

Dr Zoheir Esmail

Qur'ān, Mysticism (*ʿirfān*) and Proof (*burhān*): Ḥasanzāda Āmulī and Hermeneutical Confluence in Qur'ānic Exegesis

Sufi and philosophical epistemology, often to the irritation of more traditionally minded scholars, advocate the use of the heart and intellect as the most important tools with which to understand the reality of scripture. While the Qur'ān for Muslim mystics and philosophers is undoubtedly of divine origin, that does not mean that the certainty achieved through the human endeavours of proof and unveiling are divergent from its message. Rather, correspondence in the realisation of the Truth further attests the reality of scripture, opens pathways to understand its depth, and thereby creatively elucidate another perspective on Qur'ānic exegesis. Thought and unveiling have a role in giving meaning to the Qur'ān, which is not the exclusive remit of transmission (*naql*). Indeed, the probative value of certainty is such that scriptural exegesis is corroborative, and the hermeneutical ambiguity of scriptural analysis is officiated by recourse to what is certain. With the pecking order of jurisprudential endeavour (*ijtihād*) thereby turned on its head, controversy should be expected, and invariably such methods are banished to heterodoxy. In this paper I will investigate a modern rendition of the validity of hermeneutical confluence in a treatise written by the Shī'ī intellectual polymath, Ḥasan Ḥasanzāda Āmulī (1928-current). I will then turn to his voluminous works to identify examples of his hermeneutical method highlighting its creative application to the exegesis of the Qur'ān. While Āmulī has not written a traditional sequential or thematic exegetical work, the paper highlights how Qur'ānic exegesis occurs in a variety of contexts within the modern Shī'ī intellectual tradition.



Dr Zoheir Esmail

Al-Mahdi Institute

Dr Zoheir Ali Esmail is a scholar of Islamic philosophy, mysticism, and jurisprudence, with expertise in Shi'i thought and medieval Islamic intellectual history. He holds a PhD from the University of Exeter, where his research explored the interpretation of Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy from the Qajar period to post-revolutionary Iran. He also holds master's degrees in Islamic Mysticism and Islamic Sciences, alongside extensive *ḥawza* training in Syria, the UK, and Qom.

Dr Esmail currently serves as the Head of the Department of Mysticism and Spirituality at Al-Mahdi Institute and is also a lecturer at the University of Birmingham. He has previously taught at the Islamic College for Advanced Studies (ICAS) in London and The School of Occidental and Islamic Studies in Qom. His teaching spans Islamic philosophy, mysticism, logic, and theology at both academic and *ḥawza* levels.

Dr Esmail has presented at international conferences and published on topics including the philosophy of *tawḥīd*, Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī's mysticism, and Qur'ānic paradigms in the Prophetic *sīrah*. His recent works include *For the Seekers of Knowledge* and a forthcoming study on Sayyid Shubbar's theological reconciliation of divine unity.

Beyond academia, Dr. Esmail actively engages in educational outreach through private tuition, online platforms, and public lectures, contributing to the contemporary understanding of Islamic spirituality and philosophy.