this case, epistemology is concerned with methods, approaches, and the validity of knowledge. Finally, axiology answers the question of why, which is about the purpose and value of the knowledge that has been achieved. Axiology reflects how knowledge is utilized or applied in life, to provide benefits or fulfill certain goals. These three aspects form a complementary framework in the development of science (Umar, 2024a).

A scientist differs from a layperson in the way they understand and manage knowledge. Laypeople usually only have general knowledge (knowledge) that has not been systematically organized. Scientists, on the other hand, understand knowledge as science, which already has clear specifications, measures, and testing methods. Science starts with doubt or scepticism - an attitude of not immediately believing in something without proof. For example, if someone asks, "Is there really fruit up there?" a scientist will not immediately believe it, but will check and prove it first (Umar, 2024a).

This scepticism is the cornerstone of theory development. Through a rigorous testing process, such as checks and balances, a theory can be built. However, the theory is not final. If there is a new theory that is stronger and able to overthrow the previous theory, then the old theory will be replaced. This process is at the heart of methodology or epistemology in the philosophy of science: a systematic approach to understanding the world through scepticism, corroboration, and continuous theory development (Umar, 2024a).

Religious epistemology has fundamental differences with scientific epistemology. In scientific epistemology, the process starts with doubt or scepticism. Scientists doubt something first, then conduct proof to reach a conclusion or theory. However, this approach cannot be applied to religious science. Does one have to doubt the existence of God in order to understand Him? If one doubts Allah, it can actually damage the *aqeedah* (Umar, 2024a).

Herein lies the challenge of being a religious scientist. His approach cannot fully adopt the Western scientific mindset, which measures the validity of everything only through scientific methods. In the context of religion, belief (faith) is a starting point that should not be disturbed by doubt. Thus, religious epistemology promotes an approach that is in harmony with faith, different from the scepticism that characterizes science.

e. Nasaruddin Umar's Consept of Islamic Theosophy

1. Knowing God Through Reason and Revelation

Knowing God is not only through revelation (God's word) but also through human reason, which is given as a tool for thinking. Both are complementary and inseparable in approaching the understanding of God. God's word provides guidance and the basis of absolute truth, while reason serves to ponder, understand, and dig deeper into the meanings contained in the word.

Through reason, humans are able to see signs of God's greatness in the universe and in everyday life, which are referred to as *kauniyah* verses. Meanwhile, through the word, humans are directed to the correct understanding of the nature of God and His will, as stated in the *qawliyah* verses (revelations in the holy book) (Umar, 2024c).

This approach invites humans to combine a critical mind with a submissive heart, resulting in a wise understanding. In other words, knowing God is not just a matter of belief, but also a continuous intellectual and spiritual endeavour, which aims to harmonize between rational knowledge and divine wisdom

The Qur'ān views revelation as a great divine essence, which in a number of verses is attributed to prophets to explain its essence. Revelation represents the movement of the unreachable Holy One into the profane world. Its existence reflects its transcendental and sacred nature, a mystery that is the starting point of the entire tradition of revelation. Revelation, including the Qur'ān, is a manifestation of the transcendent, the mysterious, and the unseen God. This process shows that revelation is not just a message, but a spiritual bridge that brings the divine dimension into human reality (Nurdin, 2019).

Every human being is created with two main characteristics. First, his natural inclination is to seek God as the object of his worship and surrender. Secondly, humans by nature will not submit to just any object of worship, but will continue to strive to find a God who has certain attributes, such as the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate, and the Most Receptive to Repentance. In other words, the God that humans are looking for is the One who matches the description expressed in the Qur'an (Lari, 2005: 36).

a) God in the Perspective of Human Reason

In Nasaruddin Umar's view, human reason has an important role in understanding God, although it still has limitations. Reason is given by God as a gift to contemplate the signs of His greatness, both contained in the universe (verses *kauniyah*) and in revelation (verses *qawliyah*). However, Nasaruddin Umar emphasizes that reason cannot fully reach the essence of God, which transcends all human limitations (Umar, 2021a).

According to him, reason serves as a tool to access some of God's majesty through logical analysis and deep reflection. With reason, humans are invited to read and understand the reality that shows the existence and greatness of God. However, reason must work in harmony with revelation and the heart, as there are spiritual and metaphysical dimensions that can only be understood through faith and the guidance of revelation.

Can reason comprehend God's perfection? Directly, the answer is no, as that would potentially limit His perfection, as already understood. However, indirectly, the intellect is able to recognize His perfection (Nuruddin, 2020: 235).

Nasaruddin Umar also reminds us that human reason is often bound by space, time and sensory experience. Therefore, while reason can provide rational descriptions and arguments about God's existence, a perfect understanding can only be achieved through a holistic approach involving reason, revelation and a clean heart. In this way, reason becomes not only a logical tool, but also a bridge to deeper spiritual appreciation.

b. Discussion of God in the Qur'an

The encounter between heaven and earth is evidence of the presence of revelation. Although revelation is transcendental and sacred as the divine logos, when it is conveyed through human language that is earthly and profane, there is a dialectic between the two. Therefore, in the tradition of religious studies, including Qur'anic studies, efforts to understand the meaning of revelation are often carried out through three main approaches in Islam. First, the translation approach, which translates revelation into another language. Second, *tafsir*, which provides an explanation of the meaning of the verse according to its context. Third, *ta'wil*, which is revealing the deeper and symbolic meaning of the revelation (Mohd Sabri, 2018; Nurdin, 2019).

According to Nasaruddin Umar, the concept of God in the Qur'an is described comprehensively, including His transcendent (beyond) and immanent (near) attributes. The Qur'an teaches that God is the One, the Almighty, and cannot be equated with His creatures, but at the same time, He is also very close to His servants, as stated in the Qur'an:

$$\ldots \text{وَنَحۡنُ أَقۡرَبُ إِلَيۡهِ مِنۡ حَبۡلِ ٱلۡوَرِيدِ}$$

Translation:

… and We are nearer to him than the sinews of his neck. (QS. Qaf: 16).

$$\text{وَلِلَّهِ ٱلۡأَسۡمَآءُ ٱلۡحُسۡنَىٰ فَٱدۡعُوهُ بِهَاۖ وَذَرُواْ ٱلَّذِينَ يُلۡحِدُونَ فِيٓ أَسۡمَٰٓئِهِۦۚ سَيُجۡزَوۡنَ مَا كَانُواْ يَعۡمَلُونَ}$$

Translation:

"To Allah alone belong the asma-ul husna, so invoke Him by mentioning them and leave behind those who deviate from the truth in mentioning His names. They will be rewarded for what they have done," (QS. Al-A'raf: 180).

Nasaruddin Umar emphasizes that God in the Qur'an is not just an object of faith, but also a source of inspiration, compassion and wisdom. God is described through His names and attributes (Asmaul Husna), which provide humans with multiple dimensions to understand Him. These attributes show a balance between justice (*jalaliyah*) and compassion (*jamaliyah*), providing ethical and spiritual guidance to humans in living life (Umar, 2014b: 6).

He also highlighted that the Qur'an not only introduces God as the creator of the universe, but also as a regulator, maintainer, and guide for humans. Through His verses, humans are invited to recognize God both through reflection on the universe (*ayat kauniyah*) and through revealed revelation (*ayat qawliyah*). Thus, God in the Qur'an is not only the center of faith, but also a source of teaching and life guidance that shapes human relationships with themselves, others, and the universe (Umar, 2024c).

2. Revitalizing Religion Trough Theosophy

Revitalizing religion means renewing the understanding and application of religious values in order to remain relevant to social, cultural and modern challenges. Nasaruddin Umar, encourages the re-reading of sacred texts with a contextual approach. It is intended that religion is not far and not too distant from the adherents themselves, what the religion says and what the adherents do is not in harmony. The more distance between the adherents and their religion, the more we fail to take care of religion it self (Umar, 2024b). Religion is not just normative, but religion comes with a transformative basis, relevant to the problems of contemporary society.

Nasaruddin Umar, uses theosophical interpretation as a tool for his approach, where spiritual values are emphasized in understanding moral, ethical and humanitarian messages in religious texts. Religion must be able to answer modern challenges such as social inequality,

environmental crisis, radicalism, and moral disintegration. For this reason, revitalization of religion is needed so that religion does not only play a role in the worship space, but also becomes a solution in the public space.

The critical function of religion is not only to awaken the mindset and behavior of individuals in society, but to provide direction for the concept and planning of development. The function of religious criticism is sometimes ridden by opposition groups to weaken the joints of the government, the function of religion must certainly be a motivator more voiced by the ruling group to facilitate the achievement of its programs, it does not even rule out the possibility of business people and other professional groups also do not want to miss to take advantage of the power of religion to achieve their goals, by quoting certain parts of the scriptures (Umar, 2014: 79).

One of the important points that we need to encourage in the public sphere is the need to strengthen the values of religious moderation. Religious moderation must be realized through an attitude of tolerance, respect for differences, and contribute to social harmony (Zainal et al., 2024). The revitalization of religion intended by Nasaruddin Umar does not mean changing the core of religion, but renewing the way religion is understood and practiced so that it remains a blessing for the universe. He wants a religion that is alive, dynamic, and integrated with the needs of modern humans without losing its substance.

Religion functions to maintain human life so that it becomes orderly, organized, calm, peaceful, wise, just, including for its adherents peaceful (Umar, 2019: 147). Religion contains normative teachings and laws regarding the regulation of order and order so that humans live in peace (Al-Rasyid, 2021:3). In addition to providing values, morals, and ethics, the next function of religion is to give meaning to life and provide a sense of security and confidence. It also provides a strong inspiration to do good (Umar, 2014: 77). And strengthen the unity of the nation, so that its role and function must be maintained in the life of the nation and state. However, what often emerges is a contradictory picture of religion. On the one hand, religion is expected to bring peace, but in reality, in the name of religion, innocent human lives are often easily taken (Umar, 2014: 78).

Religious followers sometimes express their beliefs in radical ways. They understand religion literally or textually, so religion is practiced in accordance with the text rigidly without any attempt to interpret it thoroughly. Therefore, there needs to be a commitment that considers the common good, so that the religion revealed by God to create order does not become a trigger for social disharmony (Al-Rasyid, 2021: 7). Some Christian thinkers argue that a person's religion is a form of obedience or surrender in totality to something that is considered the ultimate goal of their life (Yusufian, 2014: 5).

4. CONCLUSION

Nasaruddin Umar's theosophical thinking offers an integrative approach to understanding God, religion and knowledge. Through the combination of reason, revelation and heart, he emphasizes the importance of harmony between the rational, spiritual and ethical aspects of human life. God in his view is understood as both transcendent and immanent, as the source of wisdom and compassion, and the center of all reality. The intellect has an important role in contemplating the signs of God's greatness, both through the universe (*ayat kauniyah*) and revelation (*ayat qawliyah*). However, the intellect still needs the direction of revelation to reach a deeper understanding, because there are limits in its ability to reach the metaphysical dimension. The concept of theosophy initiated by Nasaruddin Umar, by combining philosophy and Sufism, invites humans to live a balanced life between logic and spirituality, and is relevant to modern socio-cultural dynamics. This approach provides space for

religious appreciation that is not only ritualistic, but also oriented towards the development of wisdom and wisdom in facing the challenges of the times

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