

Hermeneutics in the View of Abd al-Razzaq Lahiji

Nafiseh Ahl-Sarmadi*
Seyed Mehdi Emami Jome**

Abstract

Hermeneutic is a major keyword in philosophical school of Isfahan and Abd al-Razzaq Lahiji is a prominent figure in this school. Hermeneutics for this theologian is beyond a method of confronting revealed scriptures. According to his works, Lahiji's view toward his hermeneutics could be categorized in three groups for investigation:

1. Intellectual hermeneutics
2. Intuitive-intellectual hermeneutics
3. Intuitive hermeneutics

For Lahiji, mere intuitive hermeneutics in void and an intuition without intellectualism is unable to reach its goals. However, the other two approaches are valid and could be of help. In intellectual hermeneutics, there are two issues or bounds: one is the revealed scripture which is the divine legislation and the other is the external existence as his existential discourse. They have in fact been considered a text in Lahiji's view. Thus, intellectual hermeneutics is of two distinct aspects in Lahiji's verbal approach.

However, intuitive-intellectual hermeneutics is based on an existential and sensual spiritual experience from surface to the esoteric and reaching a transcendental stage of truth. This experience could occur in the face of either revealed scripture or the existents. Nonetheless, for Lahiji, this sensual journey could not reach anywhere without intellectual conduct. In his perspective ontology is the fundament of theoretical aspects of hermeneutics. In ontology, Lahiji was influenced by his master. The ontological journey a philosopher has to go through to reach the truth is both hermeneutics and is an introduction to another hermeneutics. In other words, ontology becomes a hermeneutic way to comprehend the meaning of the text. In fact, there will be hermeneutics in hermeneutics and therefore the ontological journey will be as a hermeneutic method for those facing religious knowledge.

Lahiji discusses the basics required for intuitive-intellectual hermeneutics and mentions self-mortification and mental self-discipline (contemplation). He believes discursive reason, balance reason and intuitive reason are different roles intellect takes in this type of hermeneutics. In his theology books, Lahiji attempts to equip theology with ontology and various approaches from hermeneutics in order to open novel dimensions in theology which

* Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic Philosophy and Theology, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran
(Responsible author) sarmadi.na58@gmail.com

** Associate Professor, Department of Islamic Philosophy and Theology, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran
1339smj@gmail.com

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has unfortunately not been attended as it deserved. However, it should be noted that these novel arenas could be considered as steps toward positive evolution in theology.

The battle against religious formalism has to be considered the sociocultural mission this mystic theologian aimed to accomplish. This struggle came from his theoretical approach toward hermeneutics. Considering the prevalence of negative Sufism in Lahiji's time, he put his utmost attempt to analyze and clarify the true meaning of mysticism and prevent vulgar Sufism.

Keywords: Lahiji; Hermeneutics; Mysticism; Intellectual; Intuitive-Intellectual; Conflict

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