

Platonic Anamnesis and Laduni Epistemology: The Sunnah and Sufism as Interpretive Horizons

* Faiq Ubaidillah Ulil Abshor ¹

Nely Rahmawati Zaimah ²

¹ Department of Aqidah and Islamic Philosophy, Faculty of Ushuluddin,
University of Darussalam Gontor, Ponorogo

² Primary School Teacher Education Department,
Al-Anwar Islamic College of Religion, Rembang, Indonesia

* Corresponding author: faiqabshor@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study examines Platonic anamnesis within the horizon of the Sunnah and Sunni Sufism through a thematic literature study focused on the relationship between the soul, primordial disposition, and spiritual knowledge. Previous studies on Plato generally concentrated on recollection as an epistemological theory, while studies on Islamic spirituality often discussed *'ilm ladunnī*, *qalb*, and *fitrah* within isolated theological or mystical frameworks. This research brings these discourses into a comparative reflective reading by analysing Platonic dialogues such as *Meno*, *Phaedo*, and *Phaedrus*, alongside prophetic traditions and classical Sufi texts including *al-Risālah al-Ladunniyyah*, *al-Risālah al-Qushayriyyah*, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, and *Kitāb al-Lum'a*. The findings show that Plato positions anamnesis as the soul's recollection of universal truth through its ontological affinity with the intelligible realm, whereas the Sunnah and Sunni Sufism place knowledge within the framework of *fitrah*, divine guidance, purification of the heart, and spiritual discipline. The study also finds that the concept of knowledge in both traditions exceeds sensory empiricism and instrumental rationality, although they differ fundamentally in metaphysical structure and theological authority. In Plato, knowledge arises through recollection and the soul's dialectic; in the Islamic tradition, knowledge develops through revelation, *tazkiyah al-nafs* (purification of the self), and divine illumination. Consequently, this study concludes that the dialogue between anamnesis and *'ilm ladunnī* is located in their shared concern for the existential condition of the human soul and its orientation toward truth. Future research should undertake comparative and empirical studies exploring how anamnesis and *'ilm ladunnī* inform contemporary spiritual practices across traditions.

Keywords: Plato, anamnesis, Sunnah, *fitrah*, Sufism, *'ilm ladunnī*, soul epistemology.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji anamnesis Plato dalam cakrawala Sunnah dan tasawuf Sunni melalui studi literatur tematik yang berfokus pada epistemologi jiwa, fitrah, dan pengetahuan spiritual jiwa. Kajian-kajian sebelumnya tentang Plato umumnya berpusat pada recollection sebagai teori epistemologi, sedangkan studi spiritualitas Islam lebih banyak membahas *'ilm ladunni*, *qalb*, dan *fitrah* dalam kerangka teologis atau mistik yang terpisah. Penelitian ini mempertemukan kedua diskursus tersebut melalui pembacaan reflektif-komparatif terhadap dialog-dialog Plato seperti *Meno*, *Phaedo*, dan *Phaedrus*, dan kitab-kitab tasawuf klasik seperti *al-Risalah al-Ladunniyyah*, *al-Risalah al-Qushayriyyah*, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, dan *Kitāb al-Lum'a*, kemudian ditarik dalam kacamata sunnah Nabi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Plato memosisikan anamnesis sebagai proses pengenalan kembali kebenaran universal melalui kedekatan ontologis jiwa dengan dunia *intelligible*, sedangkan Sunnah dan tasawuf Sunni menempatkan pengetahuan dalam kerangka fitrah, hidayah, penyucian hati, dan disiplin spiritual. Penelitian ini juga menemukan bahwa konsep pengetahuan pada kedua tradisi sama-sama melampaui empirisme inderawi dan rasionalitas instrumental, meskipun keduanya memiliki struktur metafisis dan otoritas teologis yang berbeda. Dalam Plato, pengetahuan muncul melalui recollection dan dialektika jiwa; dalam tradisi Islam, pengetahuan berkembang melalui wahyu, *taẓkiyah nafs* (pemurnian hati/diri), dan iluminasi ilahiah. Dengan demikian, dialog antara anamnesis dan *'ilm ladunni* terletak pada perhatian bersama terhadap kondisi eksistensial jiwa manusia dan orientasinya menuju kebenaran. Penelitian selanjutnya disarankan berupa studi komparatif dan empiris yang mengeksplorasi bagaimana anamnesis dan *'ilm ladunni* membentuk praktik spiritual kontemporer lintas tradisi.

Kata kunci : Plato, anamnesis, Sunnah, fitrah, tasawuf, *'ilm ladunni*, epistemologi jiwa.

Introduction

In *Knowledge, Nature, and the Good: Essays on Ancient Philosophy*, John M. Cooper reopens long-neglected avenues of inquiry into the soul's epistemic depths and its latent knowledge, setting this exploration against the modern philosophical fixation on Humean empiricism and Kantian metaphysics.¹ Although the paradigm of recollection in Platonic tradition is often understood as a complete epistemological edifice—namely, that the soul has already “known” in its pre-existential phase—there remains a fundamental problem regarding the ontological relation between the soul's existence and its epistemic potential within the mechanism of anamnesis.²

In subsequent developments, anamnesis emerges as part of a broader philosophical project: the relationship between soul, truth, and the universal good/beauty (*to agathon*). Thus, the theory of anamnesis cannot be reduced merely to a mechanism of “remembering,” but must be interpreted as an epistemic structure through which the human soul potentially recognizes universal truth beyond the sensory world.³ Giannakopoulou has shown that even in the *Phaedo*—often regarded as Plato's most dualistic dialogue—Plato reveals a complex relationship between soul and body, a paradoxical dichotomy.⁴ The soul is indeed seen as closer to truth, yet human beings remain bound to embodied existence, so knowledge is always situated in tension between the sensible and the intelligible realms. As Bedu-Addo puts it, the soul is never entirely independent, but always entangled in the conditions of embodied existence.⁵

In this light, Platonic anamnesis develops beyond an abstract epistemic theory. Lin introduces the components of “origin and perfection,” emphasizing how the soul attains its highest knowledge as the teleological end of epistemology.⁶ In distinct works, Lin and Demir each argue

¹ John M. Cooper, *Knowledge, Nature, and the Good : Essays on Ancient Philosophy* (Princeton University Press, 2009), <https://www.torrossa.com/en/resources/an/5575708>.

² Dominic Scott, “Platonic Anamnesis Revisited,” *The Classical Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (December 1987): 346–66, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S000983880003055X>; DA Shepardson, *The Development of Plato's Theory of Recollection* PhD diss., University of Toronto, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2002, <https://search.proquest.com/openview/a8b6841655ee238886fa95060edbe68b/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y>.

³ Aminullah Poya and Habiburrahman Rizapoor, “Al-Ghazali's Theory of Real Knowledge: An Exploration of Knowledge Integration in Islamic Epistemology through Contemporary Perspectives,” *International Journal Of Humanities Education and Social Sciences (IJHES)* 3, no. 2 (2023): 607–24, <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/e938/1809524a35d6786d110ada2cd429ca32f770.pdf>; Domadal Pramod and Domadala Sai Prateek, “Mind, Senses, Soul & Universal Consciousness,” *Journal of Consciousness Exploration & Research* 7, no. 5 (May 2016), <https://jcer.com/index.php/jci/article/view/567>.

⁴ Maria Giannakopoulou, “Plato on Soul and Body” (PhD, University of Glasgow, 2002), <https://eleanor.lib.gla.ac.uk/record=b2069712>.

⁵ Bedu-Addo, “Sense-experience and the Argument for Recollection in Plato's *Phaedo*,” *Phronesis* 36, no. 1 (1991): 27–60, <https://doi.org/10.1163/156852891321052804>; Lee Franklin, “Recollection and Philosophical Reflection in Plato's *Phaedo*,” *Phronesis* 50, no. 4 (2005): 289–314, <https://doi.org/10.1163/156852805774481379>.

⁶ Zhimeng Lin, “Origen and Plato on the Superiority and Perfection of the Soul,” *Religions* 16, no. 1 (January 2025): 92, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel16010092>.

that the soul must move “outward” from the domination of the senses, so that knowledge is not simply acquired but unfolds as a process beginning with existential transformation.⁷

This inquiry into anamnesis is crucial within philosophy and Islamic thought because it reopens the fundamental question of whether human beings possess epistemic potential that transcends empirical experience. The discussion does not aim to judge its conformity with Islamic doctrine, but rather to highlight its relevance in an era dominated by modern epistemologies that privilege sensory experience as the foundation of knowledge. Anamnesis offers another possibility: that the human soul has a primordial orientation toward universal truth, irreducible to material mechanisms or empirical rationality. This question resonates across religious traditions, not only in Islam, which has long emphasized the relation between soul, *fitrah*, and the sources of human knowledge.⁸

In Islamic philosophy, the human being is not conceived as a blank entity shaped solely by external experience under divine authorization. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: “*Every child is born upon fitrah; it is his parents who make him a Jew, Christian, or Magian.*”⁹ This hadith indicates that humans carry an innate disposition (*fitrah*) from the very beginning of existence. Epistemologically, *fitrah* is not merely a moral inclination or religious affirmation but an ontological readiness to recognize and assimilate truth. In this sense, *fitrah* reflects a profound parallel with Platonic anamnesis, though the two differ fundamentally in metaphysical structure and theological legitimacy.

The Qur'an (Q. 7:172) itself reveals a primordial dimension of human relation to truth in the *mithaq al-ast*, when all human souls bore witness to God's lordship before material existence.¹⁰ In Sufi tradition, this verse is often understood as evidence that the human *qalb* retains a primordial trace of divine truth, though veiled by *ghaflah* (heedlessness), *nafs* (ego), and worldly distractions.¹¹ Thus, the highest knowledge in Islam is not merely rational activity but a process of purification (*tazkiyah*) through which the soul reawakens to the light of truth embedded in its *fitrah*.¹²

⁷ Lin, “Origen and Plato on the Superiority and Perfection of the Soul”; Abdullah Demir, “Anamnesis Between Myth and Epistemology: Recollection in Plato and Cross-Cultural Memory Symbolism,” *Synesis* (ISSN 1984-6754) 17, no. 3 (September 2025): 83–97, <https://seer.ucp.br/seer/index.php/synesis/article/view/3412>.

⁸ Poya and Rizapoor, “Al-Ghazali's Theory of Real Knowledge: An Exploration of Knowledge Integration in Islamic Epistemology through Contemporary Perspectives”; Moch Hatta, Erawadi Erawadi, and Sumper Mulia Harahap, “Pendidikan Ilmu Laduni Menurut Imam Al Ghazali,” *AL-IBROH: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Dan Keguruan* 1, no. 02 (2024): 100–117, <https://journal.stitgt.ac.id/index.php/al-ibroh/article/view/23>.

⁹ Abū al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḥajjāj Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 7, Translation of the Meanings of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Nasiruddin al-Khattab (Trans). (Darussalam Publishers, 1990); Muhammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 9, The Translation of the Meanings of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Arabic-English), Translated by Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Riyadh: Darussalam Publishers & Distributors, 1997).

¹⁰ Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, Badan Litbang dan Diklat, Kementerian Agama RI, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemah*, Edisi Penyempurnaan, Terjemahan Indonesia (Jakarta: Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2017).

¹¹ Shehar Bano, “Healing the Heart and Mind: Modern Relevance of Sufi to Psychological and Mental Health,” *Proceedings of Transactions on Islam, Science, and Society (TISS)* 1, no. 1 (October 2025): 110–32, <https://tiss.proceeding.unida.gontor.ac.id/index.php/tiss/article/view/15>.

¹² Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, “*Thya' Ulumuddin*,” in *Thya' Ulumuddin* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kutub al-Islāmiya, 1980).

Another hadith affirms: “*In the body there is a piece of flesh; if it is sound, the whole body is sound; if it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt. That is the heart (qalb).*”¹³ This underscores that the orientation toward knowledge and truth lies not only in reason but in the spiritual condition of the inner self. Hence, epistemology in the Sunnah is never purely intellectualistic; true knowledge is inseparable from *tazkiyah*, *adab*, and existential transformation.

At this juncture, the reflective dialogue between Platonic anamnesis and *laduni* epistemology becomes significant. Modern interpretations of Platonic anamnesis emphasize the soul’s movement beyond sensory domination to apprehend intelligible reality and attain *the good*. Meanwhile, the Sunnah emphasizes purification of the *qalb* from the veils of ego and heedlessness, enabling receptivity to divine guidance and *ma’rifah*. Both traditions acknowledge a dimension of human existence that transcends materiality, yet they diverge fundamentally in explaining the source of knowledge: anamnesis rests on recollection of pre-existential realities, while *laduni* epistemology rests on *fitrah*, revelation, and divine illumination bestowed upon the purified heart.

This study seeks to show how two great traditions—Greek philosophy and the epistemology of the Sunnah—both attempt to explain the mystery of the soul, knowledge, and human transformation toward ultimate truth. In this context, anamnesis can be read as a philosophical horizon of the soul’s epistemic potential, while *fitrah* and *laduni* in Islam constitute a normative-spiritual horizon that situates knowledge within the human journey toward self-perfection and nearness to God.

The central research question is: How does Plato’s epistemology, through the concept of anamnesis, explain the relation between soul and universal knowledge, and how can this concept be reflectively read within the horizon of the Sunnah and *laduni* epistemology in Islam? The focus is on understanding the epistemic structure of Platonic anamnesis as a mechanism for recognizing truth beyond sensory experience, and then examining its relevance to *fitrah*, *qalb*, *tazkiyah al-nafs*, and *ilm laduni* in Sunni Sufi tradition. The aim is not to equate Plato with Islam, but to place them in reflective dialogue to identify points of convergence and ontological-theological boundaries.

Accordingly, this study is limited to epistemological and spiritual analysis of Plato’s major dialogues—especially *Meno*, *Phaedo*, and *Phaedrus*—alongside Sunnah texts and classical Sufi works on *fitrah*, soul, *qalb*, and *ilm laduni*, such as those of al-Ghazali, al-Qushayri, and Al-Jilani. It does not attempt to cover the entirety of Platonic metaphysics or the whole of Islamic mysticism, but focuses specifically on the problem of the soul’s epistemic potential, human existential transformation, and the possibility of non-empirical epistemology in both philosophical and spiritual perspectives.

¹³ al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 9; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 7.

”إِنَّ فِي الْجَسَدِ مُضْغَةً إِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ أَلَا وَهِيَ الْقُلُوبُ

(Bukhārī: Book of Belief / Kitāb al-Īmān — hadith often numbered Book 2, Hadith 45 / Vol.1, Book 2, Hadith 50 in common printings; Muslim: Book of Musāqah — Hadith 1599a / Book 22, Hadith 133)

Previous Study

In the *Phaedo*, the soul is indeed portrayed as closer to truth than the body, yet human beings remain situated in an embodied existence that places knowledge in persistent tension between the sensible world and the intelligible realm.¹⁴ Glanville reinforces this point by insisting that the soul always exists in a complex relation with the human condition of embodiment.¹⁵ Cooper has likewise shown that Plato's epistemology must be read as part of a broader philosophical project concerning the relation among knowledge, the nature of reality, and human orientation toward *the good*.¹⁶ Within this framework, the theory of anamnesis raises the question of how the soul moves toward universal truth and existential perfection. Lin extends this perspective by arguing that, in the Platonic tradition, knowledge is always bound up with the soul's perfection and the release of the human being from the domination of the senses.¹⁷

On the other hand, several focused studies on Platonic anamnesis demonstrate that the discussion has shifted from a narrow concern with recollection to a more structural analysis of the relations among soul, knowledge, and orientation toward truth. Temizkan distinguishes between noetic and dianoetic anamnesis—knowledge acquired by immediate intuition versus knowledge attained through gradual analytical steps—while Gulley emphasizes Plato's critique of empiricism. Ionescu highlights the role of myth¹⁸ and the Socratic 'agitation' method¹⁹ in eliciting recollection; Ferrari²⁰ strengthens the ontological basis by stressing *syngeneia* (the kinship) between soul and Forms; and Trabattoni²¹ reads recollection as a necessary condition for Plato's entire epistemology. Together, these studies show that anamnesis is no longer treated as a single theme but as a nexus connecting method, ontology, and theory of knowledge.

These articles reveal three dominant currents in contemporary scholarship. The first treats anamnesis as an epistemic mechanism: the way the soul moves from perplexity to recognition of truth through dialectic and argumentative testing. The second shifts attention to metaphysical foundations, arguing that recollection only makes sense if the soul bears a distinctive ontological relation to non-sensible reality. The third reads anamnesis as an inner transformative process in which knowledge cannot be separated from the condition of the knowing subject. This tripartite

¹⁴ Giannakopoulou, "Plato on Soul and Body."

¹⁵ Mark Glanville, "Better out than In?," *Index on Censorship* 50, no. 3 (September 2021): 78–81, <https://doi.org/10.1177/03064220211048873>.

¹⁶ Cooper, *Knowledge, Nature, and the Good*.

¹⁷ Lin, "Origen and Plato on the Superiority and Perfection of the Soul."

¹⁸ Cristina Ionescu, "The Mythical Introduction of Recollection in the *Meno* (81A5–E2)," *Philosophy Documentation Center* 31 (2006): 153–70, <https://doi.org/10.5840/jpr.2006.20>.

¹⁹ Cristina Ionescu, "Elenchus, Recollection, and the Method of Hypothesis in the *Meno*," *PLATO JOURNAL* 17 (March 2018): 9–29, https://doi.org/10.14195/2183-4105_17_1.

²⁰ Franco Ferrari, "Anamnesis e Syngeneia: A Proposito Di Menone, 81c-d," *PLATO JOURNAL* 20 (August 2020): 127–35, https://doi.org/10.14195/2183-4105_20_9.

²¹ Franco Trabattoni, "Recollection and Metaphysics in Plato/Reminiscencia e metafisica em Platao," *Revista Archa: Revista de Estudos Sobre as Origens do Pensamento Ocidental*, no. 26 (May 2019): NA-NA, <https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?p=IFME&sw=w&issn=21794960&v=2.1&it=r&id=GALE%7CA600550856&sid=googleScholar&linkaccess=abs>.

orientation is evident across readings of *Meno*, *Phaedo*, and *Phaedrus*, each dialogue accentuating different aspects of the quest for knowledge.²²

Nevertheless, clear gaps remain that this study seeks to address. First, the five articles mentioned largely operate within Plato's own horizon and therefore do not build adequate conceptual bridges to Islamic intellectual traditions or other spiritual epistemologies. Second, *Phaedrus* has received relatively less sustained attention compared with *Meno*, despite its explicit concern with *the Good* and its importance for understanding the psychological and affective dimensions of recollection. Third, while the relation among soul, inner readiness, and the legitimacy of knowledge is often implied, it has not been systematically articulated as a comprehensive comparative framework. In short, the existing literature is strong on explaining what anamnesis is, but less robust in showing how the concept can be situated in a broader dialogical field without flattening the fundamental differences between traditions.

Studies of the soul's epistemology and *ladunni* knowledge in the Islamic tradition have tended to concentrate on *qalb*, *fitriah*, *tazkiyah al-nafs*, and *ma'rifah*. Al-Ghazali, in his monumental works *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* and *al-Risalah al-Ladunniyyah*, frames knowledge as divine light present in a purified *qalb*.²³ Knowledge is not understood solely as the product of rationality or empirical experience but also as a form of guidance (*hidayah*) attained through spiritual purification and nearness to God. Similar perspectives appear across Sufi literature—al-Qushayri's *al-Risalah*²⁴, al-Hujwiri's *Kashf al-Mahjub*²⁵, and the writings of Al-Jilani²⁶ (*Sirr al-Asrar*, *Futuḥ al-Ghayb*, *Fath Al-Rabbani*)—all situate highest knowledge in the readiness of the spirit, the purification of the heart, and existential transformation.

Yet these rich Islamic treatments remain largely separate from Platonic scholarship. Research on Platonic anamnesis tends to stop at internal readings of Greek philosophy, while studies of *'ilm ladunni* develop mainly within theological and Sufi frameworks. Few works bring these two currents into a reflective epistemological dialogue within the horizon of the Sunnah. Prior studies also often emphasize metaphysical or mystical aspects in isolation, without showing how the concepts of soul, *fitriah*, *qalb*, and human epistemic potential might be read as intersecting epistemic structures that nevertheless retain distinct ontological and theological boundaries.

²² S. Ariza, "Initiating Inquiry In Plato's *Meno*," *Rhizomata*, *Rhizomata*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 1-26. (2025), <https://doi.org/10.1515/rhiz-2025-0001>; BA Adebawale, "An Evaluation of Plato's Conception of Immortality of the Soul in *Phaedo*," *Nigeria and the Classics: Ibadan Journal of the Classics and Multidisciplinary Studies*, <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ncijcms/article/download/262586/247892/621836>; DA Shepardson, "The Many Do Not Recollect: The Nature and Scope of Recollection in Plato's *Phaedrus*," *Apeiron*, 57 (4): 641–660 (2024) (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1515/apeiron-2023-0102>.

²³ Al-Ghazali, "Thya' Ulumuddin"; Abū Ḥamid Muḥammad Al-Ghazālī, *Ar-Risalah al-Ladunniyyah* (Cairo: Dar al-Maqtham li-an-Naṣr wa Tawzī', 2014).

²⁴ Aly Mashar, "Konsep Sufi Sejati Dalam Kitab Utama Tarekat Di Indonesia: Studi Atas Kitab Al-Risalah Al-Qusyairiyyah," *Bulletin of Indonesian Islamic Studies* 2, no. 1 (May 2023): 39–54, <https://doi.org/10.51214/biis.v2i1.495>.

²⁵ Heydar Ali Dahmarde, "The Reflection of Didactic Literature in Hujwiri's *Kashf al-Mahjub*," *Journal of Prose Studies in Persian Literature*, ahead of print, January 31, 2026, <https://doi.org/10.22103/jil.2026.26584.3247>.

²⁶ Ahmad Mushawwir, "Penafsiran Sufistik Syekh 'Abd Qadir Al-Jilani dalam Kitab *Fath Al-Rabbani*" (masters, Universitas PTIQ Jakarta, 2023), <https://repository.ptiq.ac.id/id/eprint/1808/>.

Against this background, the present study occupies a dialogical-reflective position that brings Platonic anamnesis into conversation with *ladunni* epistemology as articulated within the Sunnah. The research focuses on the relations among soul, epistemic potential, *fitrah*, and existential transformation in the process of attaining truth. Plato is treated as a philosophical horizon for questions about the origin of knowledge and the soul's relation to universal truth, while the Sunnah and Sunni Sufism are treated as normative-spiritual horizons that explain *fitrah*, *qalb*, *taẓkiyah*, and *'ilm ladunni* as paths to divine knowledge. The novelty of this study lies in constructing an epistemological reading that brings Platonism and Islamic epistemology into productive dialogue without erasing their respective metaphysical and theological limits.

Theoretical Framework

This study is constructed to elucidate the relationship between the soul, epistemic potential, *fitrah*, and the existential transformation of human beings from the perspectives of Platonic philosophy and the epistemology of the Sunnah. Below is the theoretical framework table positioned as the conceptual structure for understanding this study.

Table 1. Theoretical Framework

No	Theorist	Keywords	Core Concept	Analytical Function
1	Plato	anamnesis, soul, Forms, pre-existence	The soul, in its pre-existential state, possessed direct knowledge of universal Forms; learning is the recovery of this forgotten knowledge through recollection.	Provides the primary epistemological framework of the study: the soul's pre-existential epistemic connection to universal truth as the basis of all genuine knowledge.
2	John M. Cooper	knowledge, the good, nature, teleology	Knowledge cannot be separated from its orientation toward objective reality and the universal Good; Platonic epistemology is inseparable from teleological orientation.	Broadens the scope of Platonic epistemology beyond mere recollection to include the soul's orientation toward the Good as the telos of knowledge-seeking.
3	Maria Giannakopoulou	soul-body relation, embodiment, epistemic tension	The soul-body relation is not a simple dualism; embodiment creates a persistent epistemic tension in which the soul remains entangled with the sensible realm while orienting toward the intelligible.	Articulates the existential condition of the human knower: epistemic potential is constrained but not negated by embodiment, establishing the problem space of the study.

4	Franco Ferrari	syngeneia, ontological kinship, Forms	Anamnesis is metaphysically grounded in the soul's ontological kinship (syngeneia) with the Forms; recognition is possible because the soul and Forms share a common nature.	Provides the metaphysical foundation explaining why recollection is possible — not mere psychological habit but ontological affinity — enabling direct comparison with Islamic concepts of innate orientation.
5	Franco Trabattoni	recollection, metaphysics, necessary condition	Recollection is not a peripheral theme but a necessary metaphysical condition for Plato's entire epistemological project.	Situates anamnesis as the structural prerequisite of all Platonic knowledge, linking the soul's pre-existential condition to every subsequent cognitive act.
6	Douglas A. Shepardson	recollection, epistemic scope, Phaedrus, stages	Recollection is a rare, philosophically demanding achievement; the many do not recollect. It operates in distinct stages from phenomenological "finding again" to full epistemic recovery as epistēmē.	Delimits the actual scope of anamnesis and introduces the critical distinction between universal epistemic potential and the demanding conditions required for its actualization.
7	Al-Ghazali	<i>ilm ladunni, qalb, tazkiyah al-nafs, divine light</i>	Knowledge of the highest order is divinely infused (<i>ladunni</i>) into the purified intellect; the <i>qalb</i> 's receptive capacity is activated through spiritual purification and proximity to God.	Establishes the foundational framework for Islamic <i>ladunni</i> epistemology — the primary Islamic parallel to the Platonic mechanism of recollection — and anchors the study's Islamic epistemological horizon.
8	Fitrah (Qur'an & Sunnah)	<i>fitrah</i> , primordial disposition, ontological readiness, universality	Every human being is created with an ineradicable primordial disposition (<i>fitrah</i>) as an innate orientation toward truth — universal, pre-rational, and ontologically before all empirical experience.	Functions as the primary Islamic structural parallel to Platonic anamnesis: both denote an original epistemic orientation present in the soul before and independent of sensory experience, yet differing fundamentally in metaphysical grounding.
9	<i>Mithaq al-alast</i> (Q. 7:172)	pre-existential covenant, primordial	All souls bore witness to God's lordship in a pre-existential encounter before material existence, establishing a permanent covenant-trace in	Provides the Qur'anic structural parallel to Plato's pre-existential phase — the single most direct site of structural convergence

		witnessing, <i>rububiyah</i> , athar	human nature, veiled but never erased by heedlessness (<i>ghaflah</i>).	and ontological divergence in the comparative analysis.
10	Sunnah (Hadith Corpus)	<i>fitrah</i> , <i>qalb</i> , <i>hidayah</i> , transmission, scholarly inheritance	The Sunnah situates knowledge within <i>fitrah</i> , divine guidance (<i>hidayah</i>), active seeking, and the prophetic-scholarly chain of transmission; knowledge is not cosmic memory but a path traversed through grace, effort, and normative authority.	Establishes the normative- prophetic horizon of Islamic epistemology and demarcates its boundary from Platonic recollection: the Sunnah's path of formation versus Plato's path of recovery.
11	Sufism	<i>ilm ladunni</i> , <i>ma'rifah</i> , <i>tazkiyah</i> , <i>kashf</i> , <i>dhikr</i>	Highest knowledge (<i>ma'rifah</i> and ' <i>ilm ladunni</i>) arises from the purified heart through sustained spiritual discipline; Sufism constitutes the experiential- interiorized elaboration of the Sunnah's epistemological framework.	Provides the inner-experiential dimension of Islamic epistemology: where the Sunnah establishes the normative frame, Sufism articulates the heart's process of becoming receptive to divine knowledge — enabling direct comparison with Platonic purification of the soul.

Method

This study employs a qualitative methodology grounded in a literature-study approach. The research is oriented toward close reading, conceptual understanding, and analytical interpretation of Platonic anamnesis and *ladunni* epistemology within the horizon of the Sunnah and Sunni Sufism. The approach is descriptive-analytic and reflective-comparative: it does not merely summarize textual contents but interprets the conceptual relations among ideas in order to locate points of convergence, divergence, and relevance to the problem of the soul's epistemic potential.

Research Type and Approach

The research is qualitative in nature and relies on systematic textual inquiry. Emphasis is placed on interpretive depth rather than empirical measurement. The descriptive-analytic dimension maps and explicates the internal logic of each tradition, while the reflective-comparative dimension stages a dialogical reading that preserves each tradition's metaphysical and theological boundaries even as it seeks meaningful intersections for comparative reflection.

Data Sources

Data for this study are divided into primary and secondary categories. Primary data consist of the principal texts that form the basis of conceptual analysis: Plato's dialogues relevant to anamnesis (especially *Meno*, *Phaedo*, and *Phaedrus*); authentic hadiths addressing *fitrah*, *qalb*,

knowledge, and guidance as found in *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim, and *Jāmi‘* at-Tirmidhī — the latter included for its transmission of key traditions concerning the inheritance of scholarly knowledge and the merit of seeking knowledge; classical Sufi works that treat *‘ilm ladunni*, *tazkiyah* al-naḥs, *ma‘rifah*, and the purification of the heart — specifically al-Ghazali's *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn* and al-Risālah al-Ladunniyyah, al-Qushayrī's al-Risālah al-Qushayriyyah, al-Hujwiri's *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, al-Sarraj's *Kitāb al-Lum'a fi al-Taṣawwuf* as the earliest systematic Arabic treatise on Sufism, and selected works of Al-Jilani. Secondary data comprise scholarly journal articles (national and international), monographs in philosophy and Sufism, and relevant theses and dissertations. Secondary sources are used to contextualize, critique, and enrich the primary materials and to map the development of prior scholarship on anamnesis, soul, *fiṭrah*, and spiritual epistemology.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection proceeds through a systematic and targeted literature search. The process begins with the identification of the study's central themes, followed by the retrieval of pertinent primary and secondary sources. Initial readings are conducted to verify relevance to the research focus. Relevant passages are then excerpted, annotated, and organized according to conceptual themes. Texts are read directly, and passages bearing on anamnesis, soul, epistemic potential, *fiṭrah*, *qalb*, guidance, and *‘ilm ladunni* are highlighted and categorized to facilitate subsequent analysis.

Categories and Focus of Study

To ensure analytic clarity, the material is classified into four principal categories. The Plato Epistemology category addresses anamnesis, recollection, dialectic, the Forms, and the soul's relation to universal truth. The Sunnah Epistemology category treats *fiṭrah*, *qalb*, *hidayah*, knowledge, and the purification of the soul as articulated in hadith and Islamic teaching. The Sunni Sufism category examines *‘ilm ladunni*, *ma‘rifah*, *tazkiyah* al-naḥs, *kashf*, and the veils of the self in classical Sufi literature. Finally, the Comparative-Reflective category is reserved for readings that seek points of contact and boundary-setting between Platonic anamnesis and *ladunni* epistemology without collapsing their distinct metaphysical and theological premises.

Data Analysis Techniques

Analysis is qualitative and proceeds through a sequence of interrelated steps. First, data reduction selects and simplifies the collected material, setting aside passages not germane to anamnesis, *fiṭrah*, soul, or *‘ilm ladunni*. Second, thematic classification groups relevant data under themes such as the origin of knowledge, soul-body relation, inner epistemic potential, and existential transformation. Third, textual interpretation reads each source within its own horizon: Platonic texts within the Greek philosophical context, and hadith and Sufi texts within the Sunnah and Islamic spiritual tradition. Fourth, reflective-comparative analysis places the traditions in conceptual dialogue to identify convergences and differences; here anamnesis and *ladunni* are treated as interlocutors rather than equivalents. Finally, synthesis formulates a conceptual account of the relations among soul, epistemic potential, *fiṭrah*, and spiritual transformation.

Data Validity

Validity is maintained through multiple safeguards. Source triangulation compares primary texts, scholarly commentary, and prior research to avoid reliance on a single interpretive strand. Cross-textual reading prevents the reduction of a concept to a single textual locus by examining it across sources and genres. Interpretive caution is exercised to avoid forcing meanings across traditions; the study deliberately refrains from conflating metaphysical or theological claims and instead highlights both overlap and boundary. These measures together ensure that the study's conclusions are grounded, balanced, and sensitive to the internal logics of the traditions under examination.

Results

The literature gathered for this manuscript clusters around three principal corpora: Plato's texts, the hadith corpus, and Sunni Sufi writings. In the Platonic strand, the most frequently cited sources are *Meno*, *Phaedo*, and *Phaedrus*, accompanied by articles treating anamnesis, recollection, *syngeneia*, the soul-body relation, and the perfection of the soul. In the Sunnah strand, recurring materials include hadiths on *fitrah*, *qalb*, the pursuit of knowledge, the transmission of scholarly learning, the prohibition against concealing knowledge, and the loss of knowledge when scholars pass away. In the Sufi strand, the supporting texts are *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, *Kitāb al-Lum'ā*, *al-Risālah al-Qushayriyyah*, and the works and figures of Junayd al-Baghdādī, Rābī' al-Adawiyyah, Ibn 'Arabī, Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, and Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh al-Iskandarī. The manuscript does not present these groupings as doctrinal taxonomies but as a curated assemblage that reveals recurring patterns: Plato's concern with re-cognition of truth; the Sunnah's emphasis on *fitrah*, *qalb*, and the quest for knowledge; and Sufism's focus on inner purification, *ma'rifah*, *dhikr*, and spiritual experience. The reading of the entire corpus shows both distinct sources and overlapping themes—soul, inner knowledge, and human transformation.

Anamnesis in the Platonic Corpus

Meno

The reading of *Meno* yields the central result that anamnesis functions as an answer to how knowledge is possible when the object of knowledge is not yet fully known. *Meno* is treated as the point of departure for recollection, with emphasis on the paradox of inquiry and the Socratic question-and-answer that guides the interlocutor from perplexity toward re-recognition.²⁷ Contemporary studies cited in the manuscript further bifurcate this reading into noetic and dianoetic strands: Temizkan sharply distinguishes immediate intuitive knowing from gradual analytical knowing, while Gulley underscores Plato's rejection of empiricism as the ultimate ground of knowledge.²⁸ The manuscript also highlights Shepardson's account of recollection as an

²⁷ D. Bronstein and W. Schwab, "Is Plato an Innatist in the *Meno*?" *Phronesis*, 64, no. 4 (2019), https://brill.com/view/journals/phro/64/4/article-p392_2.xml.

²⁸ Vedi Temizkan, "PLATON'UN PHAİDON DİYALOGUNDA ANAMNESİS KURAMI," *FLSF Felsefe ve Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, no. 21 (May 2016): 21, <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/flsf/issue/48626/617839>; Norman

epistemic movement—“finding again” and “getting back”—so that *Meno* functions as a model of anamnesis conceived as an active process rather than a passive state.

Phaedo

In *Phaedo*, the focus shifts from the problem of learning to the problem of the soul. The dialogue links recollection with pre-existence, death, and the soul's proximity to truth relative to the body. Giannakopoulou's reading, as reported in the manuscript, resists a simplistic dualism and instead presents a complex soul-body relation that keeps human beings within embodied existence. Recent scholarship uses *Phaedo* to show that recollection implicates not only intellectual capacity but also the soul's condition and its orientation toward perfection; Lin, for example, stresses the connection between the soul's superiority and its perfection.²⁹

Phaedrus

Phaedrus foregrounds the psychological and aesthetic dimensions of anamnesis. The manuscript notes that this dialogue ties soul, eros, and beauty together, so that recollection appears not merely as a dialectical procedure but as an inward movement toward a higher reality. Shepardson's work is cited to show that the form of recollection in *Phaedrus* differs from *Meno*, taking on a subtler character closer to inner experience.³⁰ Collectively, the three dialogues demonstrate that Plato does not offer a single, monolithic account of anamnesis: *Meno* is pedagogical, *Phaedo* metaphysical, and *Phaedrus* psychological-aesthetic.

Platonic Synthesis

Across the Platonic corpus three consistent layers emerge: (1) anamnesis explains the possibility of attaining universal knowledge; (2) the soul is positioned as the subject with a special proximity to intelligible truth; and (3) knowledge in Plato is bound up with the soul's perfection rather than mere information. Cooper, Lin, and Giannakopoulou are used to map the interrelation of knowledge, nature, and the good; the perfection of the soul; and the persistent tension between soul and body as the field in which knowledge occurs.³¹

Gulley, “Plato's Theory of Recollection,” *The Classical Quarterly* 4, nos. 3–4 (December 1954): 194–213, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838800008120>.

²⁹ Giannakopoulou, “Plato on Soul and Body”; Adebawale, “An Evaluation of Plato's Conception of Immortality of the Soul in *Phaedo*”; O. Tofighian, “Myth and Regulation: *Phaedo*,” *Myth and Philosophy in Platonic Dialogues*, edited by Omid Tofighian, 93–115. London: Palgrave Macmillan. (2016), https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-58044-3_5.

³⁰ Shepardson, “The Many Do Not Recollect: The Nature and Scope of Recollection in Plato's *Phaedrus*.”

³¹ Cooper, *Knowledge, Nature, and the Good*; Lin, “Origen and Plato on the Superiority and Perfection of the Soul”; Giannakopoulou, “Plato on Soul and Body.”

The Soul in the Sunnah Corpus

Hadith on Fitrah and Qalb

The hadith corpus yields two primary axes: the hadith that every child is born upon *fitrah*,³² which the manuscript treats as evidence of an innate disposition present from the outset of existence; and the hadith that within the body there is a piece of flesh—the heart—whose soundness or corruption determines the whole person. These two hadiths form the poles of the Sunnah corpus: *fitrah* as the primordial condition and *qalb* as the center of inner integrity.

Hadith on Seeking Knowledge

The manuscript highlights hadiths that valorize the active pursuit of knowledge: “*whoever travels a path seeking knowledge...*”, and hadiths that present religious understanding as a divine gift (“*whom God wishes good for He grants understanding in religion*”).³³ These texts are read as linking human effort and divine bestowal.

Hadith on Transmission and Loss of Knowledge

The hadith that “*the scholars are the inheritors of the prophets*”³⁴ is read as framing knowledge transmission as a social and continuous process. Paired with warnings against concealing knowledge and the hadith that God removes knowledge by causing scholars to die, the Sunnah corpus presents knowledge as a communal trust and historically sustained authority—distinct from the model of individual cosmic recollection.

Sunnah Synthesis

The Sunnah corpus consistently yields four elements: *fitrah* as primordial disposition, *qalb* as the inner center, knowledge as both gift and quest, and scholars as heirs and custodians of transmission. The Sunnah thus frames knowledge not as cosmic memory but as an inward journey supported by divine grace and active learning.

Anamnesis in the Sufism Corpus

Foundational Texts

In classical Sufi texts *Kashf al-Mahjūb* and *Kitāb al-Lum‘a* appear as foundational references, foregrounding the heart (*qalb*), purification, *ma‘rifah*, *fitrah*, inner knowledge, spiritual states, and the *ṭariqah*. The manuscript situates *Kashf al-Mahjūb* as an early Persian systematic text on Sufism

³² al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 9; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 7.

³³ al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 9.

³⁴ Abū ‘Īsā Muḥammad ibn ‘Īsā ibn Sawra ibn Mūsā ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk al-Sulamī at-Tirmidhī, *Jāmi‘ at-Tirmidhī*, IV (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifah, 1995).

and uses *Kitāb al-Lum'a* to underscore the centrality of inner purification and the definition of the heart.³⁵

*Al-Risālah al-Qushayriyyah*³⁶ and Key Figures

Al-Qushayri's *Risālah* is read for its treatment of *maqāmāt* and *aḥwāl*, and for placing heart and divine love at the center of the spiritual path.³⁷ The manuscript also records recurring emphases from major figures: Junayd on *tawḥīd* and contemplative awareness; Rābi'a on divine love and *ṣitrah*; Ibn 'Arabī on *ma'rifah*, divine inspiration, *'ilm ladunni*, and cosmic wisdom; Rūmī on *ma'rifah*, *dhikr*, love, and liberation; and Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh on heart, repentance, purification, and *dhikr*. These voices collectively show Sufism as a plurality of lines that converge on inner experience, purification, and knowledge from God.³⁸

Sufi Synthesis

The Sufi corpus displays a stable pattern: *qalb*, *dhikr*, *taẓkiyah*, *ma'rifah*, and *kashf* dominate the vocabulary; spiritual experience is presented as a process of purification; and inner knowledge is understood as arising from the soul's readiness. Several works explicitly link intuitive knowledge and "true remembrance" to the soul's liberation from outward attachments.³⁹

When the three corpora are read together, the manuscript's principal result is that three adjacent but distinct fields emerge. Plato presents anamnesis as recollection moving through dialogue, soul, and Forms. The Sunnah presents *ṣitrah*, *qalb*, *hidayah*, and knowledge as both gift and a moral responsibility. Sufism presents *ma'rifah*, *dhikr*, *kashf*, and *taẓkiyah* as the path to inner opening. Across all three corpora, the themes of soul and inner knowledge are prominent, yet each tradition preserves its own terminology, sources, and internal direction. The manuscript thus maps both convergence and boundary: shared concerns about the soul's epistemic depth, but divergent accounts of origin, method, and legitimacy.

Discussion

A reading of the collected literature shows that Plato's anamnesis reaches far beyond the simple sense of "remembering." In *Meno* it appears as an answer to an epistemic impasse; in *Phaedo* it moves into the domain of the soul, death, and pre-existence; in *Phaedrus* it shifts toward the psychological and aesthetic. Temizkan's distinction between noetic and dianoetic recollection and Gulley's insistence that Plato's theory stands opposed to empiricism both reinforce a consistent

³⁵ Sayyed Mohammad Hadi Karimi and Mahboubeh Hami, "The History of the Ideas of 'Absence' and 'Presence' in the Khafifiyya Order in Shiraz," *فصلنامه تاریخ نامه ایران بعد از اسلام* (IR) 14, no. 35 (June 2023), <https://doi.org/10.22034/jiiph.2023.52504.2346>.

³⁶ Abū al-Qāsim. Al-Qushayrī, *Al-Qushayrī's Epistle on Sufism (Al-Risalah al-Qushayriyyah Fi 'ilm Al-taṣawwuf)*, Translated by Alexander D. Knysh (Reading, UK: Garnet Publishing, 2007).

³⁷ Mashar, "Konsep Sufi Sejati Dalam Kitab Utama Tarekat Di Indonesia."

³⁸ Al-Qushayrī, *Al-Qushayrī's Epistle on Sufism (Al-Risalah al-Qushayriyyah Fi 'ilm Al-taṣawwuf)*.

³⁹ Marc Applebaum, "Dhikr as Mindfulness: Meditative Remembrance in Sufism," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 65, no. 2 (March 2025): 409–30, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00221678231206901>.

picture in the assembled corpus: true knowledge moves from surface to depth, from sensory data toward a more authentic recognition.⁴⁰

This Platonic reading sharpens when it is nurtured by studies of the soul–body relation. Giannakopoulou shows that *Phaedo* does not present a crude dualism; the body is indeed a field of limitation, yet the soul remains enmeshed in an existential tension that cannot be simply erased. Cooper expands this horizon by grouping knowledge, nature, and the good into a single cluster of concerns: knowledge is never neutral because it always orients toward a higher order. Lin strengthens this trajectory with the theme of the soul's perfection. From these convergences, it becomes clear that anamnesis in the collected literature is not merely a theory of learning but an account of how the soul moves toward perfection.⁴¹

An interesting development appears when recollection is read alongside *syngeneia* and inquiry. Ferrari situates *syngeneia* as an ontological kinship between soul and Forms, thereby giving recognition a firmer metaphysical ground.⁴² Politis frames recollection as part of an ongoing inquiry rather than a single flash⁴³; Shepardson reads *Meno's* recollection as a process of “finding again” and “getting back,” and shows that the form of recollection in *Phaedrus* differs in tone from that in *Meno*.⁴⁴ The result is unmistakable: Plato does not offer a single static pattern but several faces of anamnesis that converge on one axis—the soul's proximity to higher truth.

The shift to the Sunnah corpus is therefore intelligible, for the hadith material likewise positions human beings as bearers of an original disposition. The hadith on *fitrah* suggests that humans are born with a basic readiness, while the hadith on the heart (*qalb*) affirms that the center of human integrity is the heart. Hadiths that commend the pursuit of knowledge, that describe religious understanding as a divine gift, that name scholars as heirs of the prophets, and that forbid concealing knowledge together form a robust pattern: knowledge in the Sunnah moves through grace, active seeking, transmission, and moral responsibility. Here, knowledge does not present itself as cosmic memory but as a path to be traversed, maintained, and handed down.⁴⁵

When set beside Plato, the structural difference becomes clear. Plato locates the origin of knowledge in a soul once connected to the intelligible; the Sunnah locates knowledge in *fitrah*, *qalb*, and divine guidance. In the collected corpus, *fitrah* is not merely moral purity but a primordial disposition that opens the human being to truth; *qalb* is the center of receptivity, not a repository of memories. The path of knowledge in the Sunnah is active: one travels it, seeks it, and God facilitates it.⁴⁶ Thus, the point of contact with anamnesis lies at a very general level—both traditions

⁴⁰ Temizkan, “Platon'un Phaidon Diyalogunda Anamnesis Kurami”; Gulley, “Plato's Theory of Recollection.”

⁴¹ Cooper, *Knowledge, Nature, and the Good*; Giannakopoulou, “Plato on Soul and Body”; Lin, “Origen and Plato on the Superiority and Perfection of the Soul.”

⁴² Ferrari, “Anamnesis e Syngeneia.”

⁴³ Vasilis Politis, “The Relation Between Knowledge and Inquiry in the *Phaedo*,” *History of Philosophy and Logical Analysis* 23, no. 1 (September 2020): 51–73, <https://doi.org/10.30965/26664275-02301006>.

⁴⁴ Shepardson, *The Development of Plato's Theory of Recollection*; DA Shepardson, “Nativism and Plato's Epistemology: Knowledge, Awareness, and Innate True Belief in the *Meno*,” *History of Philosophy & Logical Analysis*, (2024), https://brill.com/view/journals/hpla/27/1/article-p1_1.xml.

⁴⁵ al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 9; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 7; at-Tirmidhī, *Jamī' at-Tirmidhī*, IV.

⁴⁶ Al-Ghazālī, *Ar-Risalah al-Ladunniyyah*.

deny that the human subject is an empty slate—yet the language of filling differs: Plato speaks of recollection, the Sunnah speaks of guidance, instruction, and the formation of the heart. In the contemporary context, the metaphysical differences between Plato and the Islamic tradition are not merely academic; they also shape how communities and individuals actualize inner knowledge.

The Sufi texts included in the corpus further refine this distinction. *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, *Kitāb al-Lum'a*, and *al-Risālah al-Qushayriyyah* revolve around *qalb*, *ma'rifah*, *dhikr*, *taẓkiyah*, and the inner path. Junayd emphasizes *tawhīd* and contemplative awareness; Rābi'a gives the face of pure divine love; Ibn 'Arabi links *ma'rifah* with divine inspiration and cosmic wisdom; Rūmī presents *dhikr* and love as movements of inner liberation; Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh centers the heart, repentance, and purification. What emerges is continuity: highest knowledge is understood as the fruit of inner purification rather than the mere accumulation of data.⁴⁷ Contemporary Sufi practices display diverse ways of actualizing *fitrah* and *qalb*: urban *dhikr* gatherings, *taẓkiyah* study circles in modern pesantren, spiritual guidance offered through online platforms, and many more.

At this juncture, the relation between Sunnah and Sufism becomes clearer. The hadith corpus provides the normative frame; Sufi texts elaborate the experiential interiorization. The Sunnah insists that knowledge must be sought, transmitted, and preserved; Sufism shows that such seeking requires a purified heart, living *dhikr*, and disciplined *adab*. Thus, the Islamic path of knowledge is not a path of recollection but a path of formation. If Plato prepares the soul to recognize again, the Sunnah and Sufism prepare the heart to receive, comprehend, and radiate knowledge.⁴⁸

This comparison yields a crucial knot: anamnesis and *ladunni* epistemology converge on the recognition that the subject of knowledge is broader than instrumental reason. Yet the collected literature also reveals limits. Plato presumes an ontological relation between soul and Forms; the Sunnah and Sufism presuppose *fitrah*, divine guidance, and *taẓkiyah* as conditions for reception. In Plato, recognition proceeds by recollection; in the Sunnah, knowledge proceeds by illumination and guidance. Both link knowledge to the state of the soul, but they do not share the same metaphysics. It is precisely here that dialogue proves valuable: thematic similarity does not erase foundational difference.

Finally, the literature displays a layered pattern. Plato presents the soul as a subject capable of recognizing universal truth through anamnesis; the Sunnah presents humans as beings of *fitrah* who acquire knowledge through guidance, seeking, and transmission; Sufism presents the heart as the center of *ma'rifah*, opened through *dhikr*, *taẓkiyah*, and *kashf*. The collected corpus does not aim at assimilation but at mapping: soul, heart, and knowledge meet as major themes, while the routes to attainment remain distinct. This is the most stable conclusion that can be drawn from the available material.

This study aligns with Cooper, Giannakopoulou, and Lin in treating knowledge as bound up with the soul's movement toward truth, orientation to the good, and existential perfection; it also

⁴⁷ Al-Qushayrī, *Al-Qushayrī's Epistle on Sufism (Al-Risālah al-Qushayriyyah Fi 'ilm Al-taṣawwuf)*; Mashar, "Konsep Sufi Sejati Dalam Kitab Utama Tarekat Di Indonesia."

⁴⁸ Al-Qushayrī, *Al-Qushayrī's Epistle on Sufism (Al-Risālah al-Qushayriyyah Fi 'ilm Al-taṣawwuf)*; Mushawwir, "Penafsiran Sufistik Syekh 'Abd Qadir Al-Jilani dalam Kitab Fath Al-Rabbāni."1

resonates with Temizkan, Ferrari, Trabattoni, and Shepardson in showing that Platonic anamnesis is tied to the soul's structure, modes of recognition, and dialogical variations across Plato's major dialogues. Yet the present research does not confine itself to internal Platonic exegesis or to Ghazalian epistemology alone: it aims to bring anamnesis into reflective conversation with the Sunnah, *fitrah*, *qalb*, and Sunni Sufi traditions as horizons that both delimit and illuminate the meaning of inner knowledge. Consequently, the study's position is closer to a cross-tradition reflective synthesis than to the reconstruction of a single tradition in isolation.

The structural convergences this study has identified between Platonic anamnesis and Islamic *ladunni* epistemology are not accidental, and from within the Islamic theological framework, they are not entirely unexpected. The Qur'an (7:172) declares that every soul among the descendants of Adam—across all times, cultures, and traditions—was gathered before material existence and bore witness to God's lordship in a primordial covenant (*mīthāq al-alasī*), a covenant that left an indelible trace in every human soul as *fitrah*.⁴⁹ Plato carried this same primordial imprint. His intuitions about the soul's prior acquaintance with truth, the tension between hidden knowledge and sensory experience, and the need for a recovery process—these can be read, from an Islamic perspective, as partial expressions of *fitrah* working without the guidance of revelation.⁵⁰ In this sense, *fitrah* functions as a universal epistemological horizon⁵¹, one that allows the human soul in any tradition to approach truth, even if—without prophetic guidance—that approach remains incomplete and metaphysically misdirected.

Acknowledging this convergence, however, is not the same as collapsing the distance between the two traditions. At least three boundaries cannot be crossed. First, the object of the soul's pre-existential encounter is fundamentally different: Plato's Forms are impersonal and without will—the soul in its disembodied state beholds eternal abstract universals such as Justice, Beauty, and Equality (*Phaedrus* 247c–e)⁵²—while in Islam the soul encounters *al-Rabb*, a personal God who speaks, covenants, and relates.⁵³ The two cannot be identified without distorting both. Second, the path of recovery differs in a way that matters theologically: Platonic anamnesis works through autonomous philosophical inquiry, and as Trabattoni has shown, recollection is not a research method but the *necessary metaphysical condition* for knowledge⁵⁴, one that the many in practice never fulfil without philosophical training.⁵⁵ Islam, by contrast, assigns an indispensable role to prophetic *tadhkīr*, because what veils the *fitrah* is not merely cognitive ignorance but spiritual *ghaflah*—a condition no amount of dialectic can lift on its own. Third, the two traditions rest on

⁴⁹ Joseph E. B. Lumbard, "Covenant and Covenants in the Qur'an," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 17, no. 2 (June 2015): 1–23, <https://doi.org/10.3366/jqs.2015.0193>.

⁵⁰ Syamsuddin Arif, "Rethinking the Concept of Fiṭra: Natural Disposition, Reason and Conscience," *American Journal of Islam and Society* 40, nos. 3–4 (November 2023): 77–103, <https://doi.org/10.35632/ajis.v40i3-4.3189>.

⁵¹ Ramon Harvey, *Primordial Human Nature (Fiṭra)*, Ed. Brendan N. Wolfe et al., 2024, <https://www.saet.ac.uk/Islam/PrimordialHumanNature>.

⁵² Trabattoni, "Recollection and Metaphysics in Plato/Reminiscencia e metafísica em Platão."

⁵³ Lumbard, "Covenant and Covenants in the Qur'an."

⁵⁴ Trabattoni, "Recollection and Metaphysics in Plato/Reminiscencia e metafísica em Platão."

⁵⁵ Shepardson, "The Many Do Not Recollect: The Nature and Scope of Recollection in Plato's *Phaedrus*."

irreconcilable cosmologies: anamnesis presupposes cyclical reincarnation across multiple lives (*Phaedrus* 248c–249e)⁵⁶, while Islam holds to a single life, a single death, and a single reckoning. The convergences found in this study are therefore best described as an *epistemological homology under different metaphysical skies* — two traditions arriving at structurally similar configurations while differing fundamentally in object, authority, and cosmology. Islam has an internal framework to explain why Plato approached the truth; Plato has no framework to explain Islam. The convergence is meaningful precisely because it is partial — and recognizing that partiality is what separates comparative inquiry from syncretism.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Plato's anamnesis, when read alongside the Sunnah and the Sunni Sufi tradition, reveals a convergent pattern in acknowledging an inner dimension of the human being as the locus of knowledge, even though each tradition retains distinct ontological grounds and claims to legitimacy. Plato situates the soul as the subject that re-recognizes truth, whereas the Sunnah and Sufism emphasize *fitrah*, *qalb*, *hidayah*, and *tazkiyah* as the pathways to true knowledge; this point of convergence confirms that knowledge is not merely the product of the senses but is also bound up with the human existential condition. Going forward, similar studies should broaden the Sufi corpus more systematically, examine a wider range of hadiths and classical commentaries, and deepen the conceptual comparison so that the relations among anamnesis, *fitrah*, and *'ilm ladunni* can be mapped with greater precision without obscuring the distinct boundaries of each tradition.

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⁵⁶ Douglas R. Campbell, "Plato's Theory of Reincarnation: Eschatology and Natural Philosophy," *The Review of Metaphysics* 75, no. 4 (June 2022): 643–65, <https://doi.org/10.1353/rvm.2022.0021>.

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