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THE PRINCIPLES OF

QUR'ANIC RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A groundbreaking reconstruction of research  
methods rooted entirely in *Qur'anic epistemology*.

This book unifies *revelation, reason, ethics, and  
scientific inquiry*, offering scholars a coherent

*Qur'an-based framework for qualitative,  
quantitative, and mixed-methods research across disciplines.*



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# THE PRINCIPLES OF QUR'ANIC RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

*Deriving the Process of Knowledge from Revelation*

Prof. Dr. Kazi Abdul Mannan  
Dr. Khandaker Mursheda Farhana



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*Deriving the Process of Knowledge from Revelation*

**Prof. Dr Kazi Abdul Mannan**

**Dr Khandaker Mursheda Farhana**

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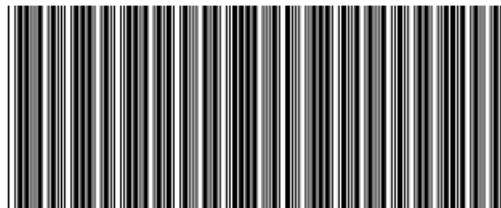
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## Preface

The present work emerges from a long-standing intellectual concern: the widening gap between the Qur'anic worldview of knowledge and the dominant research paradigms shaping contemporary academic, scientific, and social inquiry. As global scholarship advances rapidly, propelled by technological acceleration, data-driven methods, and new theoretical frameworks, Muslim scholars frequently find themselves navigating between inherited Islamic intellectual traditions and modern methodologies that often rest upon secular, materialist, or fragmented epistemologies. This book was born out of the conviction that the Qur'an offers not merely spiritual guidance but a comprehensive, internally coherent epistemic architecture capable of informing and enriching modern research across disciplines.

Our motivation in writing this volume stems from several interconnected questions:

- What does the Qur'an itself propose as the proper process of knowing?
- How does the Qur'an integrate reason ('aql), observation (baṣar), reflection (tafakkur), deep contemplation (tadabbur), and moral consciousness (tadhakkur) into a unified epistemic cycle?
- How can this divine epistemology be reconstructed into a rigorous research methodology suitable for contemporary academic practice, without reducing revelation to mere spirituality or isolating it from scientific inquiry?
- Finally, how might a Qur'an-based research paradigm address the crises of fragmentation, value-neutrality, and methodological reductionism found in many modern disciplines?

This book is an attempt to answer these questions systematically. It argues that the Qur'an offers a method, not simply a message; a logic of discovery, not only doctrines; and a framework for knowledge that integrates ontology, epistemology, ethics, and method in a manner unmatched by any single modern system. The Qur'anic epistemic worldview is not a historical artefact but a living, analytic paradigm capable of engaging -critically and constructively -with contemporary scientific, social, and human inquiry.

The volume is structured into seven major parts, each building upon the previous to form a coherent intellectual architecture.

**Part I** lays the conceptual foundations by elaborating the Qur'anic understanding of 'ilm, the human cognitive instruments of knowing, and the integration of revelation and reason. It demonstrates that the Qur'an is not anti-rational; rather, it mandates reflective inquiry, intellectual humility, and moral responsibility as essential elements of knowing. These foundational chapters offer the ontological, semantic, and cognitive tools necessary for understanding the Qur'anic theory of knowledge.

**Part II** develops the Qur'anic epistemological cycle, from sign recognition to reflection, understanding, verification, and ethical realisation, showing that knowledge in the Qur'anic worldview is not static. It is a dynamic, spiralling journey that moves from perception to insight, from insight to certainty, and from

certainty to righteous action. This part establishes the scriptural logic that underlies the Qur’anic method of discovery.

**Part III** focuses on the ethical dimensions of knowledge. Here, honesty (ṣidq), justice (‘adl), trust (amanah), and God-consciousness (taqwa) are explored not merely as moral virtues but as epistemic prerequisites. The Qur’an is clear: knowledge pursued without ethics degenerates into manipulation and arrogance. This section argues that epistemic responsibility is integral to scholarly credibility and forms the backbone of a Qur’anically grounded research methodology.

**Part IV** advances the structure of Qur’anic logic, especially through the triad of ‘ilm al-yaqin, ‘ayn al-yaqin, and ḥaqq al-yaqin, as well as the interplay of faith, knowledge, and action. These chapters clarify how certainty in the Qur’an is multidimensional, progressing from conceptual to experiential to existential realisation. The methodological implications of this hierarchical structure are profound, touching on verification, interpretation, discovery, and ethical application.

**Part V** engages contemporary scholarship by reconstructing Islamic epistemology in relation to modern scientific methods. Through comparative analysis, it illustrates both harmony and tension between Qur’anic reasoning and modern empiricism. Classical thinkers-al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, al-Ghazali, Ibn Rushd-are revisited not historically but epistemologically, illustrating how they integrated revelation and reason. This part culminates in a Qur’anically informed scientific paradigm that critiques the value-neutral posture of modern science and proposes a responsible, ethically anchored alternative.

**Part VI** synthesises the entire project into a unified philosophy of research. It demonstrates how the Qur’an harmonises ontology, epistemology, and method, culminating in a holistic paradigm that integrates cognition, intuition, empirical study, moral accountability, and spiritual perception. This section outlines future directions for Qur’anic methodological studies, emphasising the need for interdisciplinary engagement.

**Part VII** addresses a major gap in Islamic methodological literature: the relationship between Qur’anic epistemology and contemporary qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research. Modern research methods are often rooted in secular philosophies-positivism, post-positivism, constructivism, interpretivism -and lack any reference to transcendent truth or moral purpose. This part re-examines these methods through the lens of Qur’anic epistemology. It demonstrates that:

- Qur’anic hermeneutics naturally aligns with qualitative interpretation through tafakkur, tadabbur, tadhakkur, and fiqh.
- Quantitative inquiry gains ontological grounding and ethical structure when viewed through Qur’anic concepts of measure (qadar), balance (mizan), and patterned regularity (sunan Allah).
- Mixed-methods research aligns deeply with the Qur’anic model of triangulation, integrating revelation, reason, and observed signs.
- Finally, Qur’anic methodology functions as a meta-methodology, offering foundational criteria for validity, ethical integrity, and truth-oriented inquiry beyond any particular research technique.

By incorporating Part VII, the book now bridges classical Qur’anic epistemology with modern academic research, offering scholars, doctoral students, and interdisciplinary researchers a comprehensive framework that can be applied in education, social science, humanities, environmental studies, medical ethics, economics, and beyond.

Throughout this work, we have avoided all extra-scriptural reports that fall under the category the Qur’an refers to as “*lahw al-ḥadith*”—that which distracts or diverges from divine revelation as epistemic authority. This manuscript is therefore rigorously Qur’an-centric, grounding every conceptual claim in the Qur’an itself while engaging critically with modern intellectual traditions.

We hope that this book will serve not only as an academic contribution but as a methodological companion for researchers seeking an Islamically grounded yet academically rigorous path. The Qur’anic vision of knowledge is vast, integrative, ethical, and transformative. Reconstructing a research methodology from this vision is not only intellectually necessary but spiritually and civilizationally urgent.

We invite readers-scholars, students, educators, and all seekers of truth -to approach this book both critically and reflectively. May it serve as a foundation for renewed engagement with the Qur’an, the primary source of epistemic guidance for the Muslim mind, and as a catalyst for methodological renewal in the modern world.

## About the Authors



### Contact

Email: [drkaziabdulmannan@gmail.com](mailto:drkaziabdulmannan@gmail.com)

CC: [drmannankazi@drmannankazi.org](mailto:drmannankazi@drmannankazi.org)

**Prof. Dr Kazi Abdul Mannan** is an interdisciplinary scholar whose intellectual work is shaped by a sustained engagement with Qur’anic epistemology, normative theory, and the foundations of knowledge production. Trained in law and social sciences, his academic trajectory reflects a long-standing commitment to examining how ethical, metaphysical, and epistemological principles can be systematically integrated into contemporary research methodologies.

Across his scholarly career, Dr Mannan has explored questions concerning the nature of knowledge (*‘ilm*), certainty (*yaqīn*), moral responsibility (*amānah*), and justice (*‘adl*)—not merely as abstract concepts, but as operative principles guiding inquiry, judgment, and human action. His research consistently emphasises that knowledge, within a Qur’anic worldview, is neither value-neutral nor fragmented; rather, it is inherently purposive, ethically anchored, and oriented toward truth (*ḥaqq*).

As an academic, Prof. Dr Mannan has contributed to a wide range of methodological discussions spanning qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research. His work critically engages dominant modern paradigms of epistemology and method, identifying their strengths while also addressing their philosophical limitations—particularly their tendency to detach knowledge from moral ontology. In response, he advances a Qur’an-centred framework in which revelation (*wahy*), reason (*‘aql*), reflection (*tafakkur* and *tadabbur*), and ethical accountability (*taqwā*) function as integrated dimensions of a unified epistemic process.

Alongside his academic endeavours, Dr Mannan is a distinguished legal practitioner and institutional leader. As the Head of Chambers of Dr Kazi Abdul Mannan & Associates, he brings theoretical insight into direct engagement with complex legal, social, and regulatory realities. This dual engagement—scholarly and professional—has profoundly shaped his understanding of methodology as a lived practice rather than a purely technical exercise.

*The Principles of Qur’anic Research Methodology: Deriving the Process of Knowledge from Revelation* represents the culmination of Prof. Dr Mannan’s sustained inquiry into the epistemological foundations of research. In this work, he seeks to reconstruct methodology not as a borrowed or secularised toolset, but as an organically derived process rooted in the Qur’an’s vision of knowledge, ethics, and human responsibility. His contribution offers scholars a coherent alternative paradigm—one that aspires to restore unity between truth, method, and moral purpose in contemporary research.





### Contact

Email: [drfarhanamannan@gmail.com](mailto:drfarhanamannan@gmail.com)

CC: [drfarhana@mrdsb.org](mailto:drfarhana@mrdsb.org)

**Dr Khandaker Mursheda Farhana** is a distinguished sociologist, interdisciplinary researcher, and academic whose scholarly work bridges empirical inquiry with deep ethical and structural understanding of society, culture, and knowledge production. She currently serves as Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Shanto-Mariam University of Creative Technology in Dhaka, Bangladesh, where her teaching and research engage critically with questions of migration, social transformation, urbanisation, and gendered social processes.

Dr Farhana's academic foundation was laid through rigorous study in sociology, beginning with her BSS (Honours) and MSS in Sociology from Rajshahi University and culminating in a **PhD** in Sociology from the **Institute of Bangladesh Studies, Rajshahi University**, with a specialisation in rural-urban migration dynamics. Her **post-doctoral** work at the **University of Padua, Italy**, under the Erasmus Mundus EMMA Scholarship, deepened her engagement with global migration, trafficking, and social justice themes—research that intertwines empirical rigour with structural insight.

Dr Farhana has authored several significant scholarly works, including monographs, peer-reviewed articles, Book Chapters, and others, which combine anthropological sensitivity with systematic inquiry into marginalisation and human mobility. Her work extends to comparative studies on migration laws, policy, remittances, and socio-economic change. Her research articles have appeared in internationally indexed (Q1, Q2) journals, demonstrating sustained engagement with contemporary social research and interdisciplinary theory.

Beyond academia, Dr Farhana has contributed as a Social Specialist on major development projects, including the World Bank-supported Dhaka Water Supply and Sanitation project, and she currently leads empirical projects on public health services for marginalised women at the national level. Her global affiliations—as an executive member and senior member of international research associations in the USA, Hong Kong, and Europe—reflect her commitment to collaborative knowledge production.

In this volume, Dr Farhana's engagement with Qur'anic epistemology enriches the dialogue between traditional epistemic frameworks and contemporary research methodology. Her academic voice in this work exemplifies a critical orientation that does not compartmentalise empirical study from ethical and philosophical foundations, instead situating inquiry within a broader moral–ontological horizon of knowledge, purpose, and human responsibility.

## Acknowledgments

The completion of *The Principles of Qur’anic Research Methodology: Deriving the Process of Knowledge from Revelation* has been a journey of reflection, discipline, and faith. This work is the culmination of years of sustained study in Qur’anic epistemology, philosophy, and the broader Islamic intellectual heritage. It could not have been achieved without the guidance, encouragement, and generosity of many individuals and institutions who have accompanied me along this intellectual and spiritual path.

First and foremost, my deepest gratitude is due to the Almighty-*Allah*, the Source of all knowledge (*‘ilm*), wisdom (*hikmah*), and light (*mur*). Every idea developed within these pages is a humble attempt to reflect upon the divine guidance revealed in the Qur’an. Without His mercy and illumination, human thought remains incomplete and directionless.

We owe a profound intellectual debt to the scholars and thinkers whose works continue to inspire the revival of Qur’anic thought in our time. The writings of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, Fazlur Rahman, and Seyyed Hossein Nasr have been particularly influential in shaping the philosophical framework within which this book was conceived. Their insistence on recovering the unity of knowledge (*tawhīd al-‘ilm*) and the integrity of Islamic epistemology provided the intellectual groundwork for this study.

Special thanks are due to colleagues and students who have engaged with our lectures and seminars over the years. Their questions, critiques, and enthusiasm have continually refined our understanding of how the Qur’an may be approached as both a source of guidance and a comprehensive research paradigm. We are especially grateful to the academic community that fosters dialogue between theology, philosophy, and the sciences, reminding us that knowledge must remain both critical and ethical.

We would also like to acknowledge the administrative and academic staff of institutions that supported our research, granting access to archives, manuscripts, and digital resources essential for this project. The research assistants who contributed to text verification, reference management, and manuscript preparation deserve special mention for their diligence and precision.

On a personal note, we are indebted to our family, whose patience and encouragement have been our constant source of strength. Their understanding of the time, solitude, and contemplation required to complete a work of this scale has made all the difference.

Finally, we dedicate this work to future scholars of the Qur’an—those who will continue to explore its inexhaustible depths not as a closed text of the past but as a living, dynamic revelation that speaks to every age. We hope that this book serves as both a foundation and an invitation: a foundation for a unified Qur’anic epistemology, and an invitation to engage in research that is at once rigorous, reflective, and rooted in divine unity.

## Author's Note

This book emerged from a long intellectual journey shaped by deep engagement with the Qur'an and an enduring concern for the future of knowledge in the modern world. Over the years, we observed a widening gap between contemporary academic methodologies and the epistemic vision articulated in the Qur'an. While modern research increasingly treats knowledge as data to be extracted, quantified, or theorised, the Qur'an presents knowledge as a moral, ontological, and transformative reality-an amanah, a trust, that binds the human being to truth, responsibility, and divine purpose.

Our intention in writing *The Principles of Qur'anic Research Methodology* was not to oppose modern methods, nor to idealise the past, but to reconstruct the Qur'anic epistemic worldview in a systematic, academically rigorous manner. We sought to show how the Qur'an integrates observation, reason, reflection, ethics, and revelation into a coherent methodology capable of interacting constructively with qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research. The aim is to demonstrate that the Qur'an does not merely inspire spirituality-it structures inquiry, guides verification, and provides foundational principles for the discovery of truth.

The book expanded as the research deepened. What began as a four-part project eventually grew into seven comprehensive parts, each addressing a different dimension of Qur'anic epistemology -from ontology, cognition, and ethics to scientific inquiry, cosmology, and modern methodological debates. The final structure reflects a living epistemic system, not a static theory: a cycle that begins in revelation, unfolds through human reason and experience, and returns to remembrance.

As the author, we acknowledge that this work is only a beginning. The Qur'an's methodological potential is vast, and no single volume can exhaust its depth. We hope that this book will serve as a foundational reference for scholars, students, and researchers interested in developing an Islamically grounded philosophy of knowledge, one that is intellectually robust, ethically responsible, and globally relevant.

We invite readers to engage critically, contribute further, and continue the conversation this book seeks to open.

**Prof. Dr Kazi Abdul Mannan**

**Dr Khandaker Mursheda Farhana**

## Summary

*THE PRINCIPLES OF QUR'ANIC RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: Deriving the Process of Knowledge from Revelation.* This book offers a comprehensive reconstruction of Qur'anic epistemology and presents it as a fully developed research methodology capable of engaging contemporary academic disciplines. Across seven interlinked parts, it argues that the Qur'an provides not only doctrines of belief but also a complete, coherent, and ethically grounded *method of knowing*, from perception to certainty, from certainty to action, and from action to civilizational responsibility. The work demonstrates that revelation (wahy), reason ('aql), and empirical observation (baṣar) are not competing sources but complementary dimensions of a unified Qur'anic philosophy of knowledge.

**Part I** establishes the foundations by defining the Qur'anic concept of 'ilm, identifying human cognitive instruments, and showing that revelation and rationality function in harmony. It frames knowledge as a purposeful, moral act embedded within divine ontology.

**Part II** develops the Qur'anic epistemological cycle: observing God's signs, reflecting (tafakkur), contemplating (tadabbur), remembering (tadhakkur), understanding (fiqh), verifying (taḥqiq), and acting upon knowledge. This cycle demonstrates that knowledge in the Qur'an is dynamic, ethically directed, and outcome-oriented rather than purely descriptive.

**Part III** centres on the ethical dimensions of knowing-taqwa, 'adl, ṣidq, and amanah, arguing that epistemic integrity is inseparable from moral accountability. The Qur'an places responsibility on scholars and seekers (ulu al-albab) to pursue truth without arrogance, manipulation, or injustice.

**Part IV** articulates the Qur'anic logic of discovery through the integrated triad of faith, knowledge, and action, culminating in the hierarchy of certainty ('ilm al-yaqin → 'ayn al-yaqin → ḥaqq al-yaqin). These structures show that certainty in the Qur'an arises from conceptual understanding, experiential witnessing, and lived realisation.

**Part V** reconstructs Islamic epistemology in dialogue with modern science. It revisits classical scholars-al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, al-Ghazali, Ibn Rushd -through a methodological lens and evaluates the relationship between Qur'anic reasoning and modern empirical paradigms. It demonstrates how Qur'anic epistemology critiques value-neutral knowledge and proposes a morally accountable alternative.

**Part VI** synthesises the framework into a unified Qur'anic philosophy of research and offers forward-looking proposals for future scholarship. It suggests that Qur'anic methodology provides meta-criteria for truth, validity, ethics, and human flourishing in both theoretical and applied research.

**Part VII** connects Qur'anic epistemology directly with modern qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research. It shows that Qur'anic cognitive categories-tafakkur, tadabbur, tadhakkur, fiqh, qadar, mizan, and sunan Allah-map onto and enrich contemporary methodological practices. This part positions the Qur'an not only as an epistemic source but as a meta-methodology capable of guiding research design, interpretation, and ethical application across the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities.

Collectively, the seven parts present the Qur'an as a profound, interdisciplinary framework for understanding reality, constructing knowledge, and shaping ethical inquiry. This book seeks to serve as both an intellectual foundation and a practical guide for scholars aiming to integrate Qur'anic epistemology into contemporary research.

## Transliteration and Abbreviations

The transliteration system employed in this book follows a modified form of the International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES) standard, adapted for clarity and accessibility to readers unfamiliar with Arabic orthography. The aim is to preserve the integrity of the Arabic terms while maintaining readability in English academic prose. Diacritical marks are used to indicate specific Arabic letters where precision is required, but commonly recognised terms such as “Qur’an,” “Islam,” “Allah,” and “Shari‘ah” are presented in their familiar Anglicised forms.

| Arabic Transliteration Meaning / Usage |       |                         |
|----------------------------------------|-------|-------------------------|
| ا                                      | ’ / ā | Hamzah or long <i>a</i> |
| ب                                      | b     | <i>b</i>                |
| ت                                      | t     | <i>t</i>                |
| ث                                      | th    | <i>th</i> as in “think” |
| ج                                      | j     | <i>j</i>                |
| ح                                      | ḥ     | deep <i>h</i>           |
| خ                                      | kh    | guttural <i>kh</i>      |
| د                                      | d     | <i>d</i>                |
| ذ                                      | dh    | <i>dh</i> as in “this”  |
| ر                                      | r     | <i>r</i>                |
| ز                                      | z     | <i>z</i>                |
| س                                      | s     | <i>s</i>                |
| ش                                      | sh    | <i>sh</i>               |
| ص                                      | ṣ     | emphatic <i>s</i>       |
| ض                                      | ḍ     | emphatic <i>d</i>       |
| ط                                      | ṭ     | emphatic <i>t</i>       |



| Arabic Transliteration Meaning / Usage |            |                           |
|----------------------------------------|------------|---------------------------|
| ظ                                      | ẓ          | emphatic <i>dh</i>        |
| ع                                      | ‘          | voiced pharyngeal sound   |
| غ                                      | gh         | <i>gh</i>                 |
| ف                                      | f          | <i>f</i>                  |
| ق                                      | q          | <i>q</i> (uvular)         |
| ك                                      | k          | <i>k</i>                  |
| ل                                      | l          | <i>l</i>                  |
| م                                      | m          | <i>m</i>                  |
| ن                                      | n          | <i>n</i>                  |
| هـ                                     | h          | <i>h</i>                  |
| و                                      | w / ū / aw | <i>w</i> or long <i>u</i> |
| ي                                      | y / ī / ay | <i>y</i> or long <i>i</i> |

Long vowels are represented as *ā*, *ī*, and *ū*. The definite article *al* is assimilated when followed by a “sun letter” (e.g., *ash-shams*), but retained before “moon letters” (e.g., *al-qamar*). The *ta’ marbutah* (ة) is rendered as “ah” when in final position, and “t” when linked to another word.

**Abbreviations used in this book include:**

| Abbreviation    | Meaning                                                         |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| AS              | <i>‘Alayhi al-Salam</i> (“peace be upon him”)                   |
| Pbuh            | <i>Peace be upon him</i> (used sparingly, mainly in quotations) |
| CE              | Common Era                                                      |
| BCE             | Before the Common Era                                           |
| s.w.t.          | <i>Subhānahu wa-Ta’ālā</i> (“Glorified and Exalted is He”)      |
| Q               | Qur’an                                                          |
| v. / vv.        | Verse / Verses                                                  |
| cf.             | Compare                                                         |
| et al.          | And others                                                      |
| ibid.           | In the same place                                               |
| id.             | The same author                                                 |
| trans.          | Translator / translated                                         |
| ed.             | Editor / edited                                                 |
| eds.            | Editors                                                         |
| n.d.            | No date                                                         |
| surah           | Qur’anic chapter                                                |
| ayah (pl. ayat) | Qur’anic verse / sign                                           |

Qur’anic citations are referenced by *surah* and *ayah* number (e.g., Q. 2:30), while English translations are provided primarily for conceptual clarity, not exegetical finality. Arabic terms of central theological or epistemological significance—such as *‘ilm* (knowledge), *‘aql* (reason), *ḥikmah* (wisdom), and *tawḥīd*

(divine unity)-are retained in transliteration, as they carry semantic richness not fully captured by English equivalents.

## Introduction to the Qur'an and Methodology in Islam

The Qur'an presents itself as a book of guidance, discernment, wisdom, and clarification (Q. 2:185; 3:138; 10:1). Yet within its verses lies not only a theological message but also a *methodological architecture*-a framework for how human beings should perceive the world, think, reason, interpret, verify, and act. Islamic intellectual history has long acknowledged that the Qur'an shapes the moral and spiritual foundations of knowledge; what this book argues is that the Qur'an also offers a coherent *research methodology* capable of informing modern inquiry across all academic disciplines.

This introduction sets the conceptual stage for the seven-part structure of the work. It explains how Qur'anic epistemology emerges from divine ontology, how human cognitive faculties are integrated into a unified research process, and why modern scholars must revisit methodological debates through the lens of revelation and reason. At the heart of this framework is the Qur'anic conviction that knowledge ( *'ilm*) is both a divine gift and a human responsibility, and that truth is unified under the principle of *tawhīd*-the oneness of God and the coherence of all reality under His command (Q. 21:22; 39:29). The Qur'an grounds epistemology in three interdependent domains:

- Ontology - The nature of reality, creation, order, and purpose (Q. 30:30; 55:5-9).
- Cognition - The human faculties of perception, intellect, reflection, and remembrance (Q. 16:78; 3:190-191).
- Ethics - The moral conditions of truthful inquiry: *taqwa*, *'adl*, *ṣidq*, and *amanah* (Q. 2:282; 4:135).

Together, these domains create the foundation of an Islamic methodology that is at once empirical, rational, ethical, and spiritual.

The Qur'an repeatedly calls humans to observe the natural world (Q. 88:17-20), analyse history (Q. 30:9), reflect upon revelation (Q. 47:24), and use reason responsibly (Q. 10:100). These imperatives produce a recognisably methodological cycle: *observation* → *reflection* → *understanding* → *verification* → *action*. This epistemic sequence is explored extensively in **Part II** of this book, which reconstructs the Qur'an's internal research process.

A second dimension of Qur'anic methodology is ethical. Knowledge is never value-neutral in the Qur'anic worldview; it carries moral weight, shaping accountability and justice. The Qur'an warns against speaking without knowledge (Q. 17:36), condemns distortion of truth (Q. 2:79), and praises those who pursue understanding responsibly (Q. 3:191; 39:9). **Part III** of this book examines these ethical foundations, emphasising that scholars and researchers must embody integrity, humility, and righteousness.

**Part IV** deepens the analysis by exploring the Qur'anic logic of discovery, structured through the triad of *faith (iman)*, *knowledge ('ilm)*, and *action ('amal)* and the hierarchy of certainty ( *'ilm al-yaqīn*, *'ayn al-*

*yaqin*, *haqq al-yaqin*). These epistemic stages demonstrate that the Qur'an envisions knowledge as more than accumulation-it is a transformative journey culminating in lived truth.

**Part V** engages classical intellectual history and modern science, revisiting the works of al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, al-Ghazali, and Ibn Rushd to show how their methods were fundamentally anchored in Qur'anic reasoning. This part reframes the contrast between Qur'anic and modern scientific epistemologies, arguing for a synthesis that retains empirical rigour while restoring moral and metaphysical grounding.

**Part VI** synthesises the epistemological architecture into a unified Qur'anic philosophy of research. It outlines future directions for scholarship and presents conceptual frameworks for integrating Qur'anic methodology into contemporary academic landscapes.

**Part VII: Qur'anic Epistemology & Modern Research Methods** is a crucial extension of this work. While earlier parts establish the philosophical and methodological basis of Qur'anic epistemology, Part VII translates these principles into the language of modern academic research. It argues that Qur'anic cognitive constructs-such as *tafakkur* (analytical reflection), *tadabbur* (textual contemplation), *tadhakkur* (ethical recall), *fiqh* (deep understanding), and *mizan* (balance)-parallel and enrich the foundations of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research. This part demonstrates how Qur'anic epistemology offers a meta-methodology that can guide research design, data interpretation, triangulation, ethical reasoning, and interdisciplinary synthesis.

By integrating ontological, rational, moral, and methodological dimensions, this book presents the Qur'an as a timeless and versatile framework for human inquiry. It is neither a theological manual nor a scientific treatise; rather, it is a comprehensive reconstruction of how the Qur'an structures the pursuit of knowledge, truth, and human flourishing. This introduction invites scholars, students, and researchers to approach the Qur'an not only as a spiritual guide but also as a methodological compass capable of shaping contemporary academic discourse.

## CONTENT

|                                                     |      |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------|
| Preface                                             | iv   |
| About the Authors                                   | v    |
| Acknowledgments                                     | ix   |
| Author’s Note                                       | x    |
| Summary                                             | xi   |
| Transliteration and Abbreviations                   | xiii |
| Introduction to the Qur’an and Methodology in Islam | xvi  |

### PART I: FOUNDATIONS OF QUR’ANIC EPISTEMOLOGY

#### Chapter 1: Understanding Knowledge (‘Ilm) in the Qur’an

|       |                                        |    |
|-------|----------------------------------------|----|
| 1.1   | Introduction                           | 3  |
| 1.2   | The Nature and Sources of ‘Ilm         | 4  |
| 1.2.1 | The Divine Origin of Knowledge         | 4  |
| 1.2.2 | The Human Means of Acquiring Knowledge | 5  |
| 1.2.3 | The Hierarchy of Sources               | 5  |
| 1.2.4 | The Transformative Nature of ‘Ilm      | 6  |
| 1.2.5 | The Qur’an as Epistemic Framework      | 7  |
| 1.3   | Hierarchy of Knowledge                 | 7  |
| 1.4   | Knowledge and Responsibility           | 8  |
| 1.5   | Knowledge as a Collective Endeavour    | 9  |
| 1.6   | The Sacred Function of ‘Ilm            | 10 |

#### Chapter 2: Cognitive Instruments of Knowing: ‘Aql, Tafakkur, Tadabbur, and Tadhakkur

|     |                                             |    |
|-----|---------------------------------------------|----|
| 2.1 | The Cognitive Framework of the Qur’an       | 11 |
| 2.2 | ‘Aql: The Rational Faculty                  | 12 |
| 2.3 | Tafakkur: Analytical Contemplation          | 12 |
| 2.4 | Tadabbur: Deep Reflection                   | 13 |
| 2.5 | Tadhakkur: Remembrance and Moral Reflection | 14 |
| 2.6 | Integration of Cognitive Instruments        | 14 |

### Chapter 3: Revelation and Rationality: Integration, Not Opposition

|       |                                                                       |    |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 3.1   | The Qur'anic Harmony of Reason and Revelation                         | 16 |
| 3.2   | Classical Perspectives                                                | 16 |
| 3.2.1 | The Early Formulations: Reason as a Divine Trust                      | 17 |
| 3.2.2 | Al-Farabi and the Rational Structure of Revelation                    | 17 |
| 3.2.3 | Ibn Sina: The Metaphysics of Intellectual Illumination                | 17 |
| 3.2.4 | Al-Ghazali: Reconciling Reason with Spiritual Certainty               | 18 |
| 3.2.5 | Ibn Rushd: Rational Autonomy within Divine Law                        | 18 |
| 3.2.6 | Later Synthesis: Sufi Integration of Rational and Spiritual Knowledge | 19 |
| 3.2.7 | Epistemological Implications                                          | 19 |
| 3.3   | The Balance of Empiricism and Spirituality                            | 19 |
| 3.3.1 | Empiricism in the Qur'anic Context                                    | 20 |
| 3.3.2 | Spirituality as Internal Empiricism                                   | 20 |
| 3.3.3 | Synthesis: The Ethical Unity of Knowing                               | 20 |
| 3.4   | The Principle of Tawḥīd as Epistemic Unity                            | 21 |
| 3.4.1 | Tawḥīd as the Ontological Foundation of Knowledge                     | 21 |
| 3.4.2 | The Onto-Epistemic Implications of Tawḥīd                             | 21 |
| 3.4.3 | Unity of Knowledge and the Integration of Disciplines                 | 22 |
| 3.4.4 | Tawḥīd and Contemporary Epistemological Crisis                        | 22 |
| 3.4.5 | Ethical and Social Implications                                       | 22 |
| 3.5   | Toward a Unified Epistemology                                         | 23 |
| 3.5.1 | Reclaiming the Qur'anic Method of Knowing                             | 23 |
| 3.5.2 | Integration of Revelation, Reason, and Experience                     | 23 |
| 3.5.3 | Challenges and Prospects in Contemporary Thought                      | 24 |
| 3.5.4 | Knowledge as Worship and Transformation                               | 24 |
| 3.5.5 | Toward a Global Paradigm of Sacred Science                            | 24 |

## PART II: THE QUR'ANIC RESEARCH PROCESS

### Chapter 4: Observation (Nazar, Sair): The Empirical Foundation of Qur'anic Inquiry

|       |                                              |    |
|-------|----------------------------------------------|----|
| 4.1   | Nazar: Seeing as Knowing                     | 28 |
| 4.1.1 | The Linguistic and Conceptual Field of Nazar | 29 |
| 4.1.2 | Nazar as Epistemic Engagement                | 29 |
| 4.1.3 | Nazar and the Cognitive Ethic                | 29 |
| 4.1.4 | Nazar and Natural Phenomena                  | 30 |
| 4.1.5 | Nazar and Self-Observation                   | 30 |
| 4.2   | Sair: Travel as Epistemic Engagement         | 30 |

|       |                                                  |    |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------|----|
| 4.2.1 | The Semantics of Sair                            | 30 |
| 4.2.2 | Travel as Inquiry                                | 31 |
| 4.2.3 | Sair and the Unity of Space and Time             | 31 |
| 4.2.4 | Travel and Environmental Observation             | 31 |
| 4.2.5 | Sair and Moral Transformation                    | 31 |
| 4.2.6 | Sair as Integration of Empiricism and Revelation | 32 |
| 4.3   | The Empirical-Spiritual Continuum                | 32 |
| 4.3.1 | The Qur'anic Epistemic Unity                     | 32 |
| 4.3.2 | Empirical Observation as Spiritual Praxis        | 33 |
| 4.3.3 | From Observation to Realisation                  | 33 |
| 4.3.4 | The Unity of Signs: Nature, History, and Self    | 33 |
| 4.3.5 | Spirituality as the Ethical Limit of Empiricism  | 34 |
| 4.4   | Observation in the Prophetic Paradigm            | 34 |
| 4.4.1 | Prophetic Observation as Cognitive Praxis        | 34 |
| 4.4.2 | Moses: Observation as Social Awareness           | 34 |
| 4.4.3 | 'Isa and the Vision of Life                      | 35 |
| 4.4.4 | Observation and the Prophetic Method of Inquiry  | 35 |
| 4.4.5 | Observation as Revelation: The Prophetic Witness | 35 |
| 4.4.6 | The Prophetic Ethic of Perception                | 35 |
| 4.4.7 | Observation and Revelation: No Dichotomy         | 36 |
| 4.5   | Toward an Empirical Ethic                        | 36 |
| 4.5.1 | The Moral Dimension of Observation               | 36 |
| 4.5.2 | Observation as Stewardship (Khilafah)            | 37 |
| 4.5.3 | Knowledge and Accountability                     | 37 |
| 4.5.4 | Observation as Worship                           | 38 |
| 4.5.5 | The Integration of Rationality and Spirituality  | 38 |
| 4.5.6 | The Formation of an Empirical Ethic              | 38 |

## **Chapter 5: Reflection and Contemplation (Tafakkur, Tadabbur, Tadhakkur): Deep Thinking and Theorisation**

|       |                                                     |    |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------|----|
| 5.1   | The Reflective Mandate in the Qur'an                | 40 |
| 5.2   | Tafakkur: Analytical Contemplation                  | 40 |
| 5.2.1 | The Concept of Tafakkur in Qur'anic Epistemology    | 41 |
| 5.2.2 | Tafakkur as a Process of Analytical Reasoning       | 41 |
| 5.2.3 | Tafakkur and the Integration of Knowledge           | 42 |
| 5.2.4 | Tafakkur and the Cognitive-Spiritual Transformation | 42 |
| 5.3   | Tadabbur: Deep Reflection and Discernment           | 42 |
| 5.3.1 | The Semantic and Epistemic Roots of Tadabbur        | 43 |



|       |                                                       |    |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 5.3.2 | Tadabbur as a Method of Deep Understanding            | 43 |
| 5.3.3 | Tadabbur and the Ethics of Understanding              | 43 |
| 5.3.4 | Tadabbur and Theorisation in the Qur'anic Paradigm    | 44 |
| 5.3.5 | The Interrelation of Tafakkur and Tadabbur            | 44 |
| 5.4   | Tadhakkur: Remembrance and Moral Internalisation      | 44 |
| 5.4.1 | The Meaning and Cognitive Function of Tadhakkur       | 44 |
| 5.4.2 | The Relationship between Memory, Knowledge, and Faith | 45 |
| 5.4.3 | Tadhakkur as Moral Internalisation of Knowledge       | 45 |
| 5.4.4 | The Heart (Qalb) as the Site of Tadhakkur             | 45 |
| 5.4.5 | The Continuum of Tafakkur, Tadabbur, and Tadhakkur    | 46 |
| 5.5   | Theorisation and the Reflective Ethic                 | 46 |
| 5.5.1 | The Qur'anic Ground of Theorisation                   | 46 |
| 5.5.2 | The Reflective Ethic as Foundation of Theorisation    | 47 |
| 5.5.3 | The Qur'anic Logic of Knowledge Integration           | 47 |
| 5.5.4 | The Stages of Qur'anic Theorisation                   | 47 |
| 5.5.5 | The Reflective Ethic and Contemporary Knowledge       | 48 |
| 5.5.6 | Theorisation as a Mode of Worship                     | 48 |
| 5.5.7 | The Qur'anic Theory of Reflective Knowledge           | 48 |
| 5.5.8 | Toward a Qur'anic Paradigm of Theorisation            | 48 |
| 5.6   | The Reflective Synthesis of Qur'anic Epistemology     | 49 |

## Chapter 6: Validation (Burhan, Bayyina): The Logic of Proof and Evidence

|       |                                                                      |    |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 6.1   | The Qur'anic Ethos of Verification                                   | 50 |
| 6.2   | Burhan: The Qur'anic Logic of Proof                                  | 51 |
| 6.2.1 | The Semantic Field of Burhan                                         | 51 |
| 6.2.2 | Burhan and the Structure of Reason                                   | 51 |
| 6.2.3 | Burhan as Epistemic Verification                                     | 51 |
| 6.2.4 | Burhan in the Moral and Ontological Order                            | 52 |
| 6.2.5 | Burhan as Qur'anic Rationality                                       | 52 |
| 6.3   | Bayyina: Evident Clarity and Manifest Truth                          | 52 |
| 6.3.1 | The Nature of Bayyina                                                | 53 |
| 6.3.2 | Bayyina and the Clarity of Revelation                                | 53 |
| 6.3.3 | Bayyina and the Human Faculty of Discernment                         | 53 |
| 6.3.4 | The Relationship Between Burhan and Bayyina                          | 53 |
| 6.3.5 | Bayyina as Ontological Clarity                                       | 54 |
| 6.3.6 | Epistemic Ethics of Bayyina                                          | 54 |
| 6.4   | The Ethics of Verification: Avoiding Speculation and False Knowledge | 54 |
| 6.4.1 | Knowledge and Moral Responsibility                                   | 54 |

|        |                                                           |    |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 6.4.2  | Condemnation of Speculative Thought (Zann)                | 55 |
| 6.4.3  | The Triad of Verification: Hearing, Seeing, and Reasoning | 55 |
| 6.4.4  | The False Knowledge Paradigm                              | 56 |
| 6.4.5  | Epistemic Justice and Truthfulness                        | 56 |
| 6.4.6  | Avoiding Speculative Theology and Metaphysical Excess     | 56 |
| 6.4.7  | The Verification Process in the Qur'an                    | 57 |
| 6.4.8  | False Knowledge as Disconnection from Reality             | 58 |
| 6.4.9  | Epistemic Integrity and the Unity of Truth                | 58 |
| 6.4.10 | Ethical Dimensions of Epistemic Humility                  | 59 |

## Chapter 7. Synthesis (Ḥikmah): Integrating Truth and Understanding

|       |                                                              |    |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 7.1   | The Meaning of Ḥikmah in the Qur'an                          | 61 |
| 7.1.1 | Ḥikmah as the Apex of Qur'anic Epistemology                  | 61 |
| 7.1.2 | Semantic Field of Ḥikmah: From Root to Revelation            | 61 |
| 7.1.3 | Qur'anic Usage of Ḥikmah: Coupling with Kitab and Revelation | 62 |
| 7.1.4 | Ḥikmah as Divine Bestowal and Human Responsibility           | 62 |
| 7.1.5 | Prophetic Attribution of Ḥikmah                              | 62 |
| 7.1.6 | Ḥikmah and the Cosmic Order                                  | 63 |
| 7.1.7 | The Ethical Dimension of Ḥikmah                              | 63 |
| 7.2   | Ḥikmah as Epistemic Integration                              | 63 |
| 7.2.1 | From Knowing to Integrating                                  | 64 |
| 7.2.2 | The Hierarchical Structure of Qur'anic Knowledge             | 64 |
| 7.2.3 | The Dialectic of Revelation and Reason                       | 64 |
| 7.2.4 | Ḥikmah as Ethical Rationality                                | 64 |
| 7.2.5 | Ḥikmah and Divine Illumination                               | 65 |
| 7.2.6 | Ḥikmah as Balance: The Mean between Extremes                 | 65 |
| 7.2.7 | Integration across the Realms: Ghayb and Shahadah            | 65 |
| 7.2.8 | The Teleology of Wisdom: From Knowledge to Transformation    | 65 |
| 7.2.9 | Summary: The Qur'anic Synthesis of Knowing                   | 66 |
| 7.3   | The Ethical Dimension of Ḥikmah                              | 66 |
| 7.3.1 | Ḥikmah as Moral Orientation                                  | 66 |
| 7.3.2 | The Unity of Knowledge and Virtue                            | 66 |
| 7.3.3 | Ḥikmah and Taqwa: Conscious Ethics                           | 67 |
| 7.3.4 | Justice ('Adl) as the Fulfilment of Wisdom                   | 67 |
| 7.3.5 | Compassion and Forgiveness as Expressions of Ḥikmah          | 67 |
| 7.3.6 | The Ethical Responsibility of Knowledge                      | 68 |
| 7.4   | Ḥikmah and Theoretical Synthesis                             | 68 |
| 7.4.1 | Ḥikmah as Epistemological Harmony                            | 68 |

|       |                                                               |    |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 7.4.2 | The Qur'anic Logic of Integration                             | 68 |
| 7.4.3 | From Contemplation to Theory                                  | 69 |
| 7.4.4 | Integrating Rationality and Revelation                        | 69 |
| 7.4.5 | Ḥikmah and the Architecture of Meaning                        | 69 |
| 7.4.6 | Ḥikmah as the Foundation of Civilizational Thought            | 69 |
| 7.4.7 | Ḥikmah as the Unifying Principle of Knowledge                 | 70 |
| 7.5   | The Spiritual Realisation of Ḥikmah                           | 70 |
| 7.5.1 | The Inner Dimension of Wisdom                                 | 70 |
| 7.5.2 | The Purified Heart (Qalb Salim) and Spiritual Wisdom          | 71 |
| 7.5.3 | The Light of Divine Guidance                                  | 71 |
| 7.5.4 | Dhikr (Remembrance) as Spiritual Activation of Ḥikmah         | 72 |
| 7.5.5 | Tawḥid and the Unity of Knowing and Being                     | 72 |
| 7.5.6 | The Tranquillity of Wisdom: Sakīnah and Spiritual Equilibrium | 72 |
| 7.5.7 | The Fruit of Ḥikmah: Living in Divine Proportion              | 73 |
| 7.5.8 | Ḥikmah as the Light of the Heart                              | 73 |

## Chapter 8: Application (‘Amal, Iman): Knowledge into Action

|       |                                                              |    |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 8.1   | The Qur'anic Fusion of Knowledge and Action                  | 75 |
| 8.2   | ‘Amal: Action as Manifest Knowledge                          | 75 |
| 8.2.1 | The Ontological Ground of ‘Amal                              | 76 |
| 8.2.2 | ‘Amal as Verification of Faith                               | 76 |
| 8.2.3 | Righteous Action (‘Amal Ṣaliḥ) as Ethical Praxis             | 76 |
| 8.2.4 | Action as Knowledge of Being                                 | 76 |
| 8.3   | Iman: Faith as Epistemic Commitment                          | 77 |
| 8.3.1 | The Meaning and Structure of Iman                            | 77 |
| 8.3.2 | Iman and the Integrity of Knowledge                          | 77 |
| 8.3.3 | Iman and the Moral Structure of Existence                    | 77 |
| 8.4   | Knowledge-Action Integration: The Epistemic Circle Completed | 78 |
| 8.5   | The Transformative Ethic of Action                           | 78 |
| 8.6   | Conclusion: Knowledge as Action, Action as Knowledge         | 78 |

## Chapter 9: Transmission (Da‘wah, Tabligh): The Communication of Knowledge

|       |                                                |    |
|-------|------------------------------------------------|----|
| 9.1   | Knowledge as Communal Trust                    | 79 |
| 9.2   | Da‘wah: Invitation to the Way of Truth         | 79 |
| 9.2.1 | The Linguistic and Epistemic Essence of Da‘wah | 80 |
| 9.2.2 | Da‘wah as Ethical Discourse                    | 80 |
| 9.2.3 | The Internal Dimension of Da‘wah               | 80 |

|       |                                                              |    |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 9.3   | Tabligh: Communication and Clarity of Message                | 80 |
| 9.3.1 | The Concept of Tabligh in the Qur’an                         | 81 |
| 9.3.2 | Tabligh as Precision and Transparency                        | 81 |
| 9.3.3 | The Role of Language in Tabligh                              | 81 |
|       | Communicative Ethics in the Qur’an                           | 81 |
| 9.4   | 9.4.1 Truthfulness (Ṣidq) as the Foundation of Communication | 82 |
|       | 9.4.2 Gentleness and Reason in Dialogue                      | 82 |
|       | 9.4.3 The Listener’s Freedom and Responsibility              | 82 |
| 9.5   | Transmission as Collective Knowledge Formation               | 82 |
|       | 9.5.1 The Ummah as Epistemic Community                       | 82 |
|       | 9.5.2 The Dynamics of Teaching and Learning                  | 83 |
|       | 9.5.3 Prophetic Communication as Universal Model             | 83 |
| 9.6   | Conclusion: Communication as the Renewal of Knowledge        | 83 |

## **Chapter 10: Preservation (Dhikr, Kitab): The Continuity of Knowledge**

|      |                                                                  |    |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 10.1 | The Sacred Continuum of Knowledge                                | 91 |
| 10.2 | Dhikr: Remembrance as Preservation of Meaning                    | 91 |
| 10.3 | Kitab: The Written Preservation of Divine Knowledge              | 92 |
| 10.4 | The Interrelation of Dhikr and Kitab                             | 92 |
| 10.5 | The Human Role in Preservation                                   | 93 |
| 10.6 | Dhikr as Collective Memory and Cultural Continuity               | 93 |
| 10.7 | The Ontology of Preservation: From Revelation to Remembrance     | 94 |
| 10.8 | The Eternal Preservation of Truth                                | 94 |
| 10.9 | The Qur’anic Cycle of Knowledge - From Revelation to Remembrance | 94 |

## **Part III: ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF KNOWLEDGE**

### **Chapter 11: Ethics of Knowing: Qur’anic Principles of Honesty, Justice, and Responsibility**

|        |                                                                     |     |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 11.1   | Ethical Foundations of Inquiry (Taqwa, Amanah, ‘Adl)                | 99  |
| 11.1.1 | Taqwa - Conscious Awareness of God in Knowledge                     | 99  |
| 11.1.2 | Amanah - The Trust of Knowledge                                     | 100 |
| 11.1.3 | ‘Adl - Justice in Knowledge                                         | 100 |
| 11.1.4 | Synthesis of the Three Principles                                   | 100 |
| 11.2   | Verse Analysis: “La taqfu mm laysa laka bihi ‘ilm” (Al-Isra’ 17:36) | 101 |
| 11.2.1 | Epistemic Restraint and Verification                                | 101 |
| 11.2.2 | Accountability of the Cognitive Faculties                           | 101 |

|        |                                                           |     |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 11.2.3 | Ethical Implications for Scholars (Ulu al-Albab)          | 101 |
| 11.2.4 | Avoiding Arrogance (Kibr) and Concealment of Truth (Zulm) | 102 |
| 11.2.5 | From Revelation to Responsibility                         | 102 |
| 11.3   | Responsibility of Scholars and Seekers (Ulu al-Albab)     | 102 |
| 11.3.1 | The Qur'anic Portrayal of Ulu al-Albab                    | 103 |
| 11.3.2 | Moral Accountability of Scholars                          | 103 |
| 11.3.3 | Teaching and Transmission as Sacred Duty                  | 103 |
| 11.3.4 | The Spiritual Character of the Scholar                    | 103 |
| 11.3.5 | Epistemic Stewardship and the Modern Context              | 100 |
| 11.3.6 | The Scholar as Moral Agent                                | 104 |
| 11.4   | Avoiding Arrogance and Manipulation of Truth (Zulm, Kibr) | 104 |
| 11.4.1 | Zulm - The Injustice of Knowledge Misuse                  | 104 |
| 11.4.2 | Kibr - The Arrogance That Blinds Truth                    | 105 |
| 11.4.3 | The Interrelation of Zulm and Kibr                        | 105 |
| 11.4.4 | The Humble Scholar as a Model of Justice                  | 105 |
| 11.4.5 | Knowledge and Power: The Modern Challenge                 | 106 |
| 11.4.6 | Restoring Ethical Balance                                 | 106 |
| 11.5   | Ethics of Knowing                                         | 106 |

## Chapter 12: Moral Methodology in Research - From Intention (Niyyah) to Impact ('Amal)

|        |                                                                       |     |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 12.1   | Purity of Intention and Humility Before Truth                         | 108 |
| 12.1.1 | Intention (Niyyah) as the Ethical Beginning of Inquiry                | 108 |
| 12.1.2 | Humility (Tawaḍu) as Epistemic Virtue                                 | 109 |
| 12.1.3 | Sincerity (Ikhlāṣ) as the Essence of Truthful Research                | 109 |
| 12.1.4 | The Integration of Intention and Action                               | 109 |
| 12.1.5 | Humility Before Divine Knowledge                                      | 110 |
| 12.2   | Ethical Publication, Discourse, and Argumentation in Qur'anic Terms   | 110 |
| 12.2.1 | The Qur'anic Ethic of Speech (qawl ḥasan)                             | 110 |
| 12.2.2 | Publication as Witness (shahadah) and Trust (amanah)                  | 111 |
| 12.2.3 | The Discursive Ethic: Adab al-Hiwar                                   | 111 |
| 12.2.4 | The Ethic of Writing (Kitabah) in the Qur'an                          | 111 |
| 12.2.5 | The Qur'anic Cycle of Ethical Knowledge Transmission                  | 112 |
| 12.2.6 | Avoidance of Epistemic Arrogance (istikbar 'ilmi)                     | 112 |
| 12.2.7 | Ethical Responsibility in the Age of Information                      | 113 |
| 12.2.8 | From Ethical Word to Ethical World                                    | 113 |
| 12.3   | Knowledge as Trust ('Ilm Amanah): Integrating Ethics into Methodology | 113 |
| 12.3.1 | The Ontology of Trust in Qur'anic Epistemology                        | 114 |

|         |                                                                                 |     |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 12.3.2  | The Moral Architecture of 'Ilm Amanah                                           | 114 |
| 12.3.3  | The Responsibility of the Knower ('Alim) as Trustee                             | 114 |
| 12.3.4  | Methodological Integrity and Verification (Tahqiq wa Tabayyun)                  | 115 |
| 12.3.5  | Avoiding the Corruption of Knowledge: Concealment, Misuse, and Arrogance        | 115 |
| 12.3.6  | Integrating Amanah into Contemporary Research Methodology                       | 116 |
| 12.3.7  | Knowledge Dissemination as Ethical Fulfilment of Amanah                         | 116 |
| 12.3.8  | The Eternal Covenant of Knowledge                                               | 117 |
| 12.4    | Integrating Revelation and Rational Inquiry (al-Wahy wa al-'Aql)                | 117 |
| 12.4.1  | The Dual Luminous Sources of Knowledge                                          | 117 |
| 12.4.2  | Qur'an and Anthropology of Reason ('Aql) as a Moral Faculty                     | 118 |
| 12.4.3  | Revelation (Wahy) as the Source of Orientation and Meaning                      | 118 |
| 12.4.4  | The Qur'anic Logic of Integration: Between Ta'qqul and Tadhakkur                | 119 |
| 12.4.5  | The Epistemic Balance: Limitation of Reason and the Infallibility of Revelation | 120 |
| 12.4.6  | Historical Manifestations of Integration in the Islamic Intellectual Tradition  | 120 |
| 12.4.7  | Toward a Contemporary Qur'anic Epistemology: Re-integrating Wahy and 'Aql       | 120 |
| 12.4.8  | The Qur'anic Method of Rational Reflection: Observing the Signs                 | 121 |
| 12.4.9  | Revelation and Reason in the Cycle of Dhikr (Remembrance)                       | 121 |
| 12.4.10 | Ethical Consequences of Integrating Revelation and Reason                       | 122 |
| 12.4.11 | The Harmony of Light and Intellect                                              | 122 |

## **PART IV: STRUCTURE OF QUR'ANIC LOGIC AND DISCOVERY**

### **Chapter 13: The Cycle of Faith-Knowledge-Action**

|        |                                                          |     |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 13.1   | The Interconnected Architecture of Qur'anic Epistemology | 125 |
| 13.1.1 | Faith, Knowledge, and Action as a Unified Cycle          | 125 |
| 13.1.2 | Epistemic Integration and the Human Role                 | 125 |
| 13.1.3 | Cognitive and Moral Reciprocity                          | 126 |
| 13.1.4 | From Faith to Discovery                                  | 126 |
| 13.2   | Iman (Faith) as the Foundation of Epistemic Awareness    | 126 |
| 13.2.1 | Faith as an Epistemic Lens                               | 126 |
| 13.2.2 | Cognition and the Heart                                  | 127 |
| 13.2.3 | Faith and the Process of Knowing                         | 127 |
| 13.2.4 | Faith and Action                                         | 127 |
| 13.2.5 | Faith and Intellectual Humility                          | 127 |

|        |                                                 |     |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 13.3   | ‘Ilm (Knowledge) as Illumination of Faith       | 127 |
| 13.3.1 | Knowledge as Divine Light (Mur)                 | 128 |
| 13.3.2 | The Ontological Unity of Faith and Knowledge    | 128 |
| 13.3.3 | Knowledge as a Moral Responsibility             | 128 |
| 13.3.4 | Epistemic Transformation and Reflection         | 128 |
| 13.3.5 | Faith Illuminated by Knowledge                  | 129 |
| 13.3.6 | The Qur’anic Pedagogy of Light                  | 129 |
| 13.4   | ‘Amal (Action) as the Completion of Knowledge   | 129 |
| 13.4.1 | Action as Proof of Faith                        | 129 |
| 13.4.2 | ‘Amal as Transformation                         | 129 |
| 13.4.3 | Action Anchored in Intention (Niyyah)           | 129 |
| 13.4.4 | The Moral Logic of Action                       | 130 |
| 13.4.5 | Action as Continuation of Revelation            | 130 |
| 13.4.6 | From Knowledge to Justice                       | 130 |
| 13.4.7 | The Integration of Faith, Knowledge, and Action | 130 |
| 13.5   | The Living Cycle of Qur’anic Knowledge          | 131 |

#### **Chapter 14: The Three Stages of Certainty (‘Ilm al-Yaqin, ‘Ayn al-Yaqin, Ḥaqq al-Yaqin)**

|        |                                                               |     |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 14.1   | Conceptual Foundations of Yaqin in the Qur’an                 | 132 |
| 14.1.1 | Defining Yaqin in Qur’anic Epistemology                       | 132 |
| 14.1.2 | Linguistic and Semantic Roots of Yaqin                        | 132 |
| 14.1.3 | Qur’anic Occurrences and Contextual Meanings of Yaqin         | 133 |
| 14.1.4 | Yaqin as the Metaphysical and Cognitive Goal of Iman          | 134 |
| 14.1.5 | Relationship Between Yaqin, ‘Ilm, and ‘Aql                    | 134 |
| 14.1.6 | Qur’anic Epistemology as Processual: From Knowing to Becoming | 135 |
| 14.2   | The First Stage - ‘Ilm al-Yaqin (Knowledge of Certainty)      | 136 |
| 14.2.1 | Linguistic and Conceptual Dimensions of ‘Ilm al-Yaqin         | 137 |
| 14.2.2 | Qur’anic Contexts of ‘Ilm al-Yaqin                            | 137 |
| 14.2.3 | Knowledge of Certainty as Cognitive Transformation            | 137 |
| 14.2.4 | The Relationship Between ‘Ilm, ‘Aql, and Yaqin                | 138 |
| 14.2.5 | The Processual Journey of Certainty                           | 138 |
| 14.2.6 | The Ethical and Existential Implications of ‘Ilm al-Yaqin     | 139 |
| 14.2.7 | ‘Ilm al-Yaqin in the Cosmological and Eschatological Context  | 139 |
| 14.3   | The Second Stage - ‘Ayn al-Yaqin (Vision of Certainty)        | 140 |
| 14.3.1 | Linguistic and Conceptual Foundations of ‘Ayn al-Yaqin        | 140 |
| 14.3.2 | The Qur’anic Context of ‘Ayn al-Yaqin                         | 141 |

|        |                                                                  |     |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 14.3.3 | The Epistemological Transition from Knowing to Seeing            | 141 |
| 14.3.4 | The Metaphysics of Vision in the Qur'an                          | 142 |
| 14.3.5 | The Ethical and Spiritual Function of 'Ayn al-Yaqin              | 142 |
| 14.3.6 | 'Ayn al-Yaqin and the Unveiling of the Unseen (al-Ghayb)         | 142 |
| 14.3.7 | Cosmological Vision: Seeing Divine Signs in Creation             | 143 |
| 14.3.8 | The Eschatological Fulfilment of Vision                          | 143 |
| 14.3.9 | Conclusion                                                       | 144 |
| 14.4   | The Third Stage - Haqq al-Yaqin (Truth of Certainty)             | 144 |
| 14.4.1 | Linguistic and Theological Meaning of Haqq al-Yaqin              | 144 |
| 14.4.2 | The Ontological Shift: From Knowing to Being                     | 144 |
| 14.4.3 | Haqq al-Yaqin and the Qur'an as Living Truth                     | 145 |
| 14.4.4 | The Transformative Dimension of Haqq al-Yaqin                    | 145 |
| 14.4.5 | Haqq al-Yaqin and Eschatological Awareness                       | 145 |
| 14.4.6 | The Ethical Imperative of Truth-Realisation                      | 146 |
| 14.4.7 | The Dynamic Continuum: From 'Ilm to Haqq                         | 146 |
| 14.4.8 | Conclusion: The Realisation of Truth in the Human Self           | 146 |
| 14.5   | The Progression of Yaqin: From Knowing to Being                  | 146 |
| 14.5.1 | The Threefold Structure of Certainty: Knowing, Seeing, and Being | 146 |
| 14.5.2 | Integration with the Qur'anic Triad: Iman-'Ilm-'Amal             | 147 |
| 14.5.3 | Yaqin as an Epistemic Light (Mur al-'Ilm)                        | 148 |
| 14.5.4 | Ethical Implications: Responsibility and Sincerity in Certainty  | 148 |
| 14.5.5 | Revelation (Wahy) as the Final Arbiter of Certainty              | 148 |
| 14.5.6 | From Knowing to Being: The Qur'anic Path of Integration          | 149 |
| 14.5.7 | Yaqin as the Heart of Qur'anic Epistemology                      | 149 |
| 14.6   | Conclusion                                                       | 150 |

## Chapter 15: The Qur'anic Theory of Knowledge as a Unified Epistemology

|        |                                                            |     |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 15.1   | The Divine Origin and Ontology of Knowledge                | 152 |
| 15.1.1 | The Source of All Knowledge: Allah as al-Alim              | 153 |
| 15.1.2 | Ontology of Knowledge: From the Divine to the Human        | 153 |
| 15.1.3 | The Creation as Epistemic Field: Signs (Ayat) of Knowledge | 153 |
| 15.1.4 | Human Faculties as Instruments of Knowledge                | 154 |
| 15.1.5 | Revelation (Wahy) as Ontological Ground of Epistemic Truth | 154 |
| 15.1.6 | The Ethical Ontology of Knowledge                          | 155 |
| 15.1.7 | Knowledge as a Manifestation of Divine Light (Mur al-'Ilm) | 155 |
| 15.1.8 | Summary: The Ontological Unity of Knowing and Being        | 156 |
| 15.2   | Human Faculties and the Structure of Knowing in the Qur'an | 156 |
| 15.2.1 | Hearing and Sight: The Sensory Foundations of Awareness    | 156 |



|         |                                                                             |     |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 15.2.2  | The Intellect (‘Aql): The Faculty of Discernment and Understanding          | 157 |
| 15.2.3  | The Heart (Qalb): The Centre of Consciousness and Faith                     | 157 |
| 15.2.4  | The Integration of Faculties: From Perception to Realisation                | 158 |
| 15.2.5  | The Spiritual Intelligence (Furqan) as Divine Discrimination                | 159 |
| 15.2.6  | Ethical Accountability of Knowledge: The Questioning of the Faculties       | 159 |
| 15.2.7  | Summary: The Qur’anic Architecture of Knowing                               | 159 |
| 15.3    | The Qur’anic Logic of Discovery and Verification                            | 160 |
| 15.3.1  | Discovery and Verification as Twin Dimensions of Qur’anic Epistemology      | 160 |
| 15.3.2  | Discovery (Kashf) as Epistemic Unveiling                                    | 160 |
| 15.3.3  | Verification (Tahqiq) as the Principle of Certainty                         | 161 |
| 15.3.4  | The Qur’anic Method of Verification: From Signs (Ayat) to Certainty (Yaqin) | 161 |
| 15.3.5  | Rational Verification (Tahqiq al-‘Aqli) and Moral Discernment               | 161 |
| 15.3.6  | Empirical and Reflective Discovery: Signs in the Horizons and the Self      | 162 |
| 15.3.7  | Verification through Revelation (Wahy) and Consistency (Tawfiq)             | 162 |
| 15.3.8  | The Ethics of Verification: Integrity, Justice, and Responsibility          | 162 |
| 15.3.9  | Qur’anic Verification and the Contemporary Epistemic Crisis                 | 163 |
| 15.3.10 | Conclusion: From Discovery to Certainty through Verification                | 163 |
| 14.4    | Integration of Faith, Reason, and Revelation in Qur’anic Epistemology       | 163 |
| 15.4.1  | The Need for Epistemic Integration                                          | 163 |
| 15.4.2  | Faith (Iman) as Epistemic Grounding                                         | 164 |
| 15.4.3  | Reason (‘Aql) as the Faculty of Discernment                                 | 164 |
| 15.4.4  | Revelation (Wahy) as the Source and Standard of Knowledge                   | 165 |
| 15.4.5  | The Triadic Integration: Iman-‘Aql-Wahy as a Unified Epistemic Cycle        | 165 |
| 15.4.6  | Integrative Reasoning: Between Empirical Inquiry and Divine Meaning         | 166 |
| 15.4.7  | Faith and Reason in Dialogical Harmony                                      | 166 |
| 15.4.8  | Revelation as the Criterion of Integration                                  | 166 |
| 15.4.9  | Ethical Integration: Knowledge as Responsibility                            | 167 |
| 15.4.10 | Toward a Qur’anic Paradigm of Unified Knowing                               | 167 |

## PART V: RECONSTRUCTION OF ISLAMIC EPISTEMOLOGY IN CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

### Chapter 16: Classical Thinkers and Qur'anic Methodology

|        |                                                                        |     |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 16.1   | The Qur'anic Intellectual Heritage: From Revelation to Reason          | 170 |
| 16.1.1 | Revelation as the Source of All Knowledge                              | 170 |
| 16.1.2 | The Qur'anic Imperative of Reason and Reflection                       | 171 |
| 16.1.3 | From Revelation to Philosophy: The Rise of Qur'anic Rationality        | 171 |
| 16.1.4 | The Ethical Foundation of Knowledge                                    | 172 |
| 16.1.5 | Continuity from Revelation to Reason                                   | 172 |
| 16.2   | Al-Farabi and the Harmonisation of Logic and Revelation                | 172 |
| 16.2.1 | Logic (Mantiq) as a Qur'anic Discipline of Thinking                    | 173 |
| 16.2.2 | Revelation (Wahy) as the Source of Ultimate Knowledge                  | 173 |
| 16.2.3 | Harmony Between 'Aql and Wahy in the Qur'anic Framework                | 173 |
| 16.2.4 | The Virtuous City: Knowledge as Collective Illumination                | 174 |
| 16.2.5 | Ethical Dimensions of Al-Farabi's Epistemology                         | 174 |
| 16.2.6 | The Qur'anic Metaphysics of Truth in Al-Farabi's Thought               | 174 |
| 16.2.7 | Relevance for the Reconstruction of Islamic Epistemology               | 175 |
| 16.3   | Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and the Metaphysics of Intellect in Qur'anic Light | 175 |
| 16.3.1 | The Ontological Basis of Knowledge: From Existence to Intellect        | 176 |
| 16.3.2 | The Fourfold Structure of Intellect in Qur'anic Perspective            | 176 |
| 16.3.3 | Knowledge as Illumination (Ishraq) and the Qur'anic Light Metaphor     | 177 |
| 16.3.4 | The Soul and the Ascent of Knowing                                     | 177 |
| 16.3.5 | The Qur'anic Logic of Causality and the Necessary Being                | 177 |
| 16.3.6 | Ethical and Epistemic Responsibility                                   | 178 |
| 16.3.7 | The Integration of Rational Inquiry and Revelation                     | 178 |
| 16.3.8 | Relevance for Contemporary Reconstruction of Islamic Epistemology      | 178 |
| 16.4   | Al-Ghazali and the Renewal of Qur'anic Reason                          | 179 |
| 16.4.1 | The Crisis of Knowledge and the Quest for Certainty                    | 179 |
| 16.4.2 | The Qur'anic Ground of Ghazali's Epistemology                          | 180 |
| 16.4.3 | Reason as Servant of Revelation                                        | 180 |
| 16.4.4 | The Journey from Doubt to Certainty                                    | 181 |
| 16.4.5 | Knowledge and the Purification of the Heart                            | 181 |
| 16.4.6 | The Renewal (Tajdid) of Qur'anic Reason                                | 182 |
| 16.4.7 | Conclusion: Ghazali's Lasting Epistemic Vision                         | 182 |
| 16.5   | Ibn Rushd (Averroes) and the Rational Defence of Revelation            | 182 |
| 16.5.1 | Restoring Balance Between Faith and Philosophy                         | 182 |
| 16.5.2 | The Qur'anic Mandate for Rational Inquiry                              | 183 |

|        |                                                                     |     |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 16.5.3 | Revelation and Reason as Complementary Pathways                     | 183 |
| 16.5.4 | The Qur'anic Structure of Demonstration (Burhan)                    | 184 |
| 16.5.5 | Knowledge, Science, and Divine Purpose                              | 184 |
| 16.5.6 | Refutation of Epistemic Dualism                                     | 184 |
| 16.5.7 | Ethics of Knowledge and Intellectual Responsibility                 | 185 |
| 16.5.8 | Qur'anic Rationalism and Contemporary Resonance                     | 185 |
| 16.5.9 | Conclusion: Ibn Rushd's Legacy in Qur'anic Epistemology             | 186 |
| 16.6   | The Qur'anic Legacy of Classical Epistemology                       | 186 |
| 16.6.1 | From Revelation to Reason: The Continuum of Knowledge               | 186 |
| 16.6.2 | The Qur'anic Paradigm of Integration: 'Aql, 'Ilm, and Iman          | 187 |
| 16.6.3 | From Rationalism to Illumination: A Qur'anic Metaphysics of Knowing | 187 |
| 16.6.4 | The Unity of Method: Qur'anic Rationality and Philosophical Inquiry | 188 |
| 16.6.5 | Ethical and Ontological Implications of the Classical Legacy        | 188 |
| 16.6.6 | The Qur'anic Legacy: A Living Epistemology                          | 188 |
| 16.6.7 | The Unity of the Classical and the Qur'anic Mind                    | 189 |

## Chapter 17: Qur'anic vs. Modern Scientific Method

|        |                                                                        |     |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 17.1   | The Ontological Foundations of Knowledge                               | 190 |
| 17.1.1 | Reframing Ontology in Qur'anic Epistemology                            | 190 |
| 17.1.2 | Divine Reality as the Ontological Source of Knowledge                  | 191 |
| 17.1.3 | The Human Being as Ontological Knower                                  | 191 |
| 17.1.4 | The Cosmos as Ontological Revelation                                   | 192 |
| 17.1.5 | The Unity of Ontology and Epistemology                                 | 193 |
| 17.1.6 | Ontological Error: Misalignment and the Loss of Truth                  | 192 |
| 17.1.7 | Reclaiming Ontological Wholeness                                       | 193 |
| 17.2   | Epistemic Structures of Inquiry in the Qur'an                          | 194 |
| 17.2.1 | From Ontology to Method                                                | 194 |
| 17.2.2 | The Qur'anic Imperative to Reflect (Tafakkur, Tadabbur, and Tadhakkur) | 194 |
| 17.2.3 | The Role of Reason ('Aql) in Qur'anic Inquiry                          | 195 |
| 17.2.4 | Verification (Taḥqīq) and Certainty (Yaqīn)                            | 196 |
| 17.2.5 | Questioning, Observation, and Argumentation                            | 196 |
| 17.2.6 | Memory, Remembrance, and the Cognitive Continuum                       | 197 |
| 17.2.7 | Integration: The Qur'anic Method as a Triadic System                   | 197 |
| 17.2.8 | Conclusion: Toward a Qur'anic Philosophy of Inquiry                    | 198 |
| 17.3   | Comparative Evaluation - Qur'anic and Modern Scientific Rationalities  | 198 |

|        |                                                                     |     |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 17.3.1 | The Problem of Epistemic Fragmentation                              | 198 |
| 17.3.2 | Ontological Contrasts: Closed Materialism vs. Open Ontology         | 199 |
| 17.3.3 | Epistemological Structures: Observation, Reflection, and Revelation | 199 |
| 17.3.4 | Logic of Verification: Empiricism vs. Revelation-Centred Validation | 200 |
| 17.3.5 | Rationality and Purpose: Instrumental vs. Teleological              | 200 |
| 17.3.6 | Comparative Summary: Divergent Rationalities                        | 201 |
| 17.3.7 | Reintegrating the Two Paradigms: Toward an Ethical Science          | 202 |
| 17.4   | The Ethics of Knowledge - Moral Responsibility in Discovery         | 203 |
| 17.4.1 | Knowledge as Amanah: The Trust of Responsibility                    | 203 |
| 17.4.2 | Avoiding Arrogance (Kibr) and Corruption (Fasad) in Knowledge       | 203 |
| 17.4.3 | Truthfulness (Şidq) and Integrity in Research                       | 204 |
| 17.4.4 | The Principle of Balance (Mizan) in Discovery                       | 204 |
| 17.4.5 | Accountability (Mas'uliyah) and the Judgment of Knowledge           | 205 |
| 17.4.6 | Toward a Qur'anic Ethic of Discovery                                | 205 |
| 17.5   | Verification (Taḥqiq) vs. Experimentation: A Comparative Analysis   | 206 |
| 17.5.1 | Two Epistemic Pathways to Truth                                     | 206 |
| 17.5.2 | The Qur'anic Concept of Taḥqiq (Verification)                       | 206 |
| 17.5.3 | Experimentation in the Modern Scientific Paradigm                   | 207 |
| 17.5.4 | The Epistemological Difference: Taḥqiq as Transcendent Verification | 207 |
| 17.5.5 | Methodological Comparison: From Observation to Realisation          | 208 |
| 17.5.6 | Verification as Ethical Science: The Qur'anic Integration           | 210 |
| 17.5.7 | Toward a Unified Epistemology of Discovery                          | 210 |
| 17.5.8 | Verification Beyond Experiment                                      | 211 |
| 17.6   | The Qur'anic Reinterpretation of Empiricism and Rationalism         | 211 |
| 17.6.1 | Reclaiming the Balance Between Sense and Intellect                  | 211 |
| 17.6.2 | The Qur'anic Reconciliation: From Dualism to Unity                  | 211 |
| 17.6.3 | Qur'anic Empiricism: Observation as Worship                         | 212 |
| 17.6.4 | Qur'anic Rationalism: The Intellect as Servant of Revelation        | 212 |
| 17.6.5 | The Qur'anic Integration: From Observation to Realisation           | 213 |
| 17.6.6 | Qur'anic Epistemology as a Model of Integrative Knowing             | 213 |
| 17.6.7 | Toward a Qur'anically Reconstructed Epistemology                    | 214 |
| 17.7   | The Hierarchy of Knowing: From 'Ilm to Ma'rifah                     | 214 |
| 17.7.1 | Introduction: The Qur'anic View of Knowledge as a Spiritual Ascent  | 214 |
| 17.7.2 | The First Level: 'Ilm (Cognitive Knowledge)                         | 214 |
| 17.7.3 | The Second Level: Yaqin (Certainty of Truth)                        | 215 |
| 17.7.4 | The Third Level: Ma'rifah (Realised Knowledge or Gnosis)            | 216 |
| 17.7.5 | The Fourth Level: Hikmah (Wisdom)                                   | 216 |
| 17.7.6 | The Hierarchical Structure Summarised                               | 217 |
| 17.7.7 | Knowledge as Theomorphic Ascent                                     | 219 |

|         |                                                                       |     |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 17.8    | Epistemic Ethics: The Moral Use of Knowledge in the Qur'anic Paradigm | 219 |
| 17.8.1  | Knowledge as Moral Energy                                             | 219 |
| 17.8.2  | Knowledge and Accountability                                          | 220 |
| 17.8.3  | The Ethics of Discovery and Use                                       | 220 |
| 17.8.4  | The Corruption of Knowledge: Misuse and Deviation                     | 220 |
| 17.8.5  | Epistemic Justice and the Social Function of Knowledge                | 221 |
| 17.8.6  | The Integration of Moral and Cognitive Dimensions                     | 221 |
| 17.8.7  | Knowledge as a Sacred Trust                                           | 222 |
| 17.9    | The Problem of Value-Neutral Knowledge in Modern Science              | 222 |
| 17.9.1  | The Myth of Neutrality                                                | 222 |
| 17.9.2  | The Philosophical Genesis of Value-Neutral Science                    | 222 |
| 17.9.3  | The Qur'anic Critique of Detached Knowing                             | 223 |
| 17.9.4  | The Myth of Objectivity and the Human Subject                         | 223 |
| 17.9.5  | Knowledge and Power: The Modern Epistemic Crisis                      | 224 |
| 17.9.6  | The Qur'anic Reconstruction of Scientific Value                       | 224 |
| 17.9.7  | Ethical Implications for Contemporary Sciences                        | 225 |
| 17.9.8  | The Qur'anic Solution: Knowledge as Ethical Illumination              | 225 |
| 17.9.9  | From Value-Neutrality to Value-Integration                            | 225 |
| 17.10   | Toward a Qur'anically-Informed Scientific Paradigm                    | 226 |
| 17.10.1 | Introduction: The Crisis of Epistemic Fragmentation                   | 226 |
| 17.10.2 | From Secular Empiricism to Tawhīdic Science                           | 226 |
| 17.10.3 | The Three Dimensions of Qur'anic Scientific Paradigm                  | 227 |
| 17.10.4 | Methodological Transformation: From Measurement to Meaning            | 228 |
| 17.10.5 | The Vision of a Tawhīdic Science                                      | 228 |
| 17.10.6 | The Future of Knowledge and the Return to Revelation                  | 230 |

## Chapter 18: Qur'anic Research Methodology in Modern Disciplines

|        |                                                                             |     |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 18.1   | Foundational Principles - Revelation (Wahy), Reason ('Aql), and Sign (Ayah) | 233 |
| 18.1.1 | Wahy: Revelation as the Primordial Source of Knowledge                      | 233 |
| 18.1.2 | 'Aql: Reason as the Instrument of Discernment                               | 233 |
| 18.1.3 | Ayah: The Sign as Ontological Evidence                                      | 234 |
| 18.1.4 | The Triadic Integration: From Revelation to Sign                            | 234 |
| 18.2   | Methodological Ethics - Intention (Niyyah), Objectivity, and Trust (Amanah) | 235 |
| 18.2.1 | Niyyah - The Purity of Intention as Epistemic Foundation                    | 235 |
| 18.2.2 | Objectivity - Between Human Perception and Divine Truth                     | 236 |
| 18.2.3 | Amanah - Knowledge as a Divine Trust                                        | 236 |
| 18.2.4 | Integration of Niyyah, Objectivity, and Amanah                              | 237 |
| 18.2.5 | Ethical Implications for Modern Research                                    | 237 |

|        |                                                                      |     |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 18.2.6 | Conclusion                                                           | 238 |
| 18.3   | Integrating Qur'anic Epistemology into Natural Sciences              | 238 |
| 18.3.1 | Reclaiming the Moral Cosmos                                          | 238 |
| 18.3.2 | The Qur'anic Cosmos: Nature as Revelation                            | 238 |
| 18.3.3 | The Methodological Parallels: Observation and Reflection             | 239 |
| 18.3.4 | Integrating Qur'anic Concepts into Scientific Inquiry                | 239 |
| 18.3.5 | Application in Specific Natural Sciences                             | 240 |
| 18.3.6 | Toward a Qur'anic Philosophy of Science                              | 241 |
| 18.4   | Integrating Qur'anic Epistemology into Social and Human Sciences     | 242 |
| 18.4.1 | The Human Sciences as Moral Sciences                                 | 242 |
| 18.4.2 | The Qur'anic Conception of the Human Being                           | 242 |
| 18.4.3 | Methodological Integration: Revelation as Foundational Reference     | 242 |
| 18.4.4 | Reconstructing Major Disciplines through Qur'anic Epistemology       | 243 |
| 18.4.5 | The Qur'anic Method of Inquiry in Human Sciences                     | 244 |
| 18.4.6 | The Qur'anic Vision of Human Civilisation                            | 244 |
| 18.4.7 | Toward a Qur'anically Grounded Human Science                         | 244 |
| 18.5   | Case Studies - Environmental Ethics, Bioethics, and Economic Justice | 247 |
| 18.5.1 | Environmental Ethics - The Earth as a Moral Ecosystem                | 247 |
| 18.5.2 | Bioethics - The Sanctity of Life and the Boundaries of Intervention  | 248 |
| 18.5.3 | Economic Justice - The Ethic of Distribution and Human Flourishing   | 249 |
| 18.5.4 | Comparative Integration: A Triadic Moral Framework                   | 249 |
| 18.6   | The Future of Islamic Research Methodology - Challenges and Horizons | 250 |
| 18.6.1 | The Need for Epistemic Renewal                                       | 250 |
| 18.6.2 | The Contemporary Challenge: Methodological Displacement              | 251 |
| 18.6.3 | Reconstructing Methodology: Qur'anic Horizons of Integration         | 251 |
| 18.6.4 | Ethical Challenges: Power, Knowledge, and Responsibility             | 252 |
| 18.6.5 | Horizons of Renewal: Interdisciplinary and Global Prospects          | 252 |
| 18.6.6 | From Method to Wisdom                                                | 252 |

## Chapter 19: The Unity of Truth (Tawḥid) as the Epistemic Paradigm

|        |                                                      |     |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 19.1   | Tawḥid as the Foundation of Knowledge and Reality    | 255 |
| 19.1.1 | The Ontological Centrality of Divine Unity           | 255 |
| 19.1.2 | The Qur'anic Structure of Reality                    | 256 |
| 19.1.3 | Epistemology as Ontological Participation            | 256 |
| 19.1.4 | The Metaphysical Principle of Unity and Multiplicity | 257 |
| 19.1.5 | The Ethical Dimension of Knowing                     | 257 |
| 19.1.6 | The Cosmological Expression of Tawḥid                | 257 |
| 19.1.7 | Toward a Unified Epistemic Paradigm                  | 258 |

|        |                                                                                |     |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 19.2   | The Epistemological Implications of Divine Oneness (Tawḥid)                    | 258 |
| 19.2.1 | From Ontological Unity to Epistemic Integration                                | 258 |
| 19.2.2 | Unity of Source: Knowledge as Divine Trust                                     | 259 |
| 19.2.3 | Unity of the Object: The Cosmos as a Network of Signs (Ayat)                   | 259 |
| 19.2.4 | Unity of the Knower: Integration of the Soul and Intellect                     | 259 |
| 19.2.5 | Unity of Method: Reason, Revelation, and Experience                            | 260 |
| 19.2.6 | Unity of Purpose: Knowledge as Worship and Stewardship                         | 260 |
| 19.2.7 | Unity of Truth: From Multiplicity to Tawḥidic Coherence                        | 260 |
| 19.2.8 | Toward a Tawḥidic Epistemic Vision                                             | 261 |
| 19.3   | Knowledge as Worship (ʿIbadah) and Vicegerency (Khilafah)                      | 261 |
| 19.3.1 | The Moral-Teleological Ground of Knowledge                                     | 261 |
| 19.3.2 | The Qur'anic Conception of ʿIbadah as Epistemic Orientation                    | 261 |
| 19.3.3 | Knowledge and Khilafah: The Ethic of Stewardship                               | 262 |
| 19.3.4 | Worship as Cognitive Praxis: The Act of Knowing as Dhikr                       | 262 |
| 19.3.5 | The Dialectic of Knowledge and Responsibility                                  | 263 |
| 19.3.6 | The Triadic Structure: ʿIlm, ʿIbadah, and Khilafah                             | 263 |
| 19.3.7 | The Crisis of Modern Knowledge: De-Sacralization and Alienation                | 263 |
| 19.3.8 | Knowledge as a Path of Return (Rujuʿ): The Eschatological Dimension            | 264 |
| 19.3.9 | The Reunification of Knowledge, Worship, and Governance                        | 264 |
| 19.4   | The Reunification of Revelation, Reason, and Experience                        | 264 |
| 19.4.1 | Overcoming the Dualism of Modern Knowledge                                     | 264 |
| 19.4.2 | Revelation (Wahy) as the Source of Epistemic Certainty                         | 265 |
| 19.4.3 | Reason (ʿAql) as the Instrument of Reflection and Moral Discernment            | 265 |
| 19.4.4 | Experience (Tajriba) as the Arena of Verification and Reflection               | 266 |
| 19.4.5 | The Qur'anic Model of Epistemic Reunification                                  | 266 |
| 19.4.6 | Implications for Contemporary Knowledge Systems                                | 267 |
| 19.4.7 | Toward a Tawḥidic Epistemic Harmony                                            | 267 |
| 19.5   | Tawḥidic Epistemology and the Future of Human Knowledge                        | 267 |
| 19.5.1 | The Crisis of Fragmented Knowledge in the Modern Age                           | 267 |
| 19.5.2 | The Qur'anic Vision of Knowledge as a Sacred Trust                             | 268 |
| 19.5.3 | Reorienting the Structure of Knowledge: From Specialisation to Integration     | 268 |
| 19.5.4 | Reclaiming the Role of Revelation in Knowledge Production                      | 269 |
| 19.5.5 | The Ethical and Ontological Dimensions of Future Knowledge                     | 269 |
| 19.5.6 | Knowledge as Light (Mur): The Eschatological Vision of Learning                | 270 |
| 19.5.7 | Toward a Global Paradigm Shift: From Secular Rationality to Sacred Rationality | 270 |
| 19.5.8 | Conclusion: The Future of Knowledge as Return to the One                       | 270 |

|        |                                                                 |     |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 19.6   | From Fragmentation to Integration: The Qur'anic Vision of Truth | 271 |
| 19.6.1 | The Age of Epistemic Disintegration                             | 271 |
| 19.6.2 | The Qur'anic Meaning of Truth (al-Ḥaqq)                         | 271 |
| 19.6.3 | The Integration of Knowledge and Being                          | 272 |
| 19.6.4 | The Ethical Integration: Knowledge, Justice, and Mercy          | 272 |
| 19.6.5 | The Reunification of Revelation, Reason, and Experience         | 273 |
| 19.6.6 | Overcoming the Fragmentation of Modern Disciplines              | 273 |
| 19.6.7 | Toward a Qur'anic Paradigm of Global Renewal                    | 273 |
| 19.6.8 | The Return to the One                                           | 274 |

## Chapter 20: Qur'anic Cosmology and the Epistemology of Space Sciences

|        |                                                                             |     |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 20.1   | Qur'anic Cosmological Ontology                                              | 277 |
| 20.1.1 | Cosmology as an Epistemic Foundation in the Qur'an                          | 277 |
| 20.2   | Creation as Ontology: The Universe as Willed Existence                      | 277 |
| 20.2.1 | The Ontological Status of Creation (al-khalq) as Willed Reality             | 277 |
| 20.2.2 | Creation as Ordered Act: "He created the heavens and the earth in six days" | 278 |
| 20.2.3 | Unity of Origin: The Heavens and Earth were Once a Single Mass              | 278 |
| 20.2.4 | Creation as Measured (taqdir): The Universe and Its Precise Determination   | 278 |
| 20.2.5 | Divine Command as Ontological Ground: "Be, and it is" (kun fa-yakun)        | 279 |
| 20.3   | Order, Law, and Balance: The Governing Principles of the Cosmos             | 279 |
| 20.3.1 | Mizan (Balance) as Universal Order                                          | 279 |
| 20.3.2 | Qadar (Law, Determination, Measurability)                                   | 279 |
| 20.3.3 | No Deficiency or Rupture (fatur) in the Universe                            | 280 |
| 20.3.4 | Universal Laws and Fixed Pathways                                           | 280 |
| 20.3.5 | Structured Layers: The Seven Heavens                                        | 280 |
| 20.3.6 | The Firmament as "Pathways" (ḥubuk)                                         | 281 |
| 20.3.7 | Time and Motion: Day, Night, and Celestial Cycles                           | 281 |
| 20.3.8 | Moral Implications: Cosmic Law as Ethical Template                          | 281 |
| 20.4   | The Heavens as Signs (Ayat): Epistemology Rooted in Ontology                | 282 |
| 20.4.1 | Ontological Status of the Heavens as Signs                                  | 282 |
| 20.4.2 | Cosmological Signs as Epistemic Pathways                                    | 282 |
| 20.4.3 | Reading the Heavens as a Method of Knowledge                                | 283 |
| 20.4.4 | Signs as Proofs of Ontological Unity                                        | 283 |
| 20.4.5 | The Aesthetic Dimension of Cosmic Signs                                     | 283 |
| 20.4.6 | Ontological Depth of Signs: Beyond Material Phenomena                       | 284 |



|        |                                                                |     |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 20.5   | Dynamic Motion: Orbits, Cycles, and Cosmic Pathways            | 284 |
| 20.5.1 | Motion as Divine Law                                           | 284 |
| 20.5.2 | Solar-Lunar Dynamics and Calculated Movement                   | 284 |
| 20.5.3 | The Alternation of Night and Day: Rotation and Temporal Cycles | 285 |
| 20.5.4 | Dynamic Expansion and Cosmic Growth                            | 285 |
| 20.5.5 | Celestial Pathways (Subul) and Gravitational Webs              | 285 |
| 20.5.6 | Motion as Proof of Sovereignty                                 | 286 |
| 20.5.7 | Orbits, Gravity, and the Invisible Order                       | 286 |
| 20.5.8 | Epistemic Implications: From Observation to Theorisation       | 286 |
| 20.6   | Expansion, Movement, and Cosmic Evolution                      | 287 |
| 20.6.1 | Expansion as a Permanent Feature of the Cosmos                 | 287 |
| 20.6.2 | Movement as the Universal Law                                  | 287 |
| 20.6.3 | Expansion and Contraction in Eschatological Time               | 288 |
| 20.6.4 | Evolution as Divine Design                                     | 288 |
| 20.6.5 | Evolution Through Time and Stages                              | 288 |
| 20.6.6 | Cosmic Evolution as Epistemic Invitation                       | 289 |
| 20.7   | Light, Darkness, and Electromagnetic Ontology                  | 289 |
| 20.7.1 | Light as Ontological Principle                                 | 289 |
| 20.7.2 | Electromagnetic Ontology in the Qur'an                         | 289 |
| 20.7.3 | Darkness as Ontological "Non-Reception"                        | 290 |
| 20.7.4 | Light as Epistemic Illumination                                | 290 |
| 20.7.5 | Light-Speed and Cosmic Time                                    | 290 |
| 20.7.6 | Cosmic Radiation as "Stretched Light"                          | 291 |
| 20.7.7 | Light as the Metaphysics of Knowledge                          | 291 |
| 20.8   | Cosmic Purpose and Moral Ontology                              | 291 |
| 20.8.1 | Purpose (al-ghayah) as the Metaphysical Ground of Creation     | 292 |
| 20.8.2 | The Cosmos as a Moral Text (Kitab al-Kawn)                     | 292 |
| 20.8.3 | Cosmic Order as Ethical Order                                  | 293 |
| 20.8.4 | Time and Mortality as Moral Dimensions                         | 293 |
| 20.8.5 | Human Place in the Moral Cosmos                                | 293 |
| 20.9   | Cosmological Ontology and Human Epistemic Function             | 293 |
| 20.9.1 | Epistemic Environment: The Universe as a Field of Knowing      | 294 |
| 20.9.2 | Observation as Epistemic Obligation                            | 294 |
| 20.9.3 | Rational Inference ('Aql) as Cosmic Interpretation             | 295 |
| 20.9.4 | Reflection (Tafakkur, Tadabbur) as Epistemic Deepening         | 295 |
| 20.9.5 | Human Knowledge as Cosmic Participation                        | 295 |
| 20.9.6 | Moral Responsibility in Epistemic Function                     | 295 |
| 20.9.7 | Human Beings as Cosmic Witnesses                               | 296 |
| 20.10  | Human Exploration as Amanah                                    | 296 |

|         |                                                                         |     |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 20.10.1 | Space as an Epistemic Trust                                             | 296 |
| 20.10.2 | The Qur'anic Concept of Amanah as Epistemic Responsibility              | 297 |
| 20.10.3 | Cosmological Knowledge as Divine Invitation and Human Duty              | 298 |
| 20.10.4 | Ethical Conditions for Cosmic Exploration                               | 298 |
| 20.10.5 | Human Technological Power and Accountability                            | 299 |
| 20.10.6 | Toward an Islamic Framework for Contemporary Space Sciences             | 299 |
| 20.11   | Expansion of the Universe                                               | 301 |
| 20.11.1 | Cosmology as a Qur'anic Epistemic Domain                                | 301 |
| 20.11.2 | Linguistic Hermeneutics of Q. 51:47 (al-Dhariyat)                       | 302 |
| 20.11.3 | Expansion in Qur'anic Cosmological Themes                               | 303 |
| 20.11.4 | Integrating Modern Cosmology: Expansion, Inflation, and Dark Energy     | 303 |
| 20.11.5 | Philosophical Implications: Ontology, Teleology, and Purpose            | 304 |
| 20.11.6 | A Qur'anic Model of Cosmic Expansion                                    | 304 |
| 20.12   | Celestial Order as Epistemic Sign (Ayah)                                | 304 |
| 20.12.1 | The Heavens as an Epistemic Text                                        | 304 |
| 20.12.2 | The Qur'anic Concept of Ayah as a Cosmological Category                 | 305 |
| 20.12.3 | Celestial Structure and Order in the Qur'an                             | 306 |
| 20.12.4 | Celestial Order as Epistemic Argument (Dalil)                           | 306 |
| 20.12.5 | Day-Night, Light-Darkness, and Rhythmic Order                           | 307 |
| 20.12.6 | Stellar Phenomena and Epistemic Meaning                                 | 308 |
| 20.12.7 | Cosmic Rhythm and Temporal Structure                                    | 308 |
| 20.12.8 | Human Response to Celestial Order: Knowledge, Humility, and Stewardship | 308 |
| 20.12.9 | A Qur'anic Epistemology of Celestial Order                              | 309 |
| 20.13   | Time Dilation and Relativistic Readings in the Qur'an                   | 309 |
| 20.13.1 | Time as a Relational and Relative Phenomenon                            | 310 |
| 20.13.2 | Qur'anic Temporal Ontology: Multiple Scales of Time                     | 311 |
| 20.13.3 | Qur'anic Expressions of Time Dilation                                   | 311 |
| 20.13.4 | Time Dilation through Velocity -In relativity                           | 311 |
| 20.13.5 | Psychological and Phenomenological Time                                 | 312 |
| 20.13.6 | Time, Epistemology, and Human Limitation                                | 312 |
| 20.13.7 | Time Relativity and Modern Science: Convergences and Divergences        | 312 |
| 20.13.8 | Eschatological Time as the Highest Order of Temporality                 | 313 |
| 20.13.9 | Synthesis: Time as a Multi-Level Qur'anic Epistemic Structure           | 313 |
| 20.14   | Day-Night, Orbit, Gravity, and Cosmic Pathways (Subul)                  | 313 |
| 20.14.1 | The Qur'anic Logic of Cosmic Order                                      | 313 |
| 20.14.2 | Day and Night: Cycles, Rhythm, and Cosmological Law                     | 314 |
| 20.14.3 | Orbital Mechanics in the Qur'an: Precision, Calculation, and Motion     | 315 |

|          |                                                                                   |     |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 20.14.4  | Gravity: The Invisible Architecture of the Heavens                                | 316 |
| 20.14.5  | Cosmic Pathways (Subul): Trajectories, Routes, and Celestial Infrastructure       | 317 |
| 20.14.6  | Qur’anic Cosmology and Contemporary Astrophysics: Points of Convergence           | 318 |
| 20.14.7  | Epistemic Implications: Cosmological Order as an Invitation to Scientific Inquiry | 318 |
| 20.15    | Space Sciences in Islamic Intellectual History                                    | 319 |
| 20.15.1  | The Qur’anic Impulse Behind Scientific Observation                                | 319 |
| 20.15.2  | Early Motivation: Qur’anic Signs and the Rise of Precision Astronomy              | 319 |
| 20.15.3  | The Early Abbasid Period: Foundations of Islamic Astronomy                        | 320 |
| 20.15.4  | The Golden Age: Maragha, Rayy, and the Rise of Observational Science              | 320 |
| 20.15.5  | Samarkand and the Zenith of Islamic Observatories                                 | 320 |
| 20.15.6  | Cosmological Debate and Theoretical Innovation                                    | 321 |
| 20.15.7  | Decline, Fragmentation, and Continuity                                            | 321 |
| 20.15.8  | Qur’anic Epistemology as the Underlying Engine of Islamic Space Sciences          | 321 |
| 20.15.9  | Epistemic Lessons for Contemporary Space Science                                  | 322 |
| 20.16    | Time Dilation and Relativistic Readings                                           | 322 |
| 20.16.1  | Time as a Qur’anic and Cosmological Problem                                       | 322 |
| 20.16.2  | Time as Created, Not Eternal                                                      | 323 |
| 20.16.3  | “A Day Equal to a Thousand Years”: Relativistic Readings                          | 323 |
| 20.16.4  | “A Day Equal to Fifty Thousand Years”: Eschatological Relativity                  | 324 |
| 20.16.5  | Time Perception in the Afterlife: A Qur’anic Model of Temporal Elasticity         | 324 |
| 20.16.6  | Time and the Speed of Light: “The Angels Travel in a Day...”                      | 325 |
| 20.16.7  | Time in the Heavens vs. Time on Earth                                             | 325 |
| 20.16.8  | Cyclic Time, Linear Time, and Eschatology                                         | 326 |
| 20.16.9  | Measurement, Observation, and Time in Qur’anic Epistemology                       | 326 |
| 20.16.10 | Toward a Qur’anic Theory of Relativity: Epistemic Synthesis                       | 326 |

## PART VI: SYNTHESIS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

### Chapter 21: Toward a Unified Qur’anic Philosophy of Research

|      |                                                                       |     |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 21.1 | From Fragmented Epistemes to a Qur’anic Whole                         | 330 |
| 21.2 | The Ontological Unity of Research: All Knowledge as Divine Reflection | 330 |

|      |                                                                    |     |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 21.3 | The Epistemic Purpose of Research: From Curiosity to 'Ibadah       | 331 |
| 21.4 | The Methodological Triad: Revelation, Reason, and Experience       | 331 |
| 21.5 | The Ethics of Inquiry: Niyyah, Amanah, and 'Adl                    | 332 |
| 21.6 | Integration and Application: The Architecture of Qur'anic Research | 332 |
| 21.7 | Conclusion: The Reunification of Knowledge and Being               | 333 |

## **Chapter 22: Future Prospects for Qur'anic Methodology Studies**

|        |                                                                     |     |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 22.1   | Re-envisioning Qur'anic Methodology in the Age of Transformation    | 334 |
| 22.2   | The Qur'an as an Open Text of Infinite Inquiry                      | 334 |
| 22.3   | Reintegrating Revelation, Reason, and Reality                       | 335 |
| 22.4   | The Role of Digital and Cognitive Sciences in Qur'anic Methodology  | 335 |
| 22.5   | Qur'anic Methodology as a Global Epistemic Paradigm                 | 336 |
| 22.6   | Toward the Institutionalisation of Qur'anic Research Paradigms      | 336 |
| 22.7   | Conclusion: The Infinite Journey of Qur'anic Knowledge              | 336 |
| 22.8   | The Qur'anic Reconstruction of Knowledge and the Future of Human    | 338 |
| 22.8.1 | Rediscovering the Epistemological Foundations in the Qur'an         | 338 |
| 22.8.2 | The Qur'an and the Architecture of Knowledge                        | 338 |
| 22.8.3 | Classical Thinkers and Qur'anic Methodology                         | 338 |
| 22.8.4 | Qur'anic and Modern Scientific Method: A Comparative Reconstruction | 339 |
| 22.8.5 | Qur'anic Research Methodology in Modern Disciplines                 | 339 |
| 22.8.6 | The Unity of Truth (Tawḥid) as the Epistemic Paradigm               | 339 |
| 22.8.7 | Synthesis: From Fragmentation to Integration                        | 340 |
| 22.8.8 | Toward a Qur'anically Informed Future of Knowledge                  | 340 |

## **PART VII: QUR'ANIC EPISTEMOLOGY & MODERN RESEARCH METHODS**

### **Chapter 23: Introduction - Qur'anic Epistemology and Modern Method Debates**

|        |                                                             |     |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 23.1   | Setting the Stage: The Need for an Epistemic Reset          | 343 |
| 23.2   | Qur'anic Epistemology: The Primacy of Revelation in Knowing | 343 |
| 23.2.1 | Revelation defines the ontological structure of reality.    | 344 |
| 23.2.2 | Human cognition is a tool, not a source.                    | 344 |
| 23.2.3 | Observation, reason, and reflection are acts of worship.    | 344 |
| 23.3   | The Spectrum of Knowing in the Qur'an                       | 344 |
| 23.4   | The Rise of Modern Research Methodology: A Brief Survey     | 345 |
| 23.4.1 | Positivist Roots (19th-early 20th century)                  | 345 |

|        |                                                                            |     |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 23.4.2 | Post-positivism (mid-20th century)                                         | 345 |
| 23.4.3 | Interpretivism and Constructivism (20th century)                           | 345 |
| 23.4.4 | Critical theory and postmodern scepticism                                  | 345 |
| 23.4.5 | Mixed-method integration (late 20th-21st century)                          | 345 |
| 23.5   | The Epistemological Tension: Human-Centred vs. Revelation-Centred Research | 345 |
| 23.6   | Why a Qur’anic Methodological Synthesis Is Essential                       | 346 |
| 23.6.1 | The Crisis of Truth: Epistemic Fragmentation in Modern Knowledge           | 346 |
| 23.6.2 | The Crisis of Ethics: The Need for Moral Accountability in Research        | 347 |
| 23.6.3 | The Crisis of Purpose: From Knowledge as Utility to Knowledge as Meaning   | 347 |
| 23.6.4 | Why a Qur’anic Synthesis Is a Forward-Looking Necessity                    | 348 |
| 23.7   | The Purpose of This Part of the Book                                       | 349 |
| 23.8   | Structure of the Part                                                      | 349 |
| 23.9   | Toward a New Era of Qur’anic Methodology                                   | 350 |

## Chapter 24 Ontology of Knowledge: Qur’an vs Modern Paradigms

|      |                                                                             |     |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 24.1 | Ontology, Truth, and the Foundations of Knowing                             | 351 |
| 24.2 | Ontology as the Foundation of Method                                        | 352 |
| 24.3 | The Ontological Primacy of Allah (Allah) as the Source of All Knowledge     | 353 |
| 24.4 | The Created Universe as Communicative Reality: The Ontology of Signs (Ayat) | 353 |
| 24.5 | The Seen (Shahadah) and the Unseen (Ghayb): Dual-Aspect Ontology            | 354 |
| 24.6 | Human Nature (Fitrah) and the Ontology of Cognition                         | 355 |
| 24.7 | Ontology as Ethical: The Moral Structure of Reality                         | 355 |
| 24.8 | Implications of Qur’anic Ontology for Research Methodology                  | 356 |

## Chapter 25: Modern Ontologies of Knowledge

|        |                                                              |     |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 25.1   | Why Modern Ontologies Matter for Qur’anic Method Debates     | 357 |
| 25.2   | Naturalism and Materialism: The Dominant Scientific Ontology | 357 |
| 25.2.1 | Core Claim                                                   | 357 |
| 25.2.2 | Consequences for Methodology                                 | 358 |
| 25.2.3 | Limits of Naturalist Ontology                                | 358 |
| 25.3   | Empiricism and Positivism: “To Know Is to Measure”           | 358 |
| 25.3.1 | Empiricist Foundations                                       | 358 |
| 25.3.2 | Ontological Commitments                                      | 358 |
| 25.3.3 | Epistemic Strengths and Weaknesses                           | 359 |
| 25.4   | Rationalism and Intellectualism: “To Know Is to Reason”      | 359 |

|        |                                                                        |     |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 25.4.1 | Rationalist Assumptions                                                | 359 |
| 25.4.2 | Qur'anic Convergence and Divergence                                    | 359 |
| 25.4.3 | Limits of Rationalist Ontology                                         | 359 |
| 25.5   | Constructivist and Interpretivist Ontologies: "Reality Is Constructed" | 360 |
| 25.5.1 | Core Claim                                                             | 360 |
| 25.5.2 | Ontological Implications                                               | 360 |
| 25.5.3 | Qur'anic Response                                                      | 360 |
| 25.5.4 | Constructivism's Strengths and Weaknesses                              | 360 |
| 25.6   | Critical Theory and Postmodern Ontologies: "Truth Is Power"            | 360 |
| 25.6.1 | Ontological Commitments                                                | 360 |
| 25.6.2 | Qur'anic Critique                                                      | 361 |
| 25.7   | Modern Plural Ontologies: Fragmentation of Reality                     | 361 |
| 25.8   | Comparative Synthesis: Qur'anic vs. Modern Ontologies                  | 362 |
| 25.9   | Why Modern Ontologies Are Insufficient for Qur'anic Methodology        | 362 |

## Chapter 26: Qur'anic Epistemology and Qualitative Research

|        |                                                                         |     |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 26.1   | Why Qualitative Research Requires a Qur'anic Reframing                  | 363 |
| 26.1.1 | The Qur'anic View of Human Experience as Epistemic Data                 | 363 |
| 26.1.2 | Interpretation as an Ethical Act in the Qur'an                          | 364 |
| 26.1.3 | Why This Chapter is Needed                                              | 364 |
| 26.2   | The Qur'anic Cognitive Instruments of Qualitative Inquiry               | 364 |
| 26.2.1 | Tafakkur (Analytical Reflection)                                        | 364 |
| 26.2.2 | Tadabbur (Deep Reflection on Texts)                                     | 365 |
| 26.2.3 | Tadhakkur (Ethical-Experiential Remembering)                            | 365 |
| 26.2.4 | Fiqh (Deep Understanding and Discernment)                               | 365 |
| 26.3   | Qur'anic Hermeneutics and the Foundations of Qualitative Interpretation | 365 |
| 26.3.1 | The Qur'anic Hermeneutical Imperative                                   | 366 |
| 26.3.2 | Interpretation as an Ethical Responsibility                             | 366 |
| 26.3.3 | The Multilayered Structure of Qur'anic Meaning                          | 367 |
| 26.3.4 | Contextual Interpretation: The Qur'an's Internal Instruction            | 367 |
| 26.3.5 | Language, Semantics, and the Qur'an as Interpretive Matrix              | 368 |
| 26.3.6 | Reality as Text: The Qur'anic Expansion of Hermeneutics                 | 368 |
| 26.3.7 | Hermeneutical Reflexivity in the Qur'an                                 | 369 |
| 26.3.8 | The Hermeneutics of Purpose (Maqasid) and Qualitative Analysis          | 369 |
| 26.3.9 | Integration: A Qur'anic Model for Qualitative Interpretation            | 369 |
| 26.4   | Qur'anic Foundations for Qualitative Method Construction                | 370 |
| 26.4.1 | The Qur'an as a Thematic and Narrative Model for Qualitative Analysis   | 370 |

|         |                                                                                             |     |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 26.4.2  | Signs (Ayat) as Units of Meaning: The Qur'anic Data Structure                               | 371 |
| 26.4.3  | Inductive Methodology (Istinbat): A Qur'anic Epistemic Tool                                 | 371 |
| 26.4.4  | Reflection (Tafakkur) as Analytical Interpretation                                          | 372 |
| 26.4.5  | Deep Interpretation (Tadabbur): The Qur'anic Model of Layered Inquiry                       | 372 |
| 26.4.6  | Remembering (Tadhakkur): Moral and Experiential Knowledge                                   | 373 |
| 26.4.7  | Insight (Fiqh) as Deep Socio-Analytical Understanding                                       | 373 |
| 26.4.8  | Integrative Methodological Model: Four Qur'anic Cognitive Processes                         | 373 |
| 26.4.9  | Context, Purpose, and Meaning: The Qur'anic Analytical Triad                                | 374 |
| 26.4.10 | Constructing a Qur'an-Based Qualitative Method                                              | 374 |
| 26.5    | Comparative Positioning: Qur'anic Qualitative Epistemology and Modern Qualitative Paradigms | 375 |
| 26.5.1  | Convergence in Epistemic Orientation                                                        | 375 |
| 26.5.2  | Qur'anic Epistemology within the Landscape of Modern Qualitative Paradigms                  | 376 |
| 26.5.3  | Divergence: Where Qur'anic and Modern Qualitative Paradigms Part Ways                       | 377 |
| 26.5.4  | Integrative Possibilities: Toward a Qur'anically-Informed Qualitative Paradigm              | 377 |
| 26.5.5  | The Qur'an's Methodological Contributions to Qualitative Research                           | 378 |
| 26.5.6  | Positioning Qur'anic Qualitative Epistemology in the Field                                  | 378 |
| 26.6    | Constructing a Qur'an-Based Qualitative Research Framework                                  | 379 |
| 26.6.1  | Foundational Epistemic Principles                                                           | 379 |
| 26.6.2  | The Four Qur'anic Instruments of Qualitative Inquiry                                        | 380 |
| 26.6.3  | A Qur'anic Qualitative Research Process Model                                               | 381 |
| 26.6.4  | Distinctive Features of Qur'anic Qualitative Methodology                                    | 381 |
| 26.6.5  | Toward a Qur'anic Qualitative Methodology (Synthesis)                                       | 382 |
| 26.7    | Toward a Fully Formulated Qur'anic Qualitative Research Method                              | 382 |
| 26.7.1  | Foundational Premises of the Qur'anic Qualitative Method                                    | 382 |
| 26.7.2  | The Qur'anic Qualitative Method: Eight Procedural Stages                                    | 383 |
| 26.7.3  | Procedural Flowchart of the Qur'anic Qualitative Method                                     | 385 |
| 26.7.4  | Core Methodological Principles Embedded in the Qur'anic Cycle                               | 385 |
| 26.7.5  | A Fully Formulated Qur'anic Qualitative Method (Summary)                                    | 386 |
| 26.7.6  | Toward a Distinct Qur'anic Qualitative Paradigm                                             | 386 |

## Chapter 27: Qur'anic Epistemology and Quantitative Research

|        |                                                                                |     |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 27.1   | Why the Quantitative Method Must Be Reconstructed from a Qur'anic Epistemology | 387 |
| 27.2   | Qur'anic Ontology of Order, Measure, and Number                                | 387 |
| 27.2.1 | The Universe as a Measured and Ordered System                                  | 387 |
| 27.2.2 | Counting and Enumeration as Qur'anic Epistemic Tools                           | 388 |
| 27.2.3 | Measurement as Justice: The Ethical Foundation of Quantitative Method          | 388 |
| 27.3   | Epistemological Meaning of Measurement in the Qur'an                           | 388 |
| 27.3.1 | Measurement as Discovery, Not Construction                                     | 388 |
| 27.3.2 | Quantitative Data as Signs (Ayat)                                              | 389 |
| 27.3.3 | Objectivity in the Qur'anic Framework                                          | 389 |
| 27.4   | Qur'anic Concepts Relevant to Quantitative Method                              | 389 |
| 27.4.1 | 'Adl - Accuracy, Balance, and Precision                                        | 389 |
| 27.4.2 | Bayyina - Clear Evidence                                                       | 389 |
| 27.4.3 | Tathabbut - Verification and Checking                                          | 389 |
| 27.4.4 | Kitab - Structure, Order, and Recording                                        | 390 |
| 27.4.5 | Ṣidq - Truthfulness in Reporting                                               | 390 |
| 27.5   | Statistical Reasoning and the Qur'anic Logic of Patterns                       | 390 |
| 27.5.1 | Regularity and Probability                                                     | 390 |
| 27.5.2 | Inductive Reasoning                                                            | 390 |
| 27.5.3 | Big Data and the Divine Record                                                 | 390 |
| 27.6   | Constructing a Qur'an-Based Quantitative Research Method                       | 390 |
| 27.7   | Ethical Framework for Quantitative Research in the Qur'an                      | 391 |
| 27.8   | Integrating Qur'anic Quantitative Method with Modern Scientific Practice       | 392 |

## Chapter 28: Mixed-Methods & the Qur'anic Triangulation Model

|        |                                                                                    |     |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 28.1   | Why Mixed-Methods Requires a Qur'anic Epistemic Foundation                         | 393 |
| 28.2   | Qur'anic Foundations for a Triangulated Epistemology                               | 393 |
| 28.2.1 | Multiplicity of Signs (Ayat) as the Basis of Multi-Modal Knowledge                 | 393 |
| 28.2.2 | Integrating Cognitive Instruments: 'Aql, Tafakkur, Tadabbur, and Tathabbut         | 394 |
| 28.2.3 | Triangulation as Qur'anic Verification                                             | 394 |
| 28.3   | Mixed-Methods in Modern Research: Philosophical Debates and Qur'anic Interventions | 395 |
| 28.3.1 | Post-Positivism and Its Limitations                                                | 395 |
| 28.3.2 | Constructivism and Relativism                                                      | 395 |
| 28.3.3 | Pragmatism and Method Integration                                                  | 396 |
| 28.4   | Developing the Qur'anic Mixed-Methods Triangulation Model (QTM)                    | 396 |



|        |                                                              |     |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 28.4.1 | The Three Realms of Knowledge in the Qur'an                  | 396 |
| 28.4.2 | Structural Components of QTM                                 | 396 |
| 28.4.3 | Integration Phase: Mizan-Based Synthesis                     | 396 |
| 28.4.4 | QTM Research Cycle                                           | 397 |
| 28.5   | Applications of QTM Across Disciplines                       | 397 |
| 28.5.1 | Social Sciences                                              | 397 |
| 28.5.2 | Health Sciences                                              | 397 |
| 28.5.3 | Environmental Research                                       | 397 |
| 28.5.4 | Psychology                                                   | 397 |
| 28.5.5 | Economics and Finance                                        | 397 |
| 28.6   | Ethical Integrity in Mixed-Methods: The Qur'anic Perspective | 398 |
| 28.7   | Mixed-Methods as Qur'anic Cognitive Integration              | 398 |

### Chapter 29: Qur'anic Methodology as a Meta-Methodology

|        |                                                         |     |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 29.1   | Qur'anic Methodology Beyond Method                      | 399 |
| 29.2   | The Qur'an as Meta-Epistemic Framework                  | 400 |
| 29.2.1 | Meta-Methodology vs. Methodology                        | 400 |
| 29.2.2 | The Qur'an as a Comprehensive Epistemic Architecture    | 400 |
| 29.2.3 | The Qur'an's Multi-Level Epistemology                   | 401 |
| 29.2.4 | Qur'anic Meta-Principles of Inquiry                     | 401 |
| 29.3   | Qur'anic Regulation of Empirical and Rational Methods   | 401 |
| 29.3.1 | Qur'anic Commands for Empirical Inquiry                 | 402 |
| 29.3.2 | Qur'anic Critique of Empiricism as Exclusive Method     | 402 |
| 29.3.3 | Regulation of Rational Inquiry                          | 402 |
| 29.3.4 | Speech, Evidence, and the Epistemic Ethics of Testimony | 403 |

### Chapter 30: Toward an Islamically Integrated Research Paradigm

|        |                                                                       |     |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 30.1   | Completing the Epistemic Circle                                       | 404 |
| 30.2   | The Ontological Unity of Truth (Tawḥid) as Epistemic Foundation       | 405 |
| 30.3   | The Epistemic Ascent: From 'Ilm to 'Aql to Yaqin to Ḥikmah            | 405 |
| 30.3.1 | 'Ilm (Knowledge) - The Foundation                                     | 405 |
| 30.3.2 | 'Aql (Reason) - The Organ of Understanding                            | 405 |
| 30.3.3 | Yaqin (Certainty) - The Completion of Knowing                         | 405 |
| 30.3.4 | Ḥikmah (Wisdom) - The Integration of Knowledge, Reason, and Certainty | 406 |

|        |                                                                                   |     |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 30.3.5 | The Qur'anic Research Cycle: Empirical, Rational, Moral, and Spiritual Dimensions | 406 |
| 30.4   | Reconciling Modern Methods Under Qur'anic Meta-Methodology                        | 407 |
| 30.5   | The Qur'anic Criteria for Evaluating All Knowledge Systems                        | 407 |
| 30.6   | Yaqin as the Apex of Qur'anic Epistemology                                        | 407 |
| 30.7   | The Future of Islamic Epistemology: Toward an Integrated Model of Global Research | 408 |
| 30.8   | Toward a Qur'anically Integrated Research Civilisation                            | 408 |

|                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| <b>References</b> | 411 |
|-------------------|-----|

### Appendices

|                                                                              |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Appendix I: Glossary of Qur'anic Epistemological Terms                       | 418 |
| Appendix II: Verse Concordance for Epistemic and Ethical Concepts            | 420 |
| Appendix III: Visual Frameworks and Flowcharts                               | 421 |
| A. Hierarchical Framework of Qur'anic Knowledge                              |     |
| B. Circular Model of Knowledge Derivation                                    |     |
| C. Triadic Model of Qur'anic Epistemology                                    |     |
| D. Flowchart: From Revelation to Application                                 |     |
| Appendix IV: Research Methodological Protocol (Detailed Hermeneutic Process) | 423 |
| A. Foundational Principle: Knowledge as Trust (Amanah)                       |     |
| B. Stage-by-Stage Hermeneutic Process                                        |     |
| C. Instruments, Sources & Data Management                                    |     |
| D. Validation Criteria: Four-fold Check                                      |     |
| E. Practical Workflow & Implementation                                       |     |
| F. Notes on Ethical Responsibility                                           |     |
| Definition of Qur'anic terminology                                           | 428 |

## PART I: FOUNDATIONS OF QUR'ANIC EPISTEMOLOGY

The intellectual foundation of Qur'anic epistemology rests upon a profound ontological premise: that *all knowledge ('ilm) originates from the Divine Source* and that *human knowing* is a reflection of divine communication manifested through creation, revelation, and reason. In this first part, the study reconstructs the essential grammar of knowledge in the Qur'an, situating epistemology within a theological and moral order that transcends secular divisions between faith and intellect. The Qur'an presents knowledge not as an autonomous human enterprise, but as a sacred trust (*amanah*) that carries ethical and spiritual responsibilities (Q. 2:31; 96:1-5).

This part thus lays the groundwork for understanding how the Qur'an defines the act, process, and purpose of knowing. Knowledge (*'ilm*) is portrayed as a divine light (*mur*) illuminating both the mind and the moral self, guiding humanity toward truth (*haqq*) and justice (*'adl*). Unlike modern epistemological systems, which often isolate cognition from moral intent, the Qur'an situates knowledge within the holistic unity of being, purpose, and accountability (Q. 24:35; 17:36). The pursuit of *'ilm* becomes a form of worship (*'ibadah*), a means of recognising divine signs (*ayat*), and an ethical journey toward wisdom (*hikmah*).

### Chapter 1: Understanding Knowledge ('Ilm) in the Qur'an

The opening chapter examines the Qur'anic conception of *'ilm* as the foundational category of knowing. It investigates how the Qur'an differentiates between true knowledge (*'ilm al-haqq*) and speculative conjecture (*ẓann*), emphasising that knowledge must correspond to divine truth rather than human assumption (Q. 10:36; 17:85). This chapter further explores the ontological continuity between divine omniscience (*'ilm Allah*) and human cognition, establishing that all human understanding exists by divine permission (*bi-idhni Llah*) and within the moral horizon of divine guidance (Q. 2:255; 20:114).

### Chapter 2: Cognitive Instruments of Knowing - 'Aql, Tafakkur, Tadabbur, and Tadhakkur

The second chapter focuses on the Qur'anic instruments of cognition - reason (*'aql*), reflection (*tafakkur*), contemplation (*tadabbur*), and remembrance (*tadhakkur*). Together, these faculties constitute a multidimensional epistemic model that integrates rational, intuitive, and moral awareness. The Qur'an repeatedly calls upon the human mind to think, reflect, and remember as acts of faith (Q. 3:191; 38:29). This chapter demonstrates that these processes are not isolated intellectual functions but interdependent stages in the realisation of truth, transforming thought into understanding and understanding into ethical consciousness.

### Chapter 3: Revelation and Rationality - Integration, Not Opposition

The third chapter dismantles the false dichotomy between revelation and reason. The Qur'an does not position *wahy* (revelation) and *'aql* (reason) in opposition but unites them within a single epistemological continuum. Revelation provides ontological certainty, while reason serves as the interpretive instrument

through which that revelation is comprehended and applied (Q. 4:82; 41:53). This integration refutes both literalist fideism and secular rationalism, proposing instead a harmonised epistemology where revelation directs intellect, and intellect confirms revelation. In the Qur'anic worldview, knowing is not merely to observe or to infer but to recognise the divine pattern in the structure of reality itself.

Taken together, these three chapters establish the Qur'an as a comprehensive epistemological system that merges intellectual inquiry with moral and spiritual purpose. They form the essential groundwork for the subsequent parts of this study, where Qur'anic epistemology will be examined through its methods, ethics, and implications for the reconstruction of modern knowledge.

## Chapter 1. Understanding Knowledge ('Ilm) in the Qur'an

Knowledge ('ilm) in the Qur'an stands at the foundation of human existence, shaping the moral, intellectual, and spiritual framework of civilisation. Unlike modern epistemologies that often separate the knower from the known, the Qur'an unites knowledge with faith (*iman*), moral responsibility (*amanah*), and divine purpose. The Qur'anic conception of 'ilm is both revelatory and rational, integrating the faculties of reason ('aql), experience (*baṣar*), and reflection (*tafakkur*). It portrays knowledge not as possession but as trust—a means to recognise truth (*haqq*), attain wisdom (*ḥikmah*), and fulfil the divine purpose of creation. Thus, 'ilm is not simply the acquisition of information but the illumination of the soul and the harmonisation of intellect and revelation under the unity of God (*tawḥid*).

### 1.1 Introduction

The Qur'an stands as the ultimate source of divine knowledge ('ilm), defining the foundation of Islamic epistemology through its constant invocation of understanding, reflection, and inquiry. The term 'ilm, repeated over 700 times in various forms throughout the Qur'an, signifies more than the accumulation of information; it represents awareness rooted in truth, moral responsibility, and divine purpose (Nasr, 1989). The Qur'an introduces knowledge as a sacred trust (*amanah*) bestowed upon humankind to enable discernment between right and wrong (Q. 2:31-33). This intellectual capacity distinguishes humans from other creations, as demonstrated in the narrative of Adam, to whom God “*taught the names of all things*,” symbolising both linguistic and conceptual mastery.

Islamic thought views knowledge as the first principle of existence, emanating from the divine attribute *al-Alim* (The All-Knowing). In this framework, all forms of knowing—empirical, rational, or revealed—find their legitimacy in God's will and wisdom (Al-Attas, 1995). The Qur'an thus provides not only an ontological basis for knowledge but also a moral orientation. It enjoins believers to seek knowledge persistently, as in “*Say: My Lord, increase me in knowledge*” (Q. 20:114). Unlike secular or materialistic conceptions that separate knowledge from ethics, the Qur'anic vision unites cognition and conscience, creating a holistic epistemic system.

Furthermore, the Qur'an extends the pursuit of knowledge beyond the spiritual to the empirical and natural worlds. The repeated command to “*observe*,” “*reflect*,” and “*travel through the earth*” (Q. 29:20; 88:17-20) signifies an early scientific attitude grounded in moral restraint and metaphysical awareness. Thus, 'ilm is both an act of worship and a form of service to humanity. Scholars such as Al-Ghazali (n.d.) and Ibn Rushd (1954) later elaborated on this duality, emphasising that knowledge harmonises intellect and revelation when pursued with sincerity.

In the modern era, revisiting Qur'anic epistemology is vital for reconstructing an integrated model of knowledge that resists the fragmentation of contemporary thought. Through its emphasis on the unity of truth (*tawḥid*), the Qur'an reaffirms that all disciplines—be they natural sciences, humanities, or theology—are interconnected paths toward divine reality. This chapter thus begins with the fundamental nature of

'ilm, its sources, hierarchy, and ethical functions, to lay the groundwork for a comprehensive Qur'anic research methodology.

## 1.2 The Nature and Sources of 'Ilm

The concept of *'Ilm* (knowledge) in the Qur'an is central to the entire structure of Islamic epistemology. Unlike secular or positivist conceptions that reduce knowledge to empirical observation or rational abstraction, the Qur'anic understanding of *'Ilm* embodies a comprehensive unity of the spiritual, moral, rational, and sensory dimensions of human experience. The Qur'an presents *'Ilm* not merely as the accumulation of information but as illumination—a divine gift that transforms the knower's perception of reality and aligns it with the will of God (Allah). In this sense, *'Ilm* is both *ontological* and *teleological*: it reveals the nature of existence and directs it toward purpose (*maqṣad*).

The term *'Ilm* and its derivatives occur over 780 times in the Qur'an, emphasising its integral role in the divine order (Nasr, 2007). These occurrences cover diverse fields—cosmology, theology, morality, natural sciences, and social order—reflecting the Qur'an's encouragement of comprehensive inquiry. The Qur'an distinguishes between true knowledge (*'Ilm al-Ḥaqq*) and conjecture (*ẓann*), affirming that authentic knowledge must rest upon certainty (*yaqīn*) and divine guidance: “*And do not pursue that of which you do not know ('ilm)*” (Q. 17:36). This verse establishes a fundamental ethical and epistemic principle: the pursuit of knowledge demands accountability, evidence, and sincerity.

### 1.2.1 The Divine Origin of Knowledge

The Qur'an unequivocally identifies God as the ultimate source of all knowledge. “*He taught man what he did not know*” (*'allama al-insana malam ya 'lam*, Q. 96:5) encapsulates this divine-human relationship. Knowledge is, therefore, *revealed* before it is *discovered*, and every act of human knowing is a participation in the divine act of teaching (*talim*). This theological premise rejects the notion that knowledge is a purely human construct, emphasising instead that human understanding is contingent, dependent, and derivative (Al-Attas, 1995).

From this standpoint, revelation (*wahy*) becomes the primary source of *'Ilm*. The Qur'an itself is described as *kitabun mubin* (a clear book) and *huda wa rahmah* (guidance and mercy), serving as the foundational epistemic authority. It provides not only content but also methodology—how to observe, reflect, analyse, and conclude with moral certainty. This divine origin does not negate human inquiry but sanctifies it: human knowledge becomes meaningful when aligned with revelation.

The prophetic model reinforces this relationship. The Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) is described as *mu 'allim al-insan*, the teacher of humanity, who embodies and transmits divine knowledge. His sayings, actions, and judgments (*sunnah*) serve as the living extension of Qur'anic epistemology. Thus, revelation and Prophetic teaching together form the two primary and infallible sources of *'Ilm* within the Islamic worldview.

### 1.2.2 The Human Means of Acquiring Knowledge

While the divine source is ultimate, the Qur'an also recognises human faculties as instruments of knowledge acquisition. These include sensory perception (*sam'*, hearing; *baṣar*, sight), rational reflection (*'aql*), and inner awareness (*qalb*). Each faculty functions within a divinely ordained system, enabling humans to perceive, interpret, and internalise reality.

The Qur'an repeatedly calls upon these faculties in commands such as “*Do they not see?*” (Q. 88:17), “*Do they not reason?*” (Q. 2:44), and “*Do they not reflect?*” (Q. 47:24). These verses establish observation (*nazar*), reasoning (*ta'aqqul*), and contemplation (*tafakkur*) as legitimate epistemic processes. However, the Qur'an maintains that these faculties must operate under moral and spiritual discipline. When divorced from divine remembrance, they lead to arrogance and error. “*They have hearts with which they do not understand, eyes with which they do not see, and ears with which they do not hear*” (Q. 7:179).

Hence, in Qur'anic epistemology, *'Ilm* is not purely rationalistic but an *integrative* harmony between sensory, rational, and spiritual cognition. Al-Ghazali (2000) described this synthesis as the meeting of *'aql* (reason) and *qalb* (heart) under divine illumination. The heart in Qur'anic language is not an emotional centre but a metaphysical organ of perception, capable of recognising truth that transcends empirical limits.

### 1.2.3 The Hierarchy of Sources

The Qur'an establishes a divinely ordered hierarchy of knowledge sources (*maratib al-'ilm*), ensuring coherence, authenticity, and ethical accountability. This hierarchy reflects the natural flow of divine communication to human comprehension - from revelation to understanding to practice. Each level functions under divine authorisation, and none can claim independence from the divine source.

Revelation (*Wahy*) - The Supreme Source of Knowledge: The Qur'an itself is the Mother of Knowledge (*Umm al-Kitab*, Q. 13:39), containing the complete framework of guidance, moral principles, and intellectual methodology. All knowledge originates from this revealed source, which is absolute, infallible, and comprehensive. It provides not only facts but also epistemic criteria - distinguishing between truth (*ḥaqq*) and conjecture (*ẓann*). Every human inquiry must, therefore, be measured against revelation. As the Qur'an states, “*Falsehood cannot approach it from before or behind it; [it is] a revelation from the Wise, the Praiseworthy*” (Q. 41:42).

Divine Laws in Creation (*Sunnat Allah fi al-Kawn*) - The Manifest Order of the Universe: The Qur'an consistently invites humanity to observe the laws and patterns of Allah operating in nature and history. These patterns - referred to repeatedly as *Sunnat Allah* - are expressions of divine wisdom observable through empirical inquiry: “*You will never find any change in the way of Allah (Sunnat Allah); nor will you find any deviation in it.*” (Q. 35:43) These immutable natural and moral laws constitute an objective field of study sanctioned by revelation. The Qur'an thus integrates the study of nature within its epistemological system, allowing the empirical sciences to serve as a form of *tafakkur* (contemplation) upon divine order.

Human Intellect ( *'Aql* ) - The Reflective Instrument: Human reason is honoured as the *interface* between divine revelation and sensory experience. The Qur'an repeatedly challenges humans to use reason: "*Do they not reason?*" (*afala ta'qilun*, Q. 2:44). The function of *'Aql* is interpretive - to derive meaning, to discern purpose, and to align understanding with divine truth. However, reason is not autonomous; it remains a tool that functions correctly only under divine guidance. When detached from revelation, it degenerates into speculation and arrogance (Q. 10:36).

Perception and Experience (*Sam', Baṣar, Fu'ad*) - The Sensory Pathways of Knowing: The Qur'an identifies the sensory faculties as the instruments of empirical discovery. "*And Allah brought you out of your mothers' wombs not knowing anything, and He made for you hearing, sight, and hearts that you might give thanks*" (Q. 16:78). These faculties are divine trusts enabling observation of the world as *ayat* - signs of God. However, sensory data alone cannot produce wisdom; it requires reflection (*tadabbur*) and remembrance (*tadhakkur*) to yield insight.

Knowledge Internalised ( *'Ilm al-Yaqin* → *'Ayn al-Yaqin* → *Ḥaqq al-Yaqin* ) - The Ascending Certitude: The Qur'an outlines an ascending epistemic chain of certainty, beginning with conceptual knowledge ( *'ilm al-yaqin* ), followed by experiential realisation ( *'ayn al-yaqin* ), and culminating in absolute truth ( *ḥaqq al-yaqin* ) (see Q. 102:5-7; 56:95). This hierarchy reflects the progressive internalisation of divine truth through contemplation, verification, and moral application. True knowledge thus culminates not in speculation but in certainty grounded in divine reality.

Action ( *'Amal* ) - The Embodiment of Knowledge: In the Qur'anic epistemic model, knowledge attains completion only when translated into righteous action. "*Those who believe and do righteous deeds*" (*alladhina amanu wa 'amilu al-ṣālihat*) appears over fifty times in the Qur'an, establishing action as the verification of faith and knowledge. Knowledge without action is condemned as hypocrisy (Q. 61:2-3). Thus, *'Ilm* is never static; it is dynamic, ethical, and transformative.

Together, these six levels form a Qur'anic epistemic hierarchy - from *Wahy* (divine revelation) to *'Amal* (action). It reflects a continuous flow: divine truth revealed → manifested in creation → understood by intellect → verified through perception → realised in certainty → embodied in ethical conduct. This structure eliminates any need for external epistemic authorities beyond the Qur'an itself. The Qur'an is self-sufficient, internally complete, and universally applicable as the ultimate *Source, Standard, and System* of knowledge.

#### 1.2.4 The Transformative Nature of 'Ilm

In Islamic epistemology, *'Ilm* is transformative rather than merely informative. The Qur'an frequently pairs knowledge with moral consequences. For example, "*Only those who know His servants fear Allah*" (Q. 35:28). This indicates that true knowledge leads to humility, awe, and ethical behaviour. The moral dimension distinguishes Qur'anic epistemology from secular scientism, where knowledge is often divorced from virtue.



Furthermore, *Ilm* is portrayed as a means to *'ubudiyyah* (servitude to God). Knowledge, therefore, is both an act of worship and a responsibility. The value of knowledge lies not in its accumulation but in its application toward justice, compassion, and balance (*mizan*).

### 1.2.5 The Qur'an as Epistemic Framework

Unlike modern theories that compartmentalise knowledge, the Qur'an establishes a unified epistemic framework grounded in *Tawhīd*. Every field of knowledge, natural or human, theoretical or applied, finds coherence in the understanding of divine unity. Thus, physics, metaphysics, and ethics are not separate domains but interconnected manifestations of divine wisdom (*hikmah*).

Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1989) argues that modernity's epistemic crisis stems from its detachment of knowledge from sacred purpose. The Qur'an, in contrast, situates all inquiry within moral teleology: to know is to serve. Hence, the Qur'anic view transforms epistemology into an act of devotion, where understanding creation is a path toward understanding the Creator.

This epistemic unity also implies a responsibility to integrate revelation and empirical study. Muslim scholars historically demonstrated this synthesis, whether in astronomy, medicine, or philosophy, guided by the conviction that truth is singular and divine. The collapse of this synthesis in modernity represents not progress but fragmentation.

The Qur'anic conception of *Ilm* encompasses divine origin, human cognition, moral accountability, and cosmic harmony. Knowledge in Islam is not a neutral possession but a sacred trust (*amanah*). Its sources—revelation, reason, and sensory perception—operate in a divinely ordered hierarchy, ensuring both authenticity and humility in the pursuit of truth. The modern challenge for Islamic epistemology is not merely to rediscover these sources but to reintegrate them into a coherent intellectual paradigm that unites faith, reason, and experience. Only through such reintegration can the ummah revive its intellectual and spiritual vitality in the modern world.

### 1.3 Hierarchy of Knowledge

The Qur'an establishes a clear hierarchy of knowledge, structured around degrees of certainty and levels of divine proximity. This hierarchy begins with *'ilm al-yaqin* (knowledge of certainty), progresses to *'ayn al-yaqin* (vision of certainty), and culminates in *haqq al-yaqin* (truth of certainty) (Q. 102:5-7). These levels represent both epistemological depth and spiritual maturity, integrating the cognitive, experiential, and revelatory dimensions of knowing.

At the foundational level, *'ilm al-yaqin* corresponds to rational or discursive knowledge attained through study, reflection, and empirical verification. It provides intellectual certainty but remains limited to conceptual understanding. The second level, *'ayn al-yaqin*, is experiential knowledge attained through direct perception or spiritual witnessing, reflecting a deeper internalisation of truth. The highest level, *haqq al-yaqin*, signifies ontological realisation—when the knower becomes unified with the known in a state of complete awareness of divine reality (Chittick, 2007).

This triadic epistemology mirrors the Qur'anic progression from *iman* (faith) to *yaqin* (certainty) to *haqq* (ultimate truth). It suggests that knowledge is not static but transformative, leading the seeker from intellectual understanding to spiritual realisation. Moreover, the Qur'an's frequent pairing of "knowledge" with "action" ('ilm and 'amal) implies that knowledge gains authenticity only when translated into moral conduct. As the Qur'an warns, "*The most detested in the sight of Allah is one who says what he does not do*" (Q. 61:3).

The hierarchy of knowledge also serves as a safeguard against arrogance and false claims. It distinguishes between 'ilm al-nafi' (beneficial knowledge) and 'ilm al-la yanfa' (knowledge without benefit), emphasising the ethical dimension of epistemology. Beneficial knowledge contributes to the well-being of creation and aligns with divine justice, while unbeneficial knowledge inflates the ego and breeds corruption (Al-Attas, 1995).

In contrast to modern hierarchies that often privilege empirical data over metaphysical truth, the Qur'anic model restores balance by situating all knowledge within the domain of divine reality. Thus, revelation is not an obstacle to intellectual inquiry but its ultimate anchor. This hierarchy reflects the Qur'an's vision of an integrated epistemic cosmos, where every act of knowing, whether scientific or spiritual, constitutes a step toward *ma'rifah*, the direct knowledge of God.

## 1.4 Knowledge and Responsibility

In the Qur'anic paradigm, knowledge ('ilm) is never value-neutral; it inherently entails responsibility and moral accountability. The acquisition of knowledge is portrayed not as a privilege but as a trust (*amanah*) that binds the knower to act justly and truthfully (2:283). The Qur'an explicitly warns against the misuse or concealment of knowledge, declaring that "*those who conceal what Allah has revealed of the Book and exchange it for a small price-they consume nothing in their bellies but fire*" (Q. 2:174). This verse illustrates that knowledge divorced from ethics leads to spiritual corruption.

The Qur'an establishes a profound link between 'ilm and 'amal (action), insisting that genuine knowledge must manifest in righteous conduct. Knowledge, when unaccompanied by ethical responsibility, becomes an instrument of arrogance and injustice. Al-Ghazali (n.d.) cautioned against scholars who pursue knowledge merely for social prestige or argumentation, calling such knowledge "*a veil thicker than ignorance*." The Qur'an reinforces this moral framework by differentiating between those who "know" and those who "do not know" (Q. 39:9), affirming that knowledge without humility cannot lead to enlightenment.

Responsibility in knowledge also implies discernment in its use. The Qur'an prohibits speculative assumptions or claims beyond one's epistemic capacity: "*Do not pursue that of which you do not know*" (*la taqfu ma laysa laka bihi 'ilm*) (Q. 17:36). This injunction forms the ethical core of Qur'anic epistemology, emphasising intellectual honesty, caution, and verification. It anticipates the modern principle of evidence-based reasoning while grounding it in divine accountability.

Furthermore, the Qur'an assigns scholars ('ulama') a unique social responsibility: to bear witness to truth and uphold justice. "*Indeed, those who possess knowledge stand in awe of Allah*" (Q. 35:28). Knowledge

thus cultivates humility and God-consciousness (*taqwa*), shaping not only personal conduct but also social order. Therefore, in the Qur'anic context, knowledge is both enlightenment and burden, empowering humanity to act with wisdom, while obligating the knower to align their pursuits with divine justice and compassion.

## 1.5 Knowledge as a Collective Endeavour

While the Qur'an emphasises individual reflection and understanding, it equally portrays knowledge as a collective pursuit that sustains civilisation and moral progress. The verse “*And We raised some of them above others in ranks, so that some may take others in service*” (Q. 43:32) implies that human interdependence is part of divine design. Knowledge grows through cooperation, dialogue, and transmission across generations.

The Qur'an uses the plural imperative in many injunctions related to thought-*afala ta'qilun, afala tatafakkarun*-indicating a communal process of reflection. This linguistic choice signifies that the search for truth thrives within shared human experience and mutual correction. Ibn Khaldun (1967) later developed this concept in his *Muqaddimah*, arguing that knowledge progresses within societies that value cooperation, education, and institutional support.

Historically, the Islamic Golden Age exemplified this collective epistemic spirit. Scholars worked collaboratively in institutions such as Bayt al-Hikmah in Baghdad and Al-Qarawiyyin in Fez, integrating theology, philosophy, mathematics, and medicine. This synthesis reflected the Qur'anic ideal of *tawhid al-ma'rifah*-the unity of all knowledge under divine purpose (Nasr, 1989). Through such networks, knowledge was preserved, translated, and transmitted across cultures, bridging civilisations from Greece to India and later Europe.

The Qur'an also establishes the principle of consultation (*shura*) as a methodological and ethical foundation for communal knowledge production (Q. 42:38). In an epistemological sense, *shura* encourages peer review, dialogue, and collective reasoning, ensuring that decisions and interpretations emerge through consensus and deliberation rather than arbitrary authority.

Moreover, knowledge as a collective endeavour implies inclusivity. The Qur'an calls upon all believers, men and women alike, to seek knowledge (Q. 33:35). Early Muslim women such as 'A'ishah bint Abi Bakr and Fatimah al-Fihri embodied this principle, contributing to jurisprudence and education. This inclusiveness affirms that knowledge, in its Qur'anic conception, transcends social hierarchies and is a shared inheritance of humanity.

In the modern context, this collective vision offers a corrective to the fragmentation of specialised disciplines and the isolation of individual expertise. The Qur'an invites scholars to reestablish intellectual unity through cross-disciplinary engagement grounded in ethics and spirituality. Knowledge, when pursued collectively in service of truth and justice, becomes a means of realising *khilafah*-the stewardship of humanity over creation.

## 1.6 The Sacred Function of 'Ilm

The Qur'an sanctifies knowledge as a divine light that guides human existence toward truth, justice, and spiritual fulfilment. Knowledge in Islam is not merely a tool for survival or progress but a means of recognising divine reality. As the Qur'an declares: "*Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth*" (Q. 24:35). In this sense, knowledge is an illumination of the intellect and the soul, reflecting divine light within human consciousness.

The sacred function of 'ilm lies in its capacity to connect the finite mind with infinite wisdom. Through knowledge, humanity participates in the divine act of creation by discerning order in the universe. Ibn Sina (Avicenna) described knowledge as *a mode of being* reflection of the intelligible forms existing in the divine intellect (Fakhry, 1983). Thus, to know truthfully is to mirror the harmony and intentionality of creation.

Knowledge also possesses a redemptive and transformative power. It liberates human beings from ignorance (*jahl*), superstition, and moral decay. The Qur'an repeatedly contrasts the state of ignorance with that of enlightenment: "*Say, are those who know equal to those who do not know?*" (Q. 39:9). In this dichotomy, ignorance is not merely a lack of information but blindness to divine order, while knowledge is the recognition of meaning and purpose in existence.

Finally, the sacred function of 'ilm is to maintain balance (*mizan*) in the world. The Qur'an states that God "*raised the heaven and established the balance, that you may not transgress in the balance*" (Q. 55:7-8). Knowledge enables humanity to preserve this cosmic equilibrium through just actions and ethical decisions. When knowledge is desacralized, it becomes destructive, leading to environmental, moral, and social disorder. Hence, the Qur'an insists that true knowledge must always reflect divine harmony and serve universal welfare.

In essence, 'ilm is sacred because it is a bridge between knowing and being a manifestation of divine wisdom within human experience. To preserve its sanctity, knowledge must remain oriented toward truth, compassion, and service to creation.

The Qur'anic conception of 'ilm transcends the boundaries of philosophy, science, and theology-it is simultaneously rational, spiritual, and ethical. It begins with revelation, operates through reason, and culminates in wisdom. In contrast to the fragmentation of modern epistemology, the Qur'an offers a unified vision where knowing is inseparable from being and doing. Knowledge is both the path and the purpose of existence, leading humanity from ignorance to illumination, from multiplicity to unity. Hence, the pursuit of 'ilm is not an end in itself but a sacred journey toward divine realisation.

## Chapter 2. Cognitive Instruments of Knowing: ‘Aql, Tafakkur, Tadabbur, and Tadhakkur

The Qur’an presents a comprehensive and coherent framework of cognition that integrates reason, reflection, remembrance, and insight into a holistic epistemology. Knowledge (*‘ilm*) in the Qur’anic worldview does not emerge from isolated rationality but from a dynamic interaction between intellect (*‘aql*), contemplation (*tafakkur*), reflection (*tadabbur*), and remembrance (*tadhakkur*). Each of these instruments represents a unique cognitive function that shapes human understanding in the pursuit of divine truth. Together, they provide the foundation for an Islamic epistemological model that transcends empirical reductionism and spiritual abstraction. This section explores these instruments in depth, examining their interrelations, functions, and implications for constructing a Qur’anic methodology of knowing.

### 2.1 The Cognitive Framework of the Qur’an

The Qur’an repeatedly addresses the human faculties of understanding, urging believers to “reflect” (*yatafakkarun*), “ponder” (*yatadabbarun*), and “remember” (*yatadhakkarun*) the signs of God in creation and revelation. This insistence signifies that cognition is not merely a rational act but a spiritual and moral process rooted in *the* innate disposition towards truth and goodness (Al-Attas, 1995). The Qur’an conceives the human mind as both a repository and an instrument of divine signs. As Chittick (2007) emphasises, knowledge in Islam is a sacred trust (*amanah*), requiring both intellectual rigour and ethical responsibility.

Unlike secular epistemologies that separate cognition from moral being, the Qur’an views them as inseparable. The intellect (*‘aql*) functions as a moral compass guiding the human being toward recognition of divine unity (*tawhīd*). The Qur’an uses cognitive verbs such as *ya ‘qilun* (to reason), *yatafakkarun* (to think), and *yatadhakkarun* (to remember) in exhortative forms, linking reasoning with spiritual awareness (Q. 2:164; 3:190-191). This suggests that the act of knowing in Islam is simultaneously an act of worship.

The Qur’anic cognitive framework, therefore, resists reductionist interpretations of knowledge as information. Rather, it establishes a multi-dimensional approach where reason (*‘aql*), sensory perception (*sam‘*, *baṣar*), and revelation (*waḥy*) interact synergistically (Nasr, 1989). Revelation anchors human cognition in divine truth, while rational and reflective faculties enable engagement with the natural and moral order. This integration forms the essence of Qur’anic epistemology, providing an ontological harmony between faith and intellect.

In sum, the Qur’an envisions cognition as a sacred and transformative process—a movement from ignorance to awareness, from heedlessness (*ghaflah*) to remembrance (*dhikr*). It invites humanity not merely to know about the world but to know through it the signs of its Creator.

## 2.2 'Aql: The Rational Faculty

The term '*aql*, derived from the root meaning "to bind" or "restrain," appears throughout the Qur'an as the central instrument of rational discernment. The '*aql* is not located merely in the brain but in the heart (*qalb*), symbolising the integration of intellect and emotion in moral reasoning (Q. 22:46). The Qur'an repeatedly asks, "*Do they not use their reason?*" (*afala ta'qilun*), indicating that '*aql* is both a divine gift and a responsibility (Izutsu, 2002).

In Qur'anic usage, '*aql* signifies more than logical reasoning; it implies moral cognition-the ability to distinguish truth from falsehood and right from wrong (Al-Attas, 1995). It restrains the human being from error by aligning reason with divine guidance. Rationality, therefore, in the Qur'an is not autonomous but theonomous-it operates within the boundaries set by revelation (*wahy*). Al-Ghazali (1998) explained that reason without revelation becomes misguided speculation, whereas revelation without reason remains misunderstood.

Moreover, '*aql* is consistently associated with perception and reflection upon *ayat* (signs)-both cosmic and scriptural. For instance, in Qur'an 30:8, the act of reasoning involves pondering the heavens and the earth as signs of divine wisdom. This epistemic act transforms '*aql* into a participatory process rather than a detached observation. Knowledge gained through '*aql* is validated not merely by coherence but by its conformity to divine order.

Modern Muslim epistemologists, such as Nasr (1989) and Chittick (2007), emphasise that the Qur'an restores a balance between reason and revelation that modern secular thought has fractured. The Qur'an does not deny the empirical world but situates it within a hierarchy of meanings. Reason is thus both analytical and contemplative-it explores, interprets, and ultimately recognises transcendence.

In summary, '*aql* in the Qur'anic paradigm is the human faculty that bridges revelation and reality. It is rational, moral, and spiritual, functioning not as an end but as a means to discern truth and actualise divine purpose in the world.

## 2.3 Tafakkur: Analytical Contemplation

*Tafakkur*, from the root *f-k-r*, denotes deep and sustained contemplation or meditation. The Qur'an invites believers to engage in *tafakkur* regarding creation, life, and death (Q. 3:190-191; 45:13). Unlike abstract speculation, *tafakkur* involves analytical contemplation grounded in awareness of divine unity. It seeks to uncover the wisdom (*hikmah*) inherent in God's creation through observation and reason.

The process of *tafakkur* engages both intellect and imagination. According to Al-Raghib al-Asfahani (as cited in Nasr, 1989), *tafakkur* is the movement of the mind from known truths toward the discovery of unknown truths. This movement aligns closely with the scientific spirit-hypothesis, observation, inference, but under Qur'anic epistemology, its ultimate goal is not mere discovery but recognition of divine purpose.

The Qur'an encourages *tafakkur* not as an elitist activity but as a universal moral duty. Those who refuse to think are described as spiritually blind or deaf (Q. 7:179). Thus, *tafakkur* becomes an act of piety. Al-



Attas (1995) terms this the “sacralization of reason,” where intellectual inquiry is bound to ethical responsibility. To think is to worship.

Furthermore, *tafakkur* represents the Qur’an’s response to both empirical and speculative traditions. It acknowledges the value of observation (*naẓar*) but insists that reflection must transcend material appearances. Chittick (2007) notes that *tafakkur* serves as a bridge between science and spirituality, leading from the study of creation to awareness of the Creator.

In the modern context, *tafakkur* provides a model for integrating scientific inquiry with spiritual insight. A Qur’an-based research methodology would thus employ *tafakkur* as a mode of critical and reflective reasoning, empirically grounded, morally guided, and theologically conscious. It encourages questioning without scepticism and understanding without arrogance.

Ultimately, *tafakkur* is not an isolated act of thinking but a dynamic process of transformation. Through *tafakkur*, the believer transcends the limits of empirical knowing and attains insight (*basirah*), perceiving both the unity of creation and the purpose of existence.

## 2.4 Tadabbur: Deep Reflection

*Tadabbur*, derived from *d-b-r* (“to consider the outcome” or “look behind”), refers to deep reflection, particularly upon the Qur’an itself (Q 4:82; 47:24). It is a cognitive and spiritual act that involves looking beyond the surface meaning of words to grasp their inner coherence and wisdom. Whereas *tafakkur* engages the external world, *tadabbur* penetrates the text of revelation.

The Qur’an explicitly calls believers to *yatadabburun al-Qur’an*-to ponder the Qur’an deeply (Q. 47:24). This invitation marks *tadabbur* as an essential epistemic practice for uncovering divine intent. According to Al-Attas (1995), *tadabbur* transforms reading into understanding, and understanding into application. It is the hermeneutical foundation of Qur’anic interpretation (*tafsir*).

In Islamic intellectual history, *tadabbur* was not confined to scholars. Early Muslims viewed it as a communal act of engaging with revelation. Chittick (2007) argues that *tadabbur* fosters participatory hermeneutics-it enables every believer to internalise divine guidance. By connecting thought to moral transformation, *tadabbur* ensures that knowledge leads to righteous action.

In epistemological terms, *tadabbur* integrates textual exegesis with existential reflection. It bridges the gap between theory and practice, making knowledge transformative. The Qur’an’s emphasis on *tadabbur* challenges modern readers to go beyond literalism and explore the multi-layered structure of divine meaning. This multidimensionality of the text supports an inductive methodology-observing patterns, correlations, and semantic fields that reveal the unity of Qur’anic discourse (Izutsu, 2002).

Moreover, *tadabbur* safeguards interpretation from both blind traditionalism and unchecked subjectivism. It calls for disciplined reflection rooted in linguistic, historical, and ethical contexts. It is through *tadabbur* that Qur’anic epistemology becomes methodologically precise-an ongoing dialogue between text, intellect, and heart.

## 2.5 Tadhakkur: Remembrance and Moral Reflection

*Tadhakkur*, from *dh-k-r*, signifies remembrance, recollection, and moral awakening. In the Qur'an, it refers not only to remembering God but to recalling divine guidance that is already inscribed in human nature (Q. 87:9-10). It reawakens *fitrah*-the primordial consciousness of the Creator.

The act of *tadhakkur* transforms knowledge into wisdom. Whereas *tafakkur* and *tadabbur* engage intellect and reflection, *tadhakkur* engages memory and conscience. It ensures that knowledge is not forgotten, distorted, or misused. Al-Ghazali (1998) likened it to polishing the heart's mirror, restoring clarity to moral perception.

The Qur'an presents *tadhakkur* as the culmination of all cognitive acts. In Qur'an 51:55, the Prophet is instructed: "Remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers." This establishes *tadhakkur* as an ethical and pedagogical principle. It is through remembrance that knowledge attains permanence and guides action.

From a methodological perspective, *Tadhakkur* reinforces continuity in Qur'anic learning. It prevents fragmentation of knowledge by connecting present understanding to timeless truths. As Nasr (1989) notes, *tadhakkur* is the spiritual dimension of knowledge, ensuring that cognition remains oriented toward transcendence. It anchors epistemology in ontology-the act of knowing becomes an act of being.

Thus, *tadhakkur* completes the circle of Qur'anic cognition: reason (*'aql*) leads to contemplation (*tafakkur*), contemplation deepens into reflection (*tadabbur*), and reflection matures into remembrance (*tadhakkur*). Through this process, knowledge is sanctified and human consciousness aligned with divine reality.

## 2.6 Integration of Cognitive Instruments

The Qur'an's epistemology rests on the harmonious interplay of *'aql*, *tafakkur*, *tadabbur*, and *tadhakkur*. Each represents a distinct but interdependent dimension of knowing: rational, analytical, reflective, and moral. Together, they constitute a cyclical process that transforms human awareness from empirical observation to spiritual realisation.

The integration of these instruments illustrates that Qur'anic cognition is not linear but holistic. It acknowledges the legitimacy of reason, the necessity of reflection, and the centrality of remembrance. By uniting intellect and spirit, the Qur'an provides a model for integrative knowledge that modern epistemologies have lost (Al-Attas, 1995; Nasr, 1989).

In the contemporary age of fragmented knowledge, the Qur'anic model offers a means to restore unity between science, ethics, and spirituality. It redefines cognition as a sacred act, knowing as remembering, thinking as worship, and reasoning as moral discernment. Hence, the Qur'an emerges as not only the source of revelation but also as the blueprint for human epistemic development.

In conclusion, the Qur'anic cognitive instruments-*'aql*, *tafakkur*, *tadabbur*, and *tadhakkur*-together construct an integrative epistemology that unites intellect, reflection, and remembrance into a single



continuum of knowing. They demonstrate that true knowledge is not the product of detached reasoning but the outcome of spiritually conscious cognition rooted in divine guidance. By harmonising analytical inquiry with moral awareness and contemplative remembrance, the Qur’an provides a complete methodology for understanding reality in its physical, moral, and metaphysical dimensions. This holistic cognitive framework transcends the dichotomy between reason and revelation, offering humanity an enduring paradigm for intellectual, ethical, and spiritual development grounded in the unity (tawḥīd) of all truth.

## Chapter 3: Revelation and Rationality: Integration, Not Opposition

In the Qur'anic worldview, revelation (*wahy*) and reason (*'aql*) are not conflicting forces but complementary sources of knowledge. The Qur'an rejects the bifurcation between faith and intellect, positioning both as divine gifts entrusted to humankind for discovering truth. Revelation provides the metaphysical foundation and ethical direction, while reason functions as the interpretive instrument that deciphers creation and recognises divine order. Thus, revelation guides intellect, and intellect validates revelation through reflection and understanding. Far from suppressing inquiry, the Qur'an elevates rational contemplation as an act of faith itself. This section explores how the Qur'an integrates revelation and reason, examines classical Islamic perspectives on their relationship, and outlines a unified epistemological paradigm grounded in *tawhīd*-the oneness of all truth.

### 3.1 The Qur'anic Harmony of Reason and Revelation

The Qur'an establishes a profound harmony between revelation and rationality, framing both as interdependent channels for accessing divine truth. Revelation (*wahy*) is presented as divine communication that transcends human subjectivity, while reason (*'aql*) is the faculty through which humans interpret signs (*ayat*) in both scripture and nature. The Qur'an repeatedly invites humanity to think (*yatafakkarun*), reflect (*yatadabbarun*), and reason (*ya'qilun*) as acts of worship and validation of revelation.

Verses such as “*Do they not reflect upon the Qur'an?*” (Q. 47:24) and “*Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day are signs for those who possess intellect*” (Q. 3:190) reveal that rational engagement is a divine imperative. Revelation does not replace intellect; rather, it perfects it by providing metaphysical context and moral boundaries. According to Al-Ghazali (1997), the intellect is a “lamp of the heart” that cannot illuminate without the oil of revelation. Similarly, Ibn Rushd (Averroes) argued that philosophy and revelation aim at the same truth, differing only in method (Averroes, 1954).

The Qur'an warns against two extremes: blind literalism that rejects reason and pure rationalism that denies revelation. Instead, it advocates for *'aql mu'ayyad bi'l-wahy*-reason illuminated by revelation. This synthesis ensures that empirical knowledge remains ethically oriented, and spiritual knowledge remains intellectually coherent. By presenting revelation as the calibration of reason, the Qur'an establishes an epistemological balance that promotes both intellectual freedom and spiritual submission, a framework that continues to inspire Islamic thought through centuries of scholarship.

### 3.2 Classical Perspectives

The integration of revelation and reason is not a modern challenge; it has been at the heart of Islamic intellectual history since the earliest centuries of Islam. Classical Muslim scholars such as Al-Farabi (870-950 CE), Ibn Sina (Avicenna, 980-1037 CE), Al-Ghazali (1058-1111 CE), Ibn Rushd (Averroes, 1126-1198 CE), and Shah Wali Allah al-Dihlawi (1703-1762 CE) engaged deeply with the tension and synthesis between *'aql* (reason) and *wahy* (revelation). Their epistemological reflections illustrate that, within the

Qur'anic worldview, reason is neither autonomous nor antagonistic to revelation but functions within a divine framework of guidance (*huda*). The classical period thus established an enduring model for reconciling philosophical reasoning with the metaphysical certainty of divine truth.

### 3.2.1 The Early Formulations: Reason as a Divine Trust

Early Muslim theologians such as the Mu'tazilah emphasised reason as an autonomous tool to discern moral truths and theological doctrines, arguing that human intellect could independently establish the goodness or badness (*ḥusn wa qubḥ*) of actions (Adamson, 2007). However, their rationalism was balanced by the Ash'arī school, which asserted that reason must remain subservient to revelation because divine will transcends human comprehension (Frank, 1994). Despite apparent tension, both schools affirmed the Qur'an's recognition of *'aql* as a divinely entrusted faculty. As stated in Qur'an 67:10, the condemned in Hell lament: "*If only we had listened or reasoned (na'qil), we would not be among the people of the Fire.*" This verse affirms that failure to use reason constitutes a moral fault, not an epistemic impossibility. Thus, in early Islamic theology, reason was not opposed to revelation but served as its interpreter within the bounds of divine revelation (Nasr, 1993).

### 3.2.2 Al-Farabi and the Rational Structure of Revelation

Al-Farabi was among the first to provide a philosophical system harmonising revelation with Aristotelian logic. In *Al-Madinah al-Fadilah* (The Virtuous City), he argued that revelation conveys metaphysical truths symbolically for the masses, whereas philosophy expresses them discursively for the intellectual elite (Butterworth, 1985). For Al-Farabi, both prophet and philosopher participate in the same ultimate truth (*al-ḥaqq*), but their modes of expression differ. The prophet receives divine truths through *wahy*, the highest form of intuitive intellect (*'aql mustafad*), while the philosopher approaches them through reasoned demonstration. Revelation thus functions as a universal pedagogy translating metaphysical realities into symbols accessible to all levels of intellect (Al-Farabi, trans. Walzer, 1985).

In this schema, there is no dichotomy between reason and revelation; rather, revelation represents the perfection of reason guided by divine light. Al-Farabi's model influenced later thinkers such as Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd, demonstrating how prophetic revelation and human reasoning could coexist within a single epistemic framework.

### 3.2.3 Ibn Sina: The Metaphysics of Intellectual Illumination

Building upon Al-Farabi's legacy, Ibn Sina proposed that human knowledge ascends through a hierarchy of intellectual illumination, culminating in prophetic revelation. In his *Kitab al-Najat* and *Al-Isharat wa al-Tanbihat*, he posits that prophets achieve perfect conjunction with the Active Intellect (*'aql al-fa'al*), enabling them to access universal truths without mediation (Goodman, 1992). This metaphysical process mirrors Qur'anic descriptions of divine inspiration, such as in Qur'an 42:51- "*It is not for any human that Allah should speak to him except by inspiration or from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger.*" Ibn Sina thus provides a philosophical explanation for the mechanism of revelation consistent with Qur'anic cosmology.

While his system was criticised for “philosophising prophecy,” Ibn Sina intended to rationalise the structure of divine communication without undermining its sanctity. For him, reason and revelation are two rays of the same light—one apprehended through intellectual exertion, the other through divine grace (Nasr, 2006). This model foreshadows later Sufi epistemologies that interpret knowledge as illumination (*ishraq*).

### 3.2.4 Al-Ghazali: Reconciling Reason with Spiritual Certainty

Al-Ghazali, often portrayed as the reconciler of orthodoxy and philosophy, redefined the epistemological relationship between *'aql* and *wahy* through the lens of spiritual experience. In *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* and *Al-Munqidh min al-Dalal*, he argues that reason alone cannot yield certainty (*yaqin*), as it is prone to scepticism and speculation. True knowledge arises only when reason is illuminated by divine guidance through the light (*mur*) of revelation (Al-Ghazali, trans. Watt, 1953).

For Al-Ghazali, revelation provides the ultimate criterion of truth, while reason operates as a tool for understanding it. He likened reason to eyesight and revelation to sunlight: without the latter, the former cannot perceive. He wrote, “*Reason is like the eye, and the Qur'an is like the light; the eye needs the light to see, and the light needs the eye to be perceived*” (Al-Ghazali, *Ihya'*, Book I). Thus, his epistemology was neither anti-rational nor purely fideistic but integrative, grounding rational inquiry within divine illumination.

Moreover, Al-Ghazali's critique of philosophers in *Tahafut al-Falasifah* was not an outright rejection of rationalism but a warning against metaphysical overreach beyond revelation. His work established a balanced paradigm: revelation defines the limits of metaphysics, while reason elucidates its implications (Griffel, 2009). This equilibrium shaped centuries of Islamic theology and influenced both the Ash'arite tradition and later Sufi metaphysics.

### 3.2.5 Ibn Rushd: Rational Autonomy within Divine Law

Ibn Rushd advanced a robust defence of philosophical reasoning within the Islamic framework in *Faṣl al-Maqal fīma bayna al-Ḥikmah wa al-Shari'ah min al-Ittiṣāl* (The Decisive Treatise). He argued that philosophy and revelation are complementary modes of accessing truth, both mandated by the Qur'an itself (Averroes, trans. Butterworth, 2001). He cited Qur'an 59:2—“*So take warning, O people of vision (uli al-abṣar)*”—as divine authorisation for rational inquiry.

Ibn Rushd's epistemology distinguishes between three audiences: the rhetorical (common people), the dialectical (theologians), and the demonstrative (philosophers). Each accesses truth through an appropriate method suited to their cognitive capacity. He insists that *ta'wil* (allegorical interpretation) of scripture must be employed when literal meaning conflicts with demonstrative reason, provided that the interpreter is trained and pious. This hermeneutical principle, he argued, ensures the unity of truth (*ittihad al-ḥaqq*): revelation and reason cannot contradict because both emanate from the same divine source (Leaman, 1988).

Ibn Rushd thus presents a rationalist hermeneutics within the framework of faith, establishing an Islamic philosophy of reason distinct from secular rationalism. His synthesis resonates with Qur'an 3:191- "*Those who remember Allah standing, sitting, and lying down, and reflect (yatafakkaruna) on the creation of the heavens and the earth.*" Here, reflection and remembrance coexist, affirming the harmony of intellect and faith.

### 3.2.6 Later Synthesis: Sufi Integration of Rational and Spiritual Knowledge

The synthesis of reason and revelation achieved its most profound expression in the Sufi metaphysical tradition, particularly in the works of Ibn 'Arabi (1165-1240 CE) and later in those of Mulla Şadra (1571-1640 CE). Ibn 'Arabi's doctrine of *al-ilm al-ladunni* (knowledge from God's presence) builds upon Qur'an 18:65 -where Moses meets the divinely guided servant endowed with "knowledge from Our Presence." This highlights an epistemic hierarchy where intellectual and spiritual knowledge converge through divine grace (Chittick, 2007).

Mulla Şadra later integrated peripatetic, Illuminationist, and mystical epistemologies into his *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah* (Transcendent Theosophy), where all forms of knowledge-sensory, rational, and intuitive-unite under the ontological principle of *Tawhīd* (Nasr, 1978). In his system, rational reasoning is not discarded but transcended through *kashf* (unveiling), an act of divine disclosure harmonising intellect (*'aql*) and spirit (*ruh*).

### 3.2.7 Epistemological Implications

The cumulative contribution of classical scholars demonstrates a multidimensional epistemology rooted in Qur'anic principles. Each thinker articulates a distinctive synthesis:

- Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina emphasise the metaphysical continuity between prophetic revelation and rational intellect.
- Al-Ghazali integrates rational inquiry with mystical intuition, grounding certainty in divine illumination.
- Ibn Rushd institutionalises rational hermeneutics within Shari'ah.
- Ibn 'Arabi and Mulla Şadra culminate the tradition by merging rational and experiential knowledge under spiritual unity.

Together, they reaffirm that within Islamic epistemology, revelation (*wahy*) and reason (*'aql*) are not rival sources of knowledge but co-participants in the unfolding of divine truth. The Qur'an itself invites such integration, commanding believers both to think and to believe, to reflect and to submit, thus harmonising *'ilm*, *iman*, and *'aql* within the encompassing reality of *Tawhīd*.

## 3.3 The Balance of Empiricism and Spirituality

The Qur'an presents an epistemological structure that balances the sensory world of observation and experimentation (*hiss* and *tajriba*) with the transcendent realm of spiritual perception (*baṣīrah*). This synthesis lies at the heart of Islamic epistemology: the human being is called to explore the external

universe (*afaq*) through empirical means and to contemplate the internal universe (*anfus*) through spiritual reflection (Q. 41:53). The Qur'anic command to “*travel through the earth and observe*” (Q. 29:20) reflects the value of empirical observation, while its recurring exhortations to “remember” (*tadhakkarun*) and “reflect” (*yatafakkarun*) emphasize inner awareness. Both are epistemic acts that, when harmonised, lead toward holistic understanding (*ma'rifah*).

### 3.3.1 Empiricism in the Qur'anic Context

Empiricism in the Qur'anic paradigm is not a purely material process; it is an act of stewardship (*khilafah*). The Qur'an repeatedly calls on humanity to observe natural phenomena-rain, mountains, animal behaviour, and human creation-not merely as physical facts but as “signs” (*ayat*) pointing to the Divine (Q. 3:190-191; 16:10-18). The empirical act of seeing thus becomes a metaphysical journey toward meaning. The Qur'an does not separate scientific observation from spiritual discernment but fuses them through the language of *ayah*, transforming nature into revelation's open book (Nasr, 1993).

Historically, Muslim scientists such as Ibn al-Haytham, Al-Biruni, and Ibn Sina understood this synthesis. Ibn al-Haytham's *Kitab al-Manazir* exemplified methodological empiricism combined with theological intentionality -he insisted that observation must be guided by humility and awareness of human fallibility, for “the seeker of truth is not one who studies the writings of the ancients but one who suspends judgment and examines all things” (Ibn al-Haytham, trans. Sabra, 1989). His approach reflects a Qur'anic empiricism grounded in *taqwa* -the ethical awareness of God.

### 3.3.2 Spirituality as Internal Empiricism

In contrast, spiritual experience in the Qur'an represents a form of “inner empiricism,” a disciplined perception of metaphysical realities through purification of the self (*tazkiyah*). The Qur'an affirms that the heart (*qalb*) can perceive truth: “*They have hearts with which they do not understand*” (Q. 7:179). Here, cognition is not limited to sensory input but includes moral and spiritual receptivity. Al-Ghazali (1953) elaborated on this in his *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, describing the purified heart as a mirror that reflects divine light once cleansed of desire and heedlessness. Knowledge thus has both external and internal dimensions, corresponding to observation (*nazar*) and unveiling (*kashf*).

Spirituality does not negate empirical science; it disciplines it. Without ethical orientation, empirical inquiry risks descending into materialistic reductionism. The Qur'an cautions against such blindness: “*They know what is apparent of the worldly life, but they are heedless of the Hereafter*” (Q. 30:7). Spiritual awareness, therefore, functions as an epistemic compass, ensuring that empirical data is interpreted within the moral order of creation.

### 3.3.3 Synthesis: The Ethical Unity of Knowing

The integration of empiricism and spirituality requires ethical responsibility. The Qur'an frames knowledge as *amanah*-a sacred trust (Q. 33:72). Human knowledge must serve divine purpose, not egoistic exploitation. In this light, modern scientific empiricism, when divorced from spirituality, becomes ethically incomplete. By contrast, the Qur'anic paradigm situates science within the moral universe of *'adl* (justice) and *rahmah* (compassion).

This epistemic balance has profound implications for modernity. The Qur'anic worldview does not oppose scientific rationality but demands that it remain tethered to metaphysical truth. In this synthesis, empiricism reveals the structure of creation, while spirituality unveils its meaning. Both are instruments of knowing (*ma'rifah*) that together restore the unity of knowledge, a unity modern epistemology has often fragmented.

### 3.4 The Principle of Tawḥid as Epistemic Unity

At the heart of Qur'anic epistemology lies the doctrine of *Tawḥid*-the absolute unity of God-which serves not only as a theological cornerstone but also as an epistemic principle integrating all forms of knowledge. *Tawḥid* implies that all truths, whether derived from revelation, reason, or empirical observation, originate from the same Divine Source and therefore cannot contradict one another. This epistemic monotheism transcends the dichotomy between sacred and secular, faith and science, intellect and spirituality. The principle of *Tawḥid* thus provides the metaphysical foundation for a holistic understanding of reality, where knowledge becomes a means of recognising Divine order and purpose. Within this framework, the act of knowing transforms into an act of worship, aligning human cognition with the cosmic harmony established by God.

#### 3.4.1 Tawḥid as the Ontological Foundation of Knowledge

At the heart of Qur'anic epistemology lies *Tawḥid*, the affirmation of Divine Unity. Beyond its theological meaning, *Tawḥid* represents the epistemic framework that unifies all forms of knowledge under one ontological reality: “*Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth*” (24:35). The recognition of this unity is not merely doctrinal but cognitive; it shapes how Muslims perceive the relationship between the knower, the known, and the ultimate source of all knowledge.

In the Qur'anic worldview, knowledge (*‘ilm*) is not fragmented into secular and sacred domains. All knowledge originates from the Divine (*‘ilm Allah*) and returns to Him, as stated in Qur'an 2:255: “*He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they encompass nothing of His knowledge except what He wills.*” This verse affirms both the transcendence of Divine knowledge and the contingent, derivative nature of human knowing. The epistemic act, therefore, is an act of participation in divine wisdom, not its replacement.

#### 3.4.2 The Onto-Epistemic Implications of Tawḥid

*Tawḥid* eliminates the dichotomy between matter and spirit, faith and reason, revelation and science. The universe, in Qur'anic language, is a “cosmic Qur'an” (*al-Qur'an al-takwini*), and the scripture is a “verbal universe” (*al-Qur'an al-tadwini*). Both are *ayat* (signs) pointing toward the same reality (Nasr, 2007). Thus, the Qur'an calls believers to study both texts-the book of nature and the book of revelation-through contemplation (*tafakkur*) and remembrance (*tadhakkur*).

*Tawḥid* also redefines objectivity. In modern science, objectivity implies detachment from value and meaning; in the Qur'anic sense, it implies detachment from ego but not from value. The knower must



purify intention (*niyyah*) and align it with truth (*ḥaqq*). This ethical objectivity preserves the integrity of inquiry while preventing knowledge from becoming an instrument of domination or destruction.

### 3.4.3 Unity of Knowledge and the Integration of Disciplines

The Qur'anic concept of unity implies that all disciplines-natural sciences, humanities, and spiritual sciences- are interrelated aspects of a single epistemic order. Al-Attas (1995) described this as “*the integration of knowledge under the principle of Tawḥid*,” where every branch of learning contributes to realising man's role as ‘*abd* (servant) and *khaliiah* (vicegerent). In this integrated vision, physics and metaphysics, logic and ethics, jurisprudence and mysticism are not competing but complementary ways of understanding creation.

Historically, this principle was embodied in classical institutions such as Bayt al-Ḥikmah in Baghdad and Al-Qarawiyyin in Fez, where theologians, astronomers, and jurists shared intellectual space under the unifying purpose of divine knowledge. The fragmentation of knowledge in modernity, into secular, sacred, and technical domains, represents not progress but epistemic disintegration (Al-Attas, 1980). Reclaiming *Tawḥid* as an epistemic paradigm restores coherence to intellectual life, aligning learning with moral and cosmic order.

### 3.4.4 Tawḥid and Contemporary Epistemological Crisis

Modern scientific paradigms, dominated by materialism and positivism, often exclude transcendence from their ontology. This has led to what Nasr (1993) calls “*the desacralization of knowledge*.” The Qur'anic epistemology of *Tawḥid* directly counters this by restoring sacred meaning to existence. Knowledge becomes not an act of control but of witnessing (*shuhud*), not possession but participation in divine wisdom.

This perspective transforms education and research. It implies that every act of knowing is simultaneously an act of worship (‘*ibadah*), every discovery a recognition of divine creativity. As Qur'an 96:1-5 reminds us, the first command “Read in the name of your Lord who created” establishes *Tawḥid* as the foundation of all learning. Knowledge divorced from divine remembrance (*dhikr*) is incomplete; it knows the how but not the why.

### 3.4.5 Ethical and Social Implications

The epistemology of *Tawḥid* also provides an ethical framework for social justice. If all knowledge stems from one divine source, then all human beings share equal potential for understanding truth. There can be no epistemic elitism, racial hierarchy, or domination in the Qur'anic order. Knowledge becomes a means of compassion and service, not power. Thus, *Tawḥid* unifies not only epistemology but also ethics, politics, and social vision.

In sum, *Tawḥid* transforms epistemology into a holistic act of worship, knowing becomes being-in-relationship with the Divine, and the knower becomes a mirror reflecting divine unity through the multiplicity of creation.



### 3.5 Toward a Unified Epistemology

The pursuit of a unified epistemology in Islam stems from the Qur'anic vision that truth (*ḥaqq*) is indivisible and that all authentic knowledge reflects aspects of Divine wisdom. Contemporary epistemological fragmentation between religion and science, reason and revelation, material and spiritual, contradicts this holistic Qur'anic worldview. A unified epistemology seeks to restore the integration of these domains under the overarching principle of *Tawḥid*. It calls for the reconciliation of empirical inquiry with spiritual insight, viewing both as complementary paths to truth. This synthesis does not negate scientific rationality but redefines its purpose within a theocentric paradigm, where knowledge serves not merely human advancement but the realisation of moral and metaphysical order. Through such integration, Islamic thought reclaims its comprehensive vision of knowledge as both discovery and devotion.

#### 3.5.1 Reclaiming the Qur'anic Method of Knowing

The call for a unified epistemology in the modern Islamic intellectual project is, in essence, a call to rediscover the Qur'anic method of knowing. Modern scholarship has often inherited Western epistemological categories-empiricism, rationalism, positivism-without recognising their metaphysical assumptions. The Qur'an, however, provides an indigenous paradigm grounded in divine revelation, ethical intention, and cognitive harmony. It views knowledge as both a spiritual and rational act, integrating *ʿaql* (reason), *qalb* (heart), and *wahy* (revelation) into a single cognitive structure (Al-Attas, 1995).

This unified epistemology recognises multiple levels of reality: the physical (*shahadah*), the unseen (*ghayb*), and the ultimate truth (*ḥaqq al-yaqin*). Each level corresponds to a mode of knowing: empirical, rational, and spiritual, valid within its domain but incomplete without the others. The Qur'an calls humanity to ascend these levels: from *ʿilm al-yaqin* (knowledge by certainty) to *ʿayn al-yaqin* (vision of certainty) to *ḥaqq al-yaqin* (truth of certainty) (Q. 102:5-7). A unified epistemology thus means not only integration of disciplines but progression of consciousness.

#### 3.5.2 Integration of Revelation, Reason, and Experience

In this integrated model, revelation provides ontological grounding, reason ensures coherence, and experience (both empirical and spiritual) supplies verification. Each supports and corrects the others. Revelation without reason risks literalism; reason without revelation risks arrogance; experience without both risks illusion. The Qur'an balances these by uniting *naql* (transmission), *ʿaql* (intellect), and *tajriba* (experience) under divine purpose.

This tripartite model aligns with classical Islamic thought, from the rational illumination of Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina to the mystical empiricism of Al-Ghazali and Ibn ʿArabi. It also anticipates modern demands for interdisciplinarity: the Qur'an's epistemology is inherently transdisciplinary, merging theology, ethics, and science into a unified pursuit of truth.

These arguments anticipating a unified epistemology find their fullest articulation later in Part IV, where *Tawḥid* is developed as the central epistemic paradigm that integrates revelation, reason, and experience.

### 3.5.3 Challenges and Prospects in Contemporary Thought

In the contemporary Muslim world, epistemic dualism between religious and secular knowledge remains a major obstacle. Modern education often privileges scientific empiricism while marginalising moral and metaphysical inquiry. The Qur'anic model offers a corrective: it situates empirical investigation within a sacred ontology. This approach does not reject scientific methods but reorients them toward metaphysical meaning and ethical responsibility (Chittick, 2007; Nasr, 2006).

Future Qur'anic research must therefore cultivate scholars proficient in both *'ulum al-Din* (religious sciences) and *'ulum al-kawn* (cosmic sciences). Such scholars would embody the Qur'anic ideal of the *'alim rabbani* (divinely guided scholar, Q. 3:79)-one whose intellect and spirit operate in harmony. The revival of this holistic epistemology could bridge the gap between traditional madrasa scholarship and modern universities, reuniting faith and reason within one intellectual paradigm.

### 3.5.4 Knowledge as Worship and Transformation

The Qur'anic epistemology does not regard knowledge as neutral; it is transformative. The purpose of knowing is not accumulation but realisation (*tahqiq*). As Qur'an 35:28 declares: "*Only those of His servants who possess knowledge truly fear Allah.*" Knowledge thus culminates in humility, not pride. It transforms the knower ethically and spiritually, leading to what Al-Ghazali termed *'ilm al-mukashafah*, knowledge of unveiling.

This transformative aim distinguishes Qur'anic epistemology from secular models that isolate cognition from character. It implies that epistemology must be accompanied by *adab al-'ilm*-the ethics of knowledge, including sincerity, humility, and service. Only through such ethical integration can humanity reclaim the unity of knowing and being.

### 3.5.5 Toward a Global Paradigm of Sacred Science

Finally, a unified Qur'anic epistemology holds global relevance. In a world fragmented by relativism, technocracy, and ecological crisis, the Islamic concept of sacred knowledge offers an alternative: a vision of science that acknowledges the divine presence within creation. As Nasr (2007) argues, re-sacralizing knowledge is not an antiquarian project but a moral necessity for the survival of civilisation.

This epistemic framework can dialogue with other faith-based epistemologies-Christian, Hindu, or Buddhist shared concerns of ethics, meaning, and sustainability. The Qur'an's inclusive command to "*Come to a common word between you*" (Q. 3:64) thus extends to the global search for a spiritually grounded science.

A unified epistemology rooted in *Tawhīd* therefore offers not only intellectual coherence but civilizational renewal. It reestablishes the harmony between revelation and reason, science and spirituality, humanity and nature, guiding knowledge back to its sacred source and purpose.

Revelation and rationality in the Qur'an are two dimensions of one divine epistemic order. The Qur'an envisions knowledge as both a rational endeavour and a spiritual journey, rooted in the oneness of truth (*tawhīd*). Classical Islamic thought upheld this synthesis, fostering a civilisation that advanced both

science and spirituality. Today, reclaiming this Qur'anic balance offers a pathway for overcoming the intellectual fragmentation of modernity. By integrating revelation's guidance with reason's analytical power, the Qur'anic epistemology restores the unity of knowing and being as an enduring paradigm for ethical, holistic, and truth-centred research.

## PART II: THE QUR'ANIC RESEARCH PROCESS

Islamic epistemology, as articulated in the Qur'an (القرآن), integrates observation (*nazar* - نَظَر), reflection (*tafakkur* - تَفَكُّر), reason ('*aql* - عَقْل), and revelation (*wahy* - وَحْي) into a unified methodology for acquiring and transmitting knowledge. While Part I examined the metaphysical foundations of '*ilm* (عِلْم) and the Qur'anic conceptualisation of knowledge as a divine trust, Part II transitions into the operational domain of knowing - the Qur'anic research process (*manhaj al-baḥth al-Qur'ani* - مَنَهْجُ الْبَحْثِ الْقُرْآنِي). This process delineates how the human intellect engages with the world through observation (*nazar* - نَظَر), experiential travel (*sair fi al-ard* - سَيَرٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ), analytical contemplation (*tafakkur* - تَفَكُّر), deep reflection (*tadabbur* - تَدَبُّر), moral remembrance (*tadhakkur* - تَذَكُّر), validation through proof (*burhan* - بُرْهَان) and evidence (*bayyina* - بَيِّنَةٌ), synthesis into wisdom (*ḥikmah* - حِكْمَةٌ), application through faith and action ('*amal* - عَمَل, *iman* - إِيْمَان), transmission of truth (*da'wah* - دَعْوَةٌ, *Tabligh* - تَبْلِيغ), and finally, preservation of divine knowledge (*dhikr* - ذِكْر, *Kitab* - كِتَاب). Together, these interlinked stages form a complete epistemic cycle that unites empirical reality with divine guidance.

The Qur'an repeatedly commands believers to “see,” “travel,” “reflect,” “remember,” and “convey” the *ayat* (آيَات) - the signs dispersed throughout creation. These imperatives construct an investigative and communicative framework rooted in empirical observation, rational inquiry, moral responsibility, and spiritual consciousness. Unlike secular empiricism, which isolates perception from metaphysical meaning, the Qur'anic method envisions exploration as an act of worship ('*ibadah* - عِبَادَةٌ). Observation of nature, human society, and history becomes a mode of witnessing the *ḥaqq* (حَقّ) - the truth manifest in all layers of existence (Nasr, 2007; Al-Attas, 1980). Knowledge, therefore, is not pursued for material mastery or instrumental control but as a sacred act of recognising divine order and aligning the human intellect with the will of Allah (الله).

The Qur'anic research process advances through a dynamic continuum linking the senses, intellect, and spirit. Human perception begins with *nazar* (نَظَر) - careful observation and empirical attentiveness - which expands through *sair fi al-ard* (سَيَرٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ) - movement and exploration across the natural and social world. These experiences become the data of divine communication, requiring *tafakkur* (تَفَكُّر) - analytical contemplation, and *tadabbur* (تَدَبُّر) - deep reflection - to discern underlying meanings. *Tadhakkur* (تَذَكُّر) then internalises these insights morally, ensuring that knowledge does not remain theoretical but becomes transformative. Through *burhan* (بُرْهَان) and *bayyina* (بَيِّنَةٌ), knowledge is verified and purified of speculation, aligning human understanding with divine truth. Finally, *ḥikmah* (حِكْمَةٌ) synthesises these dimensions, representing the state where intellect, morality, and revelation converge into coherent understanding (Izutsu, 2002).

From this synthesis emerges the applied phase - '*amal* (عَمَل) and *iman* (إِيْمَان) - where knowledge manifests through ethical action and existential faith. The Qur'an consistently joins these two - “those who believe and do righteous deeds” (Q. 103:3) - to signify that knowing without doing remains incomplete. Yet, the

Qur'anic epistemic cycle does not end with application; it extends toward communication and preservation. Da'wah (دَعْوَة) and Tabligh (تَبْلِيغ) ensure that knowledge is shared and truth is conveyed to others with clarity, wisdom, and compassion (Q. 16:125). Through these, knowledge transcends individual cognition and becomes a collective moral enterprise.

Finally, dhikr (ذِكْر) and Kitab (كِتَاب) represent the last and most enduring movement in the Qur'anic epistemological cycle - the preservation of divine wisdom through remembrance and writing. In these acts, the Qur'an ensures both personal continuity (through remembrance in the heart) and historical continuity (through preservation in the text). Together, they safeguard revelation from distortion and oblivion, fulfilling the divine promise: *"Indeed, We have sent down the Reminder (dhikr), and surely We will preserve it"* (Q. 15:9).

## Chapter 4: Observation (Nazar, Sair): The Empirical Foundation of Qur'anic Inquiry

The Qur'an establishes *nazar* (observation) and *sair fi al-ard* (travel upon the earth) as the foundational acts of knowing. These commands are more than descriptive or poetic expressions; they form the cognitive and moral base of Islamic epistemology. Observation in the Qur'an is not limited to sensory engagement—it represents a moral responsibility to witness the signs (ayat) of the Creator manifested in the universe. Similarly, travel is not a mere act of movement but a method of encountering divine patterns within natural and historical realities. Together, *nazar* and *sair* mark the beginning of the Qur'anic research process, integrating empirical awareness with spiritual realisation. Through them, the Qur'an invites humanity to transform perception into recognition, observation into reflection, and experience into wisdom.

Observation and travel are the two pillars through which the Qur'an situates human knowledge within divine creation. The repeated exhortations, such as “*Do they not look at the camels, how they are created?*” (Q. 88:17) and “*Travel through the earth and see how He began creation*” (Q. 29:20), establish a theology of seeing and experiencing. The Qur'an, through these commands, constructs an epistemological discipline in which empirical engagement is both sacred and obligatory.

Unlike secular epistemologies that divide sense experience from metaphysical inquiry, the Qur'an binds them into a unified act of knowing. Observation in the Qur'anic framework involves both the outer eye (*baṣar*) and the inner heart (*Fu'ad*), the two instruments through which knowledge is verified and internalised (Q. 67:23; 22:46). Seeing, therefore, is not complete without inward reflection. The Qur'an describes those who “have eyes but do not see” (Q. 7:179) as spiritually blind, suggesting that perception devoid of insight remains epistemologically inert.

Travel (*sair*) extends this epistemic command beyond the local and immediate. It transforms the entire earth into a laboratory of divine signs. Through travel, one encounters diversity in creation, societies, and civilisations, leading to moral and intellectual realisation. The Qur'an consistently links travel with reflection upon past nations and natural orders (Q. 12:109; 30:9; 40:82). Thus, empirical exploration is both historical and ontological—it unveils the temporal traces of divine laws operating within creation.

This chapter develops a Qur'an-centred understanding of *nazar* and *sair* as empirical foundations of Islamic knowledge. It explores observation as a disciplined way of perceiving (*nazar*), travel as an experiential mode of engagement (*sair*), and their integration in a continuum that bridges the physical and the spiritual. Together, they illustrate how the Qur'an transforms the act of knowing into an act of *'ibadah* (worship), where seeking knowledge is synonymous with recognising the signs of Allah in the cosmos and within oneself (Q. 51:20-21).

### 4.1 Nazar: Seeing as Knowing

The Qur'anic term *Nazar* (نظر) embodies more than physical vision; it is the act of thoughtful observation that transforms perception into knowledge. Rooted in the triliteral form *n-z-r*, it conveys seeing, examining, and contemplating with intention and purpose. Within the Qur'an, *Nazar* becomes a primary

epistemic command-an invitation to engage the natural and moral order as signs (*ayat*) of divine wisdom. The act of looking is not passive; it is an instrument of understanding that connects the sensory with the intellectual. Observation (*Nazar*) thus serves as a bridge between empirical reality and spiritual cognition, shaping the very foundation of Qur'anic inquiry.

#### 4.1.1 The Linguistic and Conceptual Field of Nazar

Linguistically, *Nazar* signifies “to look attentively,” “to reflect,” or “to deliberate upon.” The Qur'an uses the term and its derivatives across contexts of natural phenomena, human conduct, and divine revelation. The command “*Afala yanẓuruna ila al-ibili kayfa khuliqat*” (*Do they not look at the camels, how they were created?* Q. 88:17) exemplifies the directive to engage one's senses as part of spiritual cognition. Similarly, *Nazar* appears in moral reflection: “*Afala yanẓuruna ila al-malikut as-samawati wa al-arḍ*” (*Do they not look at the dominion of the heavens and the earth?* Q. 7:185).

In both cases, the Qur'an redefines vision as an act of reason. *Nazar* implies discernment-seeing *through* phenomena rather than merely *at* them. It thus integrates sensory perception (*ḥiss*) and rational analysis (*ʿaql*), creating an epistemic unity between observation and inference (Rahman, 1988).

#### 4.1.2 Nazar as Epistemic Engagement

Observation in the Qur'an is never detached from purpose. The Qur'an transforms the empirical act of seeing into an intellectual and moral activity. When humans are urged to “*look at what is in the heavens and the earth*” (Q. 10:101), the command goes beyond curiosity-it calls for recognising the signs of divine order within empirical existence. *Nazar* becomes a moral obligation to perceive creation as a manifestation of divine will.

This epistemological stance opposes both blind empiricism and blind faith. Unlike Greek empiricism, which isolates sense-data from transcendence, the Qur'an's concept of *Nazar* integrates observation within the moral domain of *Tawḥid*-the unity of truth (Nasr, 1996). Empirical data thus gain value only when interpreted through divine meaning. Observation, for the Qur'an, is a sacred act: a form of worship through cognition.

#### 4.1.3 Nazar and the Cognitive Ethic

The Qur'an presents *Nazar* as a moral discipline. The act of seeing demands responsibility; the observer is accountable for what they ignore or misread. When the Qur'an laments, “*They have eyes but do not see with them*” (Q. 7:179), it identifies epistemic negligence as a spiritual ailment. True observation requires openness of the heart (*qalb*) as much as acuity of the eyes.

The Qur'anic epistemology of *Nazar* thus entails a triadic harmony among the senses, the intellect, and the heart. This framework replaces the Cartesian dualism between subject and object with an integrated consciousness of being. Observation is not an end in itself; it is a means of *ma'rifah* (recognition of truth). The Qur'an, therefore, elevates *Nazar* to a sacred cognitive duty, where empirical observation becomes a path to moral insight and ontological awareness (Izutsu, 2002).



#### 4.1.4 Nazar and Natural Phenomena

The Qur'an repeatedly directs human attention to natural processes as empirical evidence of divine wisdom: the alternation of night and day (Q. 3:190), the formation of clouds (Q. 24:43), and the diversity of life (Q. 35:27-28). Each phenomenon becomes an *ayah*-a sign requiring interpretive vision. The natural world is an open text, and *Nazar* functions as the method of its exegesis.

By urging observation, the Qur'an introduces a proto-scientific ethos grounded in ethical monotheism. The believer's inquiry is not utilitarian but reverential. Science, when guided by *Nazar*, becomes an extension of revelation-empirical exploration sanctified by divine purpose (Sardar, 1989). Thus, *Nazar* represents the Qur'anic model of scientific inquiry, where seeing is inseparable from believing.

#### 4.1.5 Nazar and Self-Observation

The Qur'an extends observation inward: "*And in yourselves, do you not then see?*" (Q. 51:21). Here, *Nazar* transforms from external perception to introspection. Self-observation becomes an epistemic act; the human being is both the observer and the observed. This reflexivity unites cosmological and psychological understanding, leading to a holistic epistemology.

The Qur'an, therefore, envisions *Nazar* as an ontological dialogue between the self, the cosmos, and the Creator. By integrating outer and inner vision, the human mind becomes a microcosm of divine signs. This recursive model of knowing-seeing the world and seeing oneself seeing-constitutes the Qur'anic definition of consciousness (al-Attas, 1980).

In Qur'anic epistemology, *Nazar* represents the synthesis of observation, reflection, and recognition. It transforms empirical inquiry into spiritual awareness. To "see" in the Qur'an is to *understand with reverence*, engage creation as a living text of divine meaning. Hence, *Nazar* establishes the empirical foundation of Qur'anic inquiry: observation as a sacred, cognitive, and moral act that unites perception and faith.

### 4.2 Sair: Travel as Epistemic Engagement

The Qur'anic concept of *Sair* (سير)-derived from the root *s-y-r*, "to move" or "to travel"-represents dynamic observation through engagement with the world. Unlike passive seeing, *Sair* involves motion, experience, and transformation. It is the epistemology of movement: learning through journeying. The Qur'an repeatedly commands, "*Qul siru fī al-ard fa-unẓuru kayfa kana 'aqibat al-mukadhibin*" (*Travel through the earth and see what the end of those who denied the truth was*; Q. 6:11). Here, travel becomes an instrument of empirical and moral discovery investigative pilgrimage across time, geography, and human history.

#### 4.2.1 The Semantics of Sair

The root *s-y-r* occurs in multiple Qur'anic contexts, denoting physical motion (*yasiruna fī al-ard*), *the movement of celestial bodies* (Q. 21:33), and the moral journeys of nations. *Sair* encapsulates both physical travel and existential progression. It signifies movement toward comprehension, where the earth itself



becomes a didactic field of signs (*ayat*). As Izutsu (2002) notes, *Sair* in the Qur'an transforms geography into pedagogy: every landscape carries epistemic weight.

#### 4.2.2 Travel as Inquiry

Travel in the Qur'an is an empirical act: a command to witness civilisations, ruins, and natural systems as repositories of moral and historical knowledge. When the Qur'an asks humankind to "travel through the land and see what was the end of those before you" (Q. 30:42), it establishes historical observation as a means of wisdom. Empirical travel becomes historiography, a method of moral learning through the remains of the past.

The epistemological significance of *Sair* lies in its active engagement. Unlike theoretical reflection (*Tafakkur*), *Sair* demands encounter. The traveller is a researcher-experiencing phenomena firsthand, gathering data through the senses, and interpreting signs through intellect. This dynamic methodology foreshadows modern field research but remains grounded in spiritual accountability. Knowledge is not collected for domination but for ethical transformation (Sardar, 2011).

#### 4.2.3 Sair and the Unity of Space and Time

The Qur'an employs *Sair* to unify spatial and temporal consciousness. To travel is to move not only through geography but also through history. The ruins of vanished civilisations-ʿAd, Thamūd, and Pharaoh-become material testimonies to moral law (Q. 40:82-85). The traveller, by witnessing their traces, partakes in a temporal dialogue between past and present.

This historical consciousness is the Qur'an's empirical pedagogy: the earth is a living archive, and *Sair* is its method of reading. By integrating travel with remembrance (*dhikr*), the Qur'an sacralizes history as moral epistemology (Rahman, 1988).

#### 4.2.4 Travel and Environmental Observation

Beyond human history, *Sair* extends to natural ecosystems. The Qur'an invites humanity to explore mountains, seas, and skies-not merely to admire them, but to discern divine harmony. "*And He made you traverse the earth and sail the seas so that you may seek of His bounty*" (Q. 17:66). Travel thus embodies ecological consciousness; it situates human beings within a living order. Observation through *Sair* encourages environmental responsibility: awareness of interdependence between creation and Creator (Nasr, 1996).

#### 4.2.5 Sair and Moral Transformation

The Qur'an associates travel with humility and self-renewal. Through *Sair*, humans confront the impermanence of power and the continuity of divine justice. The traveller's awareness matures through exposure to diversity, decay, and renewal. Travel becomes a moral mirror: movement through the world reflects the inner journey toward truth.

The ethical function of *Sair* contrasts sharply with materialistic exploration. Whereas modern travel often seeks exploitation or pleasure, the Qur'an defines travel as moral education-knowledge through encounter and empathy. The traveller who "sees" rightly (*fa-unẓuru*) becomes a witness to divine order, not a consumer of novelty (al-Attas, 1980).

#### 4.2.6 *Sair* as Integration of Empiricism and Revelation

In the Qur'anic epistemic model, *Sair* mediates between empirical observation (*Naẓar*) and moral reflection (*Tadhakkur*). It transforms the act of movement into a cognitive process. The traveller's senses gather empirical data, the intellect interprets them, and the spirit internalises their meaning. Thus, *Sair* integrates experience and revelation, embodying the unity of truth across creation.

This synthesis eliminates the dichotomy between "scientific" and "spiritual" knowledge. The Qur'an defines true science as observation conducted in remembrance of God, and true spirituality as knowledge enacted in the world (Rahman, 1988; Sardar, 1989).

In Qur'anic epistemology, *Sair* transcends geography; it is an ontological motion toward awareness. Through travel, humanity encounters both the outer world and its inner self. The Qur'an transforms the earth into a classroom of divine instruction and travel into a methodology of discovery. *Sair*, when guided by remembrance, becomes the movement of consciousness toward truth-a sacred journey uniting empirical knowledge and spiritual awakening.

### 4.3 The Empirical-Spiritual Continuum

In Qur'anic epistemology, the act of knowing is not confined to the empirical realm, nor is it detached into mystical abstraction. The Qur'an establishes a continuum between empirical observation (*Naẓar*) and spiritual consciousness (*Tadhakkur*). This integration forms the epistemic unity of Islam: sensory experience, rational reflection, and spiritual realisation are not competing modes but complementary dimensions of a single process of knowing. The empirical-spiritual continuum thus represents the Qur'an's holistic vision of cognition, in which every act of perception is both scientific and sacred.

#### 4.3.1 The Qur'anic Epistemic Unity

The Qur'an explicitly situates knowledge (*'ilm*) within a unified ontology governed by *Tawḥid*-the oneness of divine truth. In this worldview, all knowledge, whether derived from sense perception or revelation, originates in and returns to God. "He taught man what he knew not" (Q. 96:5) establishes divine teaching as the source of cognition, while "We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the Truth" (Q. 41:53) emphasises experiential verification. These verses integrate outer and inner domains of inquiry: *ayat fī al-afaq* (signs in the horizons) and *ayat fī anfusihim* (signs within themselves).

Thus, the Qur'an abolishes the modern dichotomy between empiricism and spirituality. Knowledge begins with observation but is fulfilled in recognition (*ma'rifah*). The physical and metaphysical are not opposites but coordinates of divine reality.

### 4.3.2 Empirical Observation as Spiritual Praxis

Empirical study in the Qur'an is not secular but sacred. The command to *"look at what is in the heavens and the earth"* (Q. 10:101) is inseparable from the moral call to gratitude and humility. The act of observation carries within it the possibility of spiritual transformation. When one contemplates the cycles of creation, the alternation of night and day, or the balance of ecosystems, one encounters the divine pattern underlying existence.

Observation (*Nazar*) thus becomes a spiritual praxis—an act of remembrance (*dhikr*). Seeing rightly is remembering God. The Qur'an's empirical ethic transforms ordinary perception into worship, for *"Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day are signs for those who possess understanding—those who remember God standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and reflect upon the creation of the heavens and the earth"* (Q. 3:190-191).

This verse demonstrates the continuum between empirical reflection (*yatafakkaruna*) and spiritual remembrance (*yadhkuruna*). Observation is not isolated from consciousness of the divine; rather, it becomes the path through which spiritual awareness is renewed.

### 4.3.3 From Observation to Realisation

The Qur'an constructs knowledge as a movement from sensory engagement to spiritual realisation. This transition occurs through reflection (*tafakkur*), deep insight (*tadabbur*), and remembrance (*tadhakkur*). The empirical process provides the data of experience, while the spiritual faculty interprets them through the lens of meaning. *"Do they not look into the dominion of the heavens and the earth?"* (Q. 7:185) invites empirical analysis, but the purpose of this analysis is to awaken the heart (*qalb*).

In Qur'anic language, the heart is not a metaphor for emotion but a cognitive organ capable of comprehension and moral judgment. *"Have they not travelled through the land so that their hearts may reason?"* (Q. 22:46). Here, the physical act of travel (empirical engagement) leads to inner perception (spiritual realisation). The Qur'an, therefore, treats empiricism as a spiritual discipline that refines the moral and cognitive capacities of the observer (Izutsu, 2002).

### 4.3.4 The Unity of Signs: Nature, History, and Self

The Qur'an describes three domains of signs (*ayat*): the natural world, human history, and the self. Each of these invites empirical engagement but culminates in spiritual insight. The alternation of seasons (Q. 45:5), the rise and fall of nations (Q. 30:9), and the mysteries of human consciousness (Q. 51:21) together constitute a single revelatory continuum. The believer who observes nature scientifically, history ethically, and the self introspectively participates in a unified epistemic act.

This triadic system undermines the Western compartmentalisation of sciences and humanities. For the Qur'an, knowledge of the stars and knowledge of justice belong to the same order of truth because both disclose aspects of divine unity. The empirical-spiritual continuum thus redefines the purpose of knowledge: not to control, but to comprehend; not to dominate, but to align with divine order (Nasr, 1996).

### 4.3.5 Spirituality as the Ethical Limit of Empiricism

The Qur'an grants legitimacy to empirical inquiry but binds it to moral purpose. Knowledge without spiritual consciousness becomes destructive. "*They know the outward of the life of this world, but they are heedless of the Hereafter*" (Q. 30:7). This verse delineates the pathology of secular empiricism-observation devoid of transcendental orientation. True science in the Qur'anic sense must therefore operate within ethical and teleological bounds, recognising that every fact participates in a moral cosmos (al-Attas, 1980).

The spiritual dimension provides the *niyyah* (intent) that purifies empirical inquiry from arrogance. The act of studying the world becomes an act of returning it to meaning. Thus, spirituality does not negate empiricism; it perfects it.

The Qur'an envisions knowledge as a single continuum connecting sensory experience with divine consciousness. Observation and spirituality are two phases of one process: seeing creation and remembering the Creator. This continuum forms the epistemological foundation of Islamic inquiry-a vision where the laboratory and the place of prayer are extensions of the same quest for truth.

## 4.4 Observation in the Prophetic Paradigm

The Prophets in the Qur'an are portrayed not as passive recipients of revelation but as *active observers* of the world and society. Their observation is both empirical and moral-a disciplined engagement with reality guided by divine insight. Without appealing to external traditions, the Qur'an itself portrays prophetic cognition as a model of integrated seeing (*Nazar*), reflection (*Tafakkur*), and remembrance (*Tadhakkur*). This section explores the Qur'anic depiction of prophetic observation as the highest form of empirical-spiritual engagement.

### 4.4.1 Prophetic Observation as Cognitive Praxis

The Prophets' encounters in the Qur'an illustrate the epistemic unity of observation, reason, and revelation. Abraham's observation of the celestial bodies (Q. 6:75-79) exemplifies an empirical inquiry that leads to metaphysical realisation. He observes the stars, the moon, and the sun-not as idols to be worshipped, but as phenomena to be analysed. Through this process, Abraham transitions from empirical seeing to ontological certainty: "I have turned my face toward Him who created the heavens and the earth" (Q. 6:79).

This narrative encapsulates the prophetic method: observation interpreted through rational reflection, culminating in spiritual affirmation. Abraham's empirical reasoning, conducted within divine awareness, becomes a model for the epistemology of revelation.

### 4.4.2 Moses: Observation as Social Awareness

The Prophet Moses represents another dimension of observation, social and moral perception. The Qur'an describes his sensitivity to injustice and his ability to perceive the moral order beneath social phenomena. His encounter with Pharaoh's tyranny and the suffering of his people (Q. 28:3-14) displays observational

awareness extended into ethical action. Moses “sees” oppression not as abstract information but as a moral imperative.

Observation, in the prophetic paradigm, demands engagement. To witness wrongdoing without responding is epistemic blindness. The Prophet’s knowledge is inseparable from responsibility, for true perception requires transformation of self and society. Hence, the Qur’an aligns observation with justice, making moral responsiveness a condition of knowing (Rahman, 1988).

#### 4.4.3 ‘Isa and the Vision of Life

The Prophet ‘Isa (Jesus), in Qur’anic perspective, embodies perceptive insight into the spiritual dimension of existence. His acts-breathing life into clay, healing the blind, and restoring the dead to life by divine permission (Q. 3:49)-represent not supernatural spectacle but epistemic symbols: vision restored, perception renewed, consciousness revived. His “healing of the blind” is an emblem of removing epistemic blindness, transforming ignorance into insight.

Thus, prophetic observation is not limited to the external senses but includes the inner awakening of the heart. The Prophets demonstrate that spiritual awareness is the deepest form of seeing-perception that transcends materiality to discern the essence of truth (Izutsu, 2002).

#### 4.4.4 Observation and the Prophetic Method of Inquiry

The Qur’an presents the Prophets as inquirers who use the world as a laboratory of meaning. Their method integrates empirical data, rational analysis, and divine revelation. This triadic approach contrasts with secular empiricism by uniting knowledge with ethical teleology.

For instance, Solomon’s attention to the speech of birds (Q. 27:16) and Joseph’s interpretation of dreams (Q. 12:43-49) illustrate sensitivity to both natural and symbolic orders. Each Prophet reads creation as a network of signs. The prophetic method, therefore, exemplifies *semiotic empiricism*-the art of decoding reality through divine symbols.

#### 4.4.5 Observation as Revelation: The Prophetic Witness

The Qur’an characterises Prophets as *shuhada’*-witnesses to truth. Their witnessing arises from observation that reveals the moral and ontological order of existence. “*We made you a community of the middle path so that you may be witnesses over humanity, and the Messenger a witness over you*” (Q. 2:143). The prophetic model thus transfers to the community of believers, who must emulate this witnessing through observation aligned with justice and awareness.

To observe as the Prophet observes is to see with moral clarity-to recognise both the visible and the invisible dimensions of phenomena. Such witnessing transforms knowledge into accountability.

#### 4.4.6 The Prophetic Ethic of Perception

Prophetic observation is guided by humility. The Prophets never claim ownership of knowledge; they act as custodians of divine insight. This humility safeguards observation from arrogance. “*And they do not*

*encompass anything of His knowledge except what He wills*" (Q. 2:255). This verse encapsulates the epistemic posture of the Prophet: complete awareness of the limits of human knowledge within divine omniscience.

In this paradigm, the act of observing becomes a form of submission (*Islam*). Knowledge acquired through observation is a sacred trust, not personal possession. The Prophet's way of knowing thus establishes a moral template for all human inquiry-seeing with respect, interpreting with justice, and acting with responsibility (al-Attas, 1980).

#### 4.4.7 Observation and Revelation: No Dichotomy

The Prophets in the Qur'an do not experience a conflict between reason and revelation. Their observation is illuminated by divine guidance. Revelation (*wahy*) provides the interpretive framework that gives empirical data moral direction. When revelation commands observation, it sanctifies science; when it instructs reflection, it elevates philosophy. Thus, the prophetic paradigm abolishes the dichotomy between empiricism and spirituality.

Each Prophet becomes a model of integrated epistemology. Abraham symbolises empirical reasoning; Moses, moral perception; Jesus, spiritual vision; and Muhammad, though not analysed here through extra-Qur'anic sources, represents the synthesis of all three, for the Qur'an itself is the final articulation of this epistemic unity (Nasr, 1996).

The prophetic paradigm of observation presents a complete model of Qur'anic inquiry. Prophets observe with intellect, act with justice, and remember with humility. Observation becomes a form of revelation in action-a movement from perception to realisation. By emulating the prophetic way of seeing, humanity is invited to re-engage the world as a text of divine signs, integrating science, ethics, and spirituality into one continuous act of knowing.

#### 4.5 Toward an Empirical Ethic

The Qur'an presents observation (*nazar*) and travel (*sair*) not merely as acts of inquiry, but as moral and epistemological duties. The act of seeing is bound by ethical responsibility, and the act of knowing carries moral consequence. The Qur'anic methodology transforms empirical engagement into a process guided by divine consciousness (*taqwa*) and justice (*'adl*). Observation is not a neutral act; it is charged with purpose, value, and accountability. In the Qur'anic worldview, to observe is to witness the signs (*ayat*) of Allah within creation, and to interpret them in ways that promote harmony between human intellect and divine truth (Q. 41:53; 6:75). Thus, an *empirical ethic* emerges-one in which knowledge derived from sensory experience is directed toward moral growth, stewardship, and remembrance of divine unity.

##### 4.5.1 The Moral Dimension of Observation

Empirical investigation, according to the Qur'an, is not amoral or secularised; it is deeply moralised. The observer is accountable not only for what is seen but for the interpretation and application of that sight. Allah repeatedly calls humankind to *look* and *consider* the signs of the heavens and the earth (Q. 3:190-



191; 10:101). These verses link *nazar* (observation) to *dhikr* (remembrance) and *'aql* (reason), implying that observation devoid of moral orientation risks distortion.

For instance, Qur'an 30:8 warns: *"Do they not reflect within themselves? Allah created not the heavens and the earth and what is between them except in truth and for a specified term."* The Qur'an thus situates empirical observation within the context of truth (*haqq*) and temporality, suggesting that all observation must lead to recognition of divine purpose rather than mere accumulation of data. The ethical essence of observation is therefore to discern order, not to exploit it.

#### 4.5.2 Observation as Stewardship (Khilafah)

Human beings are entrusted as vicegerents (*khaliiah*) upon the earth (Q. 2:30). This stewardship transforms observation into a form of trusteeship. The empirical study of creation is, therefore, not an act of domination but of moral responsibility. Observation becomes a means to fulfil the covenant (*mithaq*) between humanity and the Creator, wherein knowledge must serve preservation rather than corruption (*fasad*). The Qur'an declares: *"Do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption"* (Q. 2:11; 7:56). Here, the prohibition implies that misuse of knowledge or empirical discovery violates the moral contract embedded in observation.

The Qur'an's emphasis on balance (*mizan*) reinforces this ethic. Allah commands, *"And the heaven He raised and imposed the balance, that you not transgress within the balance"* (Q. 55:7-8). Empirical pursuit, therefore, must respect ecological and moral equilibrium. Observation that ignores the balance becomes unethical, regardless of its scientific success. The *mizan* principle provides the metaphysical foundation of what may be called a Qur'anic environmental ethic, rooted in seeing creation as a trust, not a resource to be exhausted.

#### 4.5.3 Knowledge and Accountability

The Qur'an links knowledge (*'ilm*) with accountability (*hisab*). Human beings will be questioned not only for their actions but also for their epistemic engagements-how they used the faculties of sight, hearing, and intellect: *"Indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart-about all those [one] will be questioned"* (Q. 17:36). This verse establishes an ethical framework for empirical activity. The act of observation must lead to moral awareness, not arrogance. The misuse of sensory faculties for deceit, materialism, or oppression is condemned (Q. 45:23; 7:179).

This accountability extends to collective knowledge production. Societies that suppress inquiry or distort truth are also culpable. The Qur'an denounces communities that deny signs after witnessing them (Q. 6:157; 10:39). Thus, epistemic ethics operates both individually and socially, emphasising transparency, honesty, and humility in the pursuit of knowledge. In this light, Qur'anic epistemology prefigures modern concerns about ethical science and moral responsibility in discovery.

#### 4.5.4 Observation as Worship

The Qur'an transforms empirical acts into worship (*'ibadah*) when guided by remembrance of Allah. Observation becomes a means of drawing nearer to the Divine through recognition of His signs. Qur'an 51:20-21 declares: "*And on the earth are signs for those of sure faith, and in yourselves-do you not see?*" Here, the empirical and the spiritual intersect; observation is not secular seeing but a contemplative act that integrates outer perception and inner reflection. Such a vision elevates science from mere curiosity to devotion. The Qur'an invites humankind to a perpetual form of worship through discovery.

Thus, empirical ethics in the Qur'an demands humility before the Creator. The Qur'an condemns those who see the signs but remain blind to their meaning (Q. 7:179). Knowledge must yield gratitude, not arrogance. The ultimate test of empirical ethics lies in whether observation leads to remembrance (*dhikr*), moral balance (*mizan*), and justice (*'adl*).

#### 4.5.5 The Integration of Rationality and Spirituality

The Qur'an's call to observe integrates two dimensions of knowing: empirical (*hissi*) and spiritual (*ruhani*). The Qur'an never separates these modes but unites them under the principle of *tawhid*-the unity of truth. Rational inquiry without spiritual anchoring risks fragmentation, while spirituality without empirical grounding risks abstraction. The Qur'anic model thus advocates a *harmonised empiricism* where observation serves both intellectual growth and moral reform.

This synthesis is vividly represented in verses such as Qur'an 6:99, where the process of rainfall, vegetation, and fruit-bearing is described not only as natural phenomena but as *ayat*-signs demanding reflection. The empirical process is simultaneously theological. Thus, every act of seeing becomes a bridge between material evidence and divine meaning.

#### 4.5.6 The Formation of an Empirical Ethic

From these principles, one can construct a Qur'an-based empirical ethic rooted in five interrelated values:

- Taqwa (God-consciousness) - Observation must be undertaken with awareness of divine presence and purpose.
- Adl (Justice) - Knowledge should aim at equity and should not contribute to corruption or exploitation.
- Amanah (Trust) - The natural world is a trust from Allah; empirical engagement must preserve its integrity.
- Shukr (Gratitude) - Every discovery is a reminder of divine mercy, leading to humility and thankfulness.
- Tawhid (Unity) - All knowledge, whether empirical or metaphysical, originates from and points back to the One Creator.

Thus, an empirical ethic in the Qur'anic sense transcends utilitarian science. It situates the human observer within the moral order of creation, transforming every act of discovery into an act of moral witness.



Observation in the Qur'anic framework is far more than sensory engagement-it is a moral, spiritual, and epistemological journey. Through the twin concepts of *nazar* and *sair*, the Qur'an establishes an empirical foundation grounded in responsibility and transcendence. The Qur'an invites humanity to witness the signs of creation as evidence of divine wisdom and unity, encouraging a reflective empiricism that balances discovery with humility and knowledge with worship.

The Qur'anic model rejects the dichotomy between empirical science and faith. It envisions an integrated epistemology in which observation, contemplation, and remembrance form a continuum of knowing. The ethical parameters of this process ensure that knowledge serves divine order rather than human arrogance. The empirical act becomes sacred when guided by the principles of *taqwa*, *mizan*, and *'adl*. Through this lens, science and spirituality are not competitors but collaborators in unveiling truth.

In conclusion, the Qur'an proposes an *empirical ethic* that unites the faculties of perception and intellect with moral consciousness. Observation is an act of stewardship, inquiry is an act of devotion, and knowledge is a trust. In this holistic vision, humanity's engagement with the world becomes a path to both intellectual illumination and spiritual fulfilment. The Qur'an thus redefines empiricism as a sacred pursuit-one that unveils the divine in the material, the infinite in the finite, and the moral in the observable.

## Chapter 5: Reflection and Contemplation (Tafakkur, Tadabbur, Tadhakkur): Deep Thinking and Theorisation

The Qur'an not only commands observation (*naẓar*) and travel (*sair*), but equally demands reflection (*tafakkur*), deep deliberation (*tadabbur*), and moral remembrance (*tadhakkur*). These cognitive acts represent the inner dimension of knowing, transforming empirical data into wisdom (*hikmah*). Through them, the Qur'an develops a complete epistemology, where knowledge arises from the harmony between external inquiry and internal contemplation. Reflection in the Qur'anic framework is not speculative abstraction but an ethically guided, spiritually infused process of reasoning. It integrates rational analysis, moral awareness, and remembrance of divine purpose. This chapter explores how the Qur'an conceptualises reflective thinking as both an intellectual discipline and an act of worship, outlining its structure, objectives, and implications for theorisation and ethical reasoning.

### 5.1 The Reflective Mandate in the Qur'an

The Qur'an consistently links true understanding with reflection. It frequently questions, “*Do they not think?*” (*afala yatafakkarun*) and “*Will they not reflect?*” (*afala yatadabbarun*) (Q. 59:21; 47:24; 7:176). These rhetorical inquiries establish reflection as a moral and cognitive imperative. Reflection is not optional curiosity but the very means through which revelation becomes realised in consciousness. The Qur'an's call to think, reason, and remember emerges as part of divine pedagogy, guiding the human intellect toward discernment of truth, causality, and value.

Reflection in the Qur'anic worldview is multidimensional. It begins with *tafakkur*, the analytical process of contemplating phenomena and principles; extends to *tadabbur*, a deeper pursuit of wisdom within revelation; and culminates in *tadhakkur*, moral remembrance and internalisation of truth. Together, these three processes form an integrated reflective triad that moves from cognition to transformation.

The Qur'an thus establishes reflection as both a method and a moral act. Verses such as 3:190-191 and 39:42 emphasise the connection between thinking and worship. Those “who remember Allah standing, sitting, and lying down, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth” exemplify the Qur'anic ideal of integrated reflection, where the intellectual and spiritual faculties converge.

In modern epistemological terms, this structure provides a model of critical thinking grounded not in scepticism, but in divine coherence (*tawhīd*). It seeks meaning rather than doubt, coherence rather than fragmentation. The Qur'an does not suppress reason; it refines it. Reflection becomes a tool of liberation from ignorance and illusion, empowering humanity to uncover moral order and divine law in both nature and revelation.

### 5.2 Tafakkur: Analytical Contemplation

The Qur'anic concept of *tafakkur* (تَفَكُّر) embodies the analytical and rational dimension of contemplation. It calls upon human beings to examine, deduce, and reason about the signs (*ayat*) of creation in both the natural and moral orders. The term *tafakkur* is not mere meditation but an active and disciplined

intellectual exercise that connects empirical observation with rational deduction. It reflects the Qur'an's invitation to transcend passive acceptance and to engage in critical thought that reveals divine wisdom through cause and consequence. In this sense, *tafakkur* constitutes the epistemic bridge between perception (*naẓar*) and moral realisation (*tadhakkur*), situating human cognition as a sacred act of discovery and understanding grounded in divine signs (Q. 3:190-191; 45:13).

### 5.2.1 The Concept of Tafakkur in Qur'anic Epistemology

The Qur'an establishes *tafakkur*-analytical contemplation-as a central cognitive and spiritual function through which human beings engage the world and comprehend divine realities. The term *tafakkur* derives from the trilateral root *f-k-r*, which denotes active, systematic thinking, reflection, and reasoning (Ibn Manzur, 2003). In the Qur'an, *tafakkur* is not merely abstract rumination; it signifies a disciplined mental process by which observable phenomena, natural laws, and moral truths are interpreted within the ontological framework of divine unity (*tawḥīd*).

Allah repeatedly urges believers to “think” (*yatafakkarun*) about creation: “*Do they not reflect upon themselves? Allah created the heavens and the earth and everything between them in truth and for an appointed term*” (Q. 30:8). Here, reflection upon the self and the cosmos becomes a methodological act of epistemic synthesis, linking empirical awareness with metaphysical insight. Thus, *tafakkur* bridges the sensory and the intelligible realms, grounding knowledge in both observation and revelation.

In Qur'anic epistemology, *tafakkur* stands as a moral as well as intellectual obligation. The failure to engage in it constitutes a spiritual deficiency, as in “*They have hearts with which they do not understand, eyes with which they do not see, and ears with which they do not hear*” (Q. 7:179). Knowledge without reflection becomes inert, devoid of ethical direction. Conversely, *tafakkur* transforms awareness into wisdom (*ḥikmah*), aligning cognition with divine purpose (Nasr, 2007).

### 5.2.2 Tafakkur as a Process of Analytical Reasoning

Tafakkur in the Qur'anic sense is an *analytical process* rather than a static state. It involves breaking down phenomena into constituent meanings, evaluating them through rational inquiry, and integrating them into a coherent worldview guided by revelation. This analytical orientation is evident in verses that juxtapose observation with inference: “*Do they not look at the camels-how they are created? And at the sky-how it is raised?*” (Q. 88:17-18). The act of “looking” (*yanẓurun*) leads to contemplation (*tafakkur*), and contemplation leads to the recognition of divine order.

The Qur'an calls upon humans to think across multiple layers of existence: the natural, historical, psychological, and moral. In *tafakkur*, the intellect (*‘aql*) is not autonomous but responsive to signs (*ayat*). Each sign in nature or scripture points beyond itself toward divine wisdom. This multi-layered reasoning framework makes *tafakkur* the foundation for Qur'anic hermeneutics, where reflection on the external world mirrors reflection upon the Qur'an itself (Rahman, 1980).

Analytically, *tafakkur* includes comparison (*muqaranah*), differentiation (*tafṣīl*), and synthesis (*ta'līf*). For instance, in Qur'an 13:3, believers are urged to reflect upon contrasting states-night and day, land and sea-

as part of understanding divine balance. Such structured contemplation cultivates epistemic discipline; it encourages the believer to form judgments through evidence, not conjecture (*ẓann*), as explicitly prohibited in Qur'an 10:36.

### 5.2.3 Tafakkur and the Integration of Knowledge

The Qur'an views knowledge as integrated, not fragmented. *Tafakkur* unites empirical, rational, and spiritual domains into a single epistemic field. This holistic perspective resonates with the Qur'anic description of the human being as both *'abd* (servant) and *khaliiah* (vicegerent), a being endowed with cognitive faculties meant for reflection and stewardship (Q. 2:30-34).

Reflection upon creation thus becomes a divine trust (*amanah*). Through *tafakkur*, human beings discern the ethical implications of natural order-sustainability, justice, and compassion. In this sense, *tafakkur* forms the intellectual basis of Islamic environmental and social ethics (Sardar, 2012). The Qur'an connects reflection to action: “*Those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and lying down, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth, saying, ‘Our Lord, You did not create this in vain’*” (Q. 3:191). Reflection culminates in moral awareness-recognising that knowledge entails responsibility.

### 5.2.4 Tafakkur and the Cognitive-Spiritual Transformation

The practice of *tafakkur* transforms the knower. The Qur'an implies that true reflection leads to *tadhakkur* (remembrance), an inner awakening that reorients thought toward transcendence. The contemplative process shifts from external observation to internal purification. This movement from intellect to heart (*qalb*) represents the epistemic ascent from knowing about creation to knowing the Creator (Q. 51:20-21).

Therefore, *tafakkur* is not only analytical but also existential-it redefines human consciousness in light of divine signs. As Al-Attas (1995) observes, Qur'anic thought aims not at speculative abstraction but at moral-intellectual realisation: a harmony between mind, soul, and cosmos. In this unity, contemplation becomes worship (*ibadah*), and cognition becomes servitude (*'ubudiyyah*).

In summary, *tafakkur* in the Qur'an is an epistemological discipline uniting intellect, observation, and moral consciousness. It transforms human reasoning into a sacred inquiry, where thought becomes a medium for recognising divine purpose. Analytical contemplation, as commanded by the Qur'an, is not detached speculation but an ethical act that converts knowledge into gratitude and responsibility. By integrating *tafakkur* into the epistemic structure of *'ilm*, the Qur'an establishes a model of reasoning that harmonises the seen and the unseen, the rational and the revealed (Q. 3:191; 38:29).

## 5.3 Tadabbur: Deep Reflection and Discernment

*Tadabbur* (تدبر) signifies deep, consequential reflection, thinking beyond the surface to discern patterns, purposes, and moral implications. While *tafakkur* engages the analytical faculty, *tadabbur* moves toward holistic synthesis and discernment. The Qur'an repeatedly calls believers to *tadabbur* its verses (Q. 47:24; 4:82; 23:68), implying that revelation itself is a living text that demands intellectual and moral engagement. The essence of *tadabbur* lies in tracing the consequences (*dubr*, “end”) of things, examining how causes unfold toward divine purpose. It transforms intellectual understanding into moral discernment,

linking divine speech (*kalam Allah*) with the order of existence. Hence, *tadabbur* forms the Qur'anic framework for theorisation: seeing connections between revelation, nature, and ethical responsibility.

### 5.3.1 The Semantic and Epistemic Roots of Tadabbur

While *tafakkur* emphasises analytical reasoning, *tadabbur* emphasises deep reflection, pondering outcomes, consequences, and inner meanings. Derived from the root *d-b-r* ("to consider what lies behind or after"), *tadabbur* denotes reflective foresight, a mode of thinking that contemplates both immediate realities and their ultimate ends.

The Qur'an explicitly commands *tadabbur* in relation to its own verses: "*Do they not reflect deeply (yatadabbaruna) on the Qur'an, or are there locks upon their hearts?*" (Q. 47:24). The verse underscores that deep reflection is necessary for spiritual comprehension; without it, revelation remains sealed to the unreflective mind. Thus, *tadabbur* functions as both an interpretive and moral act, uncovering layers of meaning inaccessible to superficial reading (Izutsu, 2002).

### 5.3.2 Tadabbur as a Method of Deep Understanding

In Qur'anic epistemology, *tadabbur* is a systematic process of exploring the implications of divine signs, both textual and cosmic. It is distinguished from *tafakkur* by its depth and orientation toward end-results (*'aqibah*). Where *tafakkur* analyses, *tadabbur* synthesises; it penetrates beneath phenomena to perceive divine intentionality.

For example, in "*Do they not reflect on the Qur'an? If it were from other than Allah, they would have found in it much contradiction*" (Q. 4:82), *tadabbur* is framed as a verification process-evaluating coherence, consistency, and divine authorship through reason. It thus becomes a critical methodology for Qur'anic hermeneutics and theological discernment (Lawwamahi, 2008).

*Tadabbur* also extends beyond scripture to history and destiny. The Qur'an instructs: "*Travel through the land and see what the end of those who denied the truth*" (Q. 30:9). This historical contemplation fuses empirical observation with metaphysical foresight. It teaches that reflection on past civilisations is a means to moral renewal and socio-historical understanding (Rahman, 1980).

### 5.3.3 Tadabbur and the Ethics of Understanding

*Tadabbur* is ethically charged. It requires intellectual humility, sincerity, and freedom from prejudice. The Qur'an repeatedly warns against *qalb al-marid* (diseased hearts) that distort reflection. Only those whose hearts remain open to divine light can achieve genuine discernment. Thus, epistemic virtue-purity of intention-is a prerequisite for *tadabbur* (Q. 26:89).

Deep reflection transforms knowledge into guidance (*huda*). It enables humans to perceive the moral order embedded in revelation and creation. In this sense, *tadabbur* aligns thought with divine command, forming the cognitive foundation of moral action (Nasr, 2007). Reflection divorced from ethics degenerates into arrogance, as exemplified by Iblis's failure to reflect rightly on divine wisdom (Q. 7:12).

### 5.3.4 Tadabbur and Theorisation in the Qur'anic Paradigm

Beyond personal reflection, *tadabbur* generates theoretical insight. It allows humanity to derive principles-scientific, ethical, and civilizational -from divine order. The Qur'an's invitation to *tadabbur* implies an open-ended intellectual project: an ongoing search for coherence between the seen and the unseen.

Through *tadabbur*, knowledge expands from empirical recognition to metaphysical understanding. In Qur'an 59:2, believers are urged to "reflect" upon historical consequences so that discernment yields wisdom. This pattern of thinking underlies a Qur'anic theory of knowledge where reason, revelation, and history interact dynamically. The theorising intellect, guided by *tadabbur*, becomes a witness (*shahid*) to divine justice across time (Sardar, 2012).

### 5.3.5 The Interrelation of Tafakkur and Tadabbur

*Tafakkur* and *tadabbur* form a dialectical pair in Qur'anic epistemology: the former represents analytical reflection, the latter synthetic discernment. Together they constitute the cognitive core of Qur'anic reasoning (*istidlal*). Where *tafakkur* breaks phenomena apart for scrutiny, *tadabbur* reassembles them into meaning. This circular process mirrors the dynamic of revelation itself, alternating between detail and unity, analysis and synthesis (Izutsu, 2002).

The Qur'an's repeated appeals to *tafakkur* and *tadabbur* are thus not rhetorical but methodological. They establish a model of thought that integrates empiricism, rationality, and spirituality-a distinctively Qur'anic philosophy of knowledge that precludes dichotomies between faith and reason.

*Tadabbur* represents the highest form of Qur'anic contemplation, where the intellect perceives the coherence of divine truth in revelation and creation alike. It transforms fragmented knowledge into unity and speculative thought into discernment. Through *tadabbur*, believers discover that the Qur'an is both message and method-a continuous invitation to think, discern, and apply. Hence, *tadabbur* embodies the reflective soul of Islamic epistemology: a disciplined practice that converts divine communication into ethical intelligence and social wisdom (Q. 47:24; 4:82; 23:68).

## 5.4 Tadhakkur: Remembrance and Moral Internalisation

*Tadhakkur* (تذكر) means remembrance that leads to moral awakening. It represents the internalisation of knowledge derived from observation (*nazar*), contemplation (*tafakkur*), and reflection (*tadabbur*). In the Qur'an, *tadhakkur* completes the epistemic cycle: knowledge becomes remembrance, and remembrance becomes transformation. The Qur'an associates *tadhakkur* with awakening from heedlessness (Q. 24:44), moral sensitivity (Q. 2:221), and the recollection of divine guidance (Q. 87:9-10). Unlike mere memory, *tadhakkur* signifies existential awareness-the moment when knowledge reorients human will toward divine alignment.

### 5.4.1 The Meaning and Cognitive Function of Tadhakkur

The term *tadhakkur* originates from the Arabic root *dh-k-r*, signifying remembrance, recollection, or mindful recall. In the Qur'an, *tadhakkur* denotes a process of conscious remembering through which



knowledge becomes internalised and translated into moral consciousness. While *tafakkur* engages the analytical intellect and *tadabbur* engages reflective depth, *tadhakkur* penetrates the spiritual heart (*qalb*), where cognition merges with ethical realisation.

The Qur'an repeatedly urges humankind to "remember" (*tadhakkarū*) as an act of intellectual renewal: "*And remind, for indeed the reminder benefits the believers*" (Q. 51:55). Here, remembrance is not nostalgia but epistemic reawakening—a dynamic recollection that keeps divine truth alive in the consciousness of the knower. The *dhikr* of divine signs transforms abstract knowledge into lived awareness. *Tadhakkur* thus signifies the highest form of reflective integration, wherein knowledge is not only known but *felt* and *embodied* (Izutsu, 2002).

### 5.4.2 The Relationship between Memory, Knowledge, and Faith

In Qur'anic psychology, the act of remembering is directly linked to the structure of human consciousness. Allah reminds humankind of their primordial covenant: "*Am I not your Lord?*" *They said, "Yes, we testify"* (Q. 7:172). This verse establishes *tadhakkur* as a retrieval of pre-temporal awareness, a remembrance of divine lordship embedded in the soul. Thus, reflection and remembrance are two dimensions of a single epistemological continuum: *tafakkur* discovers knowledge externally, while *tadhakkur* reclaims it internally.

Forgetfulness (*nisyan*) is described as the spiritual opposite of *tadhakkur*. The Qur'an presents heedlessness (*ghaflah*) as the condition of epistemic and moral blindness: "*Do not be like those who forgot Allah, so He made them forget themselves*" (Q. 59:19). In this statement, forgetting God results in alienation from the self—an ontological dislocation that leads to moral decay. Conversely, remembering God restores cognitive and ethical order, aligning human thought with divine wisdom (Nasr, 2007).

### 5.4.3 Tadhakkur as Moral Internalisation of Knowledge

*Tadhakkur* transforms the intellect's insights into an ethical disposition. Through remembrance, divine instruction becomes *internal law*, regulating perception, intention, and behaviour. The Qur'an describes this transformation as an inward illumination: "*This is a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding may take heed (yatadhakkarun)*" (Q. 38:29).

Here, *tadhakkur* represents the moral culmination of reflection—its goal being *taqwa* (God-consciousness). To "take heed" implies not merely comprehension but the adoption of divine patterns within human life. The process converts epistemic awareness into spiritual responsibility. Thus, *tadhakkur* is not passive recollection but active moral participation in the reality of revelation (Al-Attas, 1995).

### 5.4.4 The Heart (Qalb) as the Site of Tadhakkur

The Qur'an situates remembrance primarily in the *qalb*, the spiritual intellect. It is said: "*Indeed, in that is a reminder (dhikra) for whoever has a heart or listens while he is present [in mind]*" (Q. 50:37). The

*heart* here is not the seat of emotion, but the organ of integrated knowing, where reason, faith, and conscience converge.

Through *tadhakkur*, the heart functions as a moral compass, distinguishing truth from falsehood, justice from injustice. This internalisation of divine remembrance is the true foundation of ethical autonomy in Qur'anic thought. It produces not blind conformity but conscious obedience—a voluntary alignment of human will with divine law (Rahman, 1980).

### 5.4.5 The Continuum of Tafakkur, Tadabbur, and Tadhakkur

These three modes of reflection—*tafakkur*, *tadabbur*, and *tadhakkur*—form a sequential epistemic ascent:

- *Tafakkur* analyses and investigates.
- *Tadabbur* discerns and synthesises;
- *Tadhakkur* internalises and moralises.

Each stage deepens the human encounter with revelation, culminating in the transformation of consciousness. This triadic model of reflection defines Qur'anic epistemology as a continuous cycle of thought, remembrance, and ethical renewal (Sardar, 2012).

*Tadhakkur* is the moral consummation of Qur'anic epistemology—the conversion of thought into ethical presence. It ensures that knowledge culminates in remembrance, humility, and gratitude. Through *tadhakkur*, human cognition becomes a mirror reflecting divine wisdom, linking memory with moral renewal. Thus, the Qur'an establishes remembrance not as ritual repetition but as continuous moral vigilance, sustaining the believer's journey from knowing to being (Q. 51:55; 54:17; 39:9).

## 5.5 Theorisation and the Reflective Ethic

The Qur'an envisions theorisation (*istinbat*, *ta'wil*) not as speculative abstraction but as reflective synthesis, deriving moral and empirical patterns from divine order. The reflective ethic of the Qur'an transforms knowledge into wisdom (*hikmah*) and responsibility. Every act of knowing carries moral weight, as human beings are appointed vicegerents (*khulafa'*) entrusted with understanding creation (Q. 2:30). Thus, the Qur'an's framework of theorisation is both epistemic and ethical: it demands reasoning that aligns with divine law, social justice, and ecological harmony.

### 5.5.1 The Qur'anic Ground of Theorisation

The Qur'an presents itself not only as a revelation but as a rational and moral framework for theorisation—*nadhariyyah Qur'aniyyah*. Theorisation (*ta'niyah fikriyyah*) in the Qur'anic paradigm is the process of developing conceptual structures derived from divine order (*nizam ilahi*). In this sense, theory is not speculative abstraction but disciplined reflection grounded in the *ayat* (signs) of Allah.

The Qur'an invites humanity to theorise from within the harmony of the cosmos: “*We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the Truth*” (Q. 41:53). The “signs in the horizons” form the empirical foundation of inquiry; the “signs within themselves” form



the introspective foundation. The synthesis of both is the birth of theory-knowledge systematically organised around divine coherence (Izutsu, 2002).

Theorisation in this sense becomes an act of worship, for it involves discerning the logic of divine creation and embedding it into human understanding. Each scientific, ethical, or social theory must therefore be measured against the Qur'anic criterion of truth: whether it reveals divine balance (*mizan*) and justice (*'adl*), or distorts them (Nasr, 2007).

### 5.5.2 The Reflective Ethic as Foundation of Theorisation

The Qur'anic vision of theory is inseparable from ethics. In modern epistemologies, theory often precedes or stands apart from moral concern; in the Qur'an, reflection is always ethically bound. The reflective act (*tafakkur*, *tadabbur*, *tadhakkur*) is moral because it engages human faculties as trust (*amanah*). The Qur'an declares: *"Indeed, We offered the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they declined to bear it; yet man undertook it"* (Q. 33:72). This *amanah* is the responsibility to know, discern, and act justly.

Hence, every theoretical enterprise must reflect an ethical consciousness-an awareness that knowledge entails accountability. The Qur'an associates corruption (*fasad*) with the misuse of intellect: *"Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of what people's hands have earned"* (Q. 30:41). True theorisation seeks to restore equilibrium by realigning human systems with divine order.

### 5.5.3 The Qur'anic Logic of Knowledge Integration

A Qur'an-based theory of knowledge rejects the compartmentalisation of sciences. It posits an integrated epistemology in which all forms of knowing-natural, social, spiritual- are dimensions of a single reality under God's unity (*tawhid*). The Qur'an declares: *"He taught Adam the names of all things"* (Q. 2:31), signifying the origin of all disciplines within divine instruction.

In this framework, theorisation becomes an act of reconnecting fragmented knowledges to their ontological source. The reflective ethic (*akhlāq al-tafakkur*) ensures that intellectual activity remains within the bounds of justice, compassion, and humility. Thus, knowledge serves not domination but stewardship (*khilafah*).

### 5.5.4 The Stages of Qur'anic Theorisation

Theorisation in the Qur'anic method proceeds through several epistemic stages:

- Observation (*naẓar*) - empirical attention to signs in creation.
- Reflection (*tafakkur-tadabbur*) - analytical and deep reasoning about meaning.
- Remembrance (*tadhakkur*) - moral internalisation and value orientation.
- Integration (*ta'lif*) - synthesis into a unified conceptual framework.
- Application (*'amal*) - translation into ethical and social transformation.

This sequence demonstrates that theory in Islam is both cognitive and performative; it exists to guide right action (*'amal ṣalīḥ*). The Qur'an continually links knowledge with praxis: "*Those who believe and do righteous deeds-their reward is with their Lord*" (Q. 2:62).

### 5.5.5 The Reflective Ethic and Contemporary Knowledge

In the modern world, knowledge production often becomes detached from metaphysical and moral grounding. The Qur'an critiques such disjunction: "*They know the outward of this worldly life, but they are heedless of the Hereafter*" (Q. 30:7). This verse diagnoses a truncated rationality-an intellect that observes without remembrance.

A Qur'an-based reflective ethic restores balance by reorienting theory toward meaning and responsibility. The goal of knowledge is not infinite accumulation but harmonious living (*ḥayat ṭayyibah*). As Sardar (2012) argues, Qur'anic thinking demands that theory must serve humanity's moral and ecological survival, not its destruction.

### 5.5.6 Theorisation as a Mode of Worship

In Qur'anic ontology, reflection itself is an act of worship. To theorise with humility is to acknowledge divine wisdom; to theorise arrogantly is to usurp it. The Qur'an warns: "*They have not estimated Allah with the estimation due to Him*" (Q. 6:91). The reflective ethic thus demands intellectual modesty-the recognition that human theories are approximations of divine order, never replacements for it (Al-Attas, 1995).

When theory proceeds from *tawḥīd*, it becomes a means of glorifying the Creator through understanding His creation. The Qur'an's constant call to "ponder," "see," and "remember" establishes a theology of thought, where contemplation is inseparable from devotion.

### 5.5.7 The Qur'anic Theory of Reflective Knowledge

Combining *tafakkur*, *tadabbur*, and *tadhakkur*, the Qur'an advances a comprehensive theory of reflective knowledge (*'ilm tadhakkuri*). Its principles include:

- Unity of knowledge and value: cognition and ethics are inseparable.
- Interconnectedness of signs: all phenomena point toward divine wisdom.
- Purpose of reflection: knowledge aims at balance, justice, and guidance.
- Limit of human reason: intellect must recognise its dependence on revelation.

This reflective theory challenges both materialist empiricism and abstract rationalism, offering instead an integrated epistemology that embraces both the empirical and the transcendent (Nasr, 2007; Izutsu, 2002).

### 5.5.8 Toward a Qur'anic Paradigm of Theorisation

A Qur'an-only model of theorisation envisions knowledge as a journey from perception to understanding, from understanding to remembrance, and from remembrance to transformation. It asserts that the ultimate goal of theory is not intellectual possession but spiritual illumination (*mur al- 'ilm*).

In this paradigm, every reflective act becomes an echo of divine creativity. To think is to participate in the ongoing revelation of meaning woven through existence. Such theorisation restores dignity to human reason, sanctifying thought as an extension of worship.

The Qur'an's model of theorisation unites intellect and morality under divine guidance. Knowledge becomes ethical only when it serves justice, balance, and compassion. The reflective ethic transforms human inquiry into stewardship, a covenantal act of understanding creation responsibly. Hence, Qur'anic epistemology does not isolate thought from value; it sanctifies theorisation as a moral enterprise rooted in remembrance, reflection, and responsibility (Q. 2:30; 3:191; 30:22).

## 5.6 The Reflective Synthesis of Qur'anic Epistemology

The Qur'anic vision of reflection and contemplation-embodied in *tafakkur* (analytical contemplation), *tadabbur* (deep reflection), and *tadhakkur* (remembrance)-establishes an integrated model of divine epistemology that unites intellect, observation, and moral awareness. These three dimensions together construct the reflective architecture of *ilm* (knowledge) in Islam, presenting a system in which cognition is inseparable from ethics and spirituality. The Qur'an transforms the act of thinking into an act of worship, whereby the intellect becomes a mirror reflecting divine order and purpose. In this system, knowledge is not a neutral construct but a sacred trust that demands both intellectual humility and moral accountability (Q. 3:191; 47:24; 51:55).

The process of Qur'anic contemplation unfolds in a continuum: *tafakkur* initiates critical and analytical reasoning through engagement with the observable world; *tadabbur* deepens that reflection into discernment of divine coherence and unity; and *tadhakkur* internalises knowledge as moral transformation and remembrance. Together, they establish a reflective cycle-thinking, discerning, remembering-through which human consciousness evolves toward wisdom (*hikmah*). The Qur'an repeatedly reminds us that the signs (*ayat*) of creation, history, and revelation are meant “for those who reflect” (Q. 45:13; 59:21). Hence, reflective engagement is not optional but essential to the very purpose of revelation.

Moreover, this reflective triad constructs the ethical foundation for theorisation (*istinbat* and *ta'wil*). The Qur'an envisions theory not as an abstraction detached from reality but as the synthesis of empirical insight, rational clarity, and moral responsibility. Knowledge that does not yield gratitude or justice is portrayed as blindness, while knowledge grounded in reflection leads to insight (*baṣirah*) and balance (*mizan*) (Q. 55:7-9; 96:5-6). The reflective ethic thus becomes both epistemological and existential: to think rightly is to live.

In conclusion, *tafakkur*, *tadabbur*, and *tadhakkur* together form the intellectual and spiritual heart of Qur'anic epistemology. They affirm that the pursuit of knowledge must culminate in awareness of the Divine, moral purification, and social justice. Through deep reflection, the Qur'an transforms the human act of knowing into a sacred journey from perception to realisation, from intellect to wisdom, and from remembrance to ethical action.

## Chapter 6: Validation (Burhan, Bayyina): The Logic of Proof and Evidence

All arguments and evidential reasoning are grounded entirely in Qur'anic epistemology, without reference to any extra-Qur'anic sources. The chapter demonstrates how *Burhan* (logical proof) and *Bayyina* (clear evidence) represent the Qur'an's system of validation and verification - establishing the divine balance between reason, revelation, and ethical integrity.

Validation lies at the heart of the Qur'anic epistemological process. Knowledge (*'ilm*) is not complete until it passes through a process of verification (*tahqiq*) grounded in *burhan* (proof) and *bayyina* (clarity). The Qur'an calls repeatedly for the presentation of evidence - "Bring your proof (*burhanakum*) if you are truthful" (Q. 2:111; 21:24) - emphasising that belief and truth must rest on demonstrable grounds. Unlike speculative assertion or inherited dogma, Qur'anic epistemology demands that every claim about the cosmos, ethics, or divinity be anchored in verifiable reasoning. In this sense, the Qur'an not only invites inquiry but also provides the normative logic by which truth is authenticated - a synthesis of rational, empirical, and moral verification.

### 6.1 The Qur'anic Ethos of Verification

The Qur'an's discourse of *burhan* and *bayyina* reveals a profoundly rational dimension within divine revelation. Far from rejecting reasoning, the Qur'an elevates *burhan* - proof grounded in observation and logic - as the distinguishing mark of truth. The divine challenge "*Bring your proof*" (Q. 2:111; 21:24; 27:64) is not rhetorical but methodological. It establishes an epistemic principle: that truth claims, whether religious, philosophical, or scientific, must withstand rational and empirical scrutiny.

In Qur'anic epistemology, validation operates across two interrelated dimensions: internal coherence (*tadbir wa-taṣḍiq*) and external correspondence (*muṭabaqa wa-ḥaqiqa*). The first demands that any proposition aligns with the internal logic of revelation - the coherence of Qur'anic principles, moral laws, and cosmological order. The second requires that claims about reality be consistent with observable signs (*ayat*) in nature, history, and the self (Q. 41:53).

The Qur'an's call for *bayyina* (clear evidence) underscores this dual verification process. A *bayyina* is not mere sensory proof, but the transparency of truth made manifest - clarity that dispels ambiguity and aligns intellect with revelation (Q. 98:1-3). Such clarity transforms knowledge from conjecture (*ẓann*) into certainty (*yaqin*), a progression repeatedly emphasised in the Qur'an (Q. 102:5-7).

Thus, the Qur'anic logic of validation integrates empirical observation, rational proof, and moral discernment. This logic transcends both material empiricism and abstract speculation, presenting a holistic model where truth manifests through harmony between the seen and the unseen, the rational and the revealed, the word and the world.

## 6.2 Burhan: The Qur’anic Logic of Proof

In the Qur’an, *burhan* represents the apex of epistemic verification - the conclusive proof that integrates divine revelation, rational discernment, and observable reality. Unlike conjectural belief (*ẓann*), *burhan* signifies certainty derived from divine evidence, not human authority. It is a term of precision, appearing where the Qur’an establishes its authority over falsehood and ignorance. Within the Qur’anic epistemological structure, *burhan* is not merely logical deduction but the ultimate demonstration of truth (*haqq*). It connects the metaphysical reality of divine unity (*tawḥīd*) with the rational faculties of humankind, forming the intellectual foundation of Islamic knowledge.

### 6.2.1 The Semantic Field of Burhan

The Arabic root *b-r-h-n* signifies *clear, luminous proof*, shining evidence that removes ambiguity. In the Qur’an, the word *burhan* is used to designate irrefutable evidence from Allah, such as in *Surat al-Nisa’* (Q. 4:174): “O mankind! Surely there has come to you a *burhan* from your Lord, and We have sent down to you a clear light (*muran mubinan*).”

Here, *Burhan* represents the Qur’an itself, as a divinely manifested proof that transcends historical, cultural, or interpretive limitations. It is a direct illumination of truth, grounded in revelation but accessible to human intellect. Thus, *Burhan* encompasses not only propositional proof but also existential verification - the way divine truth reveals itself within human cognition and the natural world.

### 6.2.2 Burhan and the Structure of Reason

In Qur’anic methodology, proof does not arise from human speculation but from rational alignment with divine signs (*ayat*). The Qur’an calls the human being to reason within the moral and cosmic order established by Allah. *Burhan* is therefore inseparable from *‘aql* (reason), *nazar* (observation), and *tafakkur* (contemplation).

For instance, in *Sirat al-An‘am* (Q. 6:149):

“Say, ‘To Allah belongs the conclusive proof (*al-hujjatu al-baligha*). If He had willed, He would have guided you all.’”

The verse defines *Burhan* as divine rational order- the unassailable proof embedded in creation. Humans are invited to align their reasoning within this order. Knowledge, then, is validated not by mere argumentation but by coherence with divine rationality. *Burhan* becomes the meeting point of revelation and intellect - the Qur’anic equivalent of epistemic certainty (*yaqin*).

### 6.2.3 Burhan as Epistemic Verification

The Qur’an differentiates between conjectural belief (*ẓann*), partial knowledge (*‘ilm*), and conclusive proof (*burhan*). This gradation establishes a hierarchy of epistemic certainty. In *Sirat al-Naml* (Q. 27:64), Allah challenges humanity: “Is there any deity with Allah? Bring your *burhan*, if you are truthful.”

Here, *Burhan* functions as a test of epistemic integrity. The Qur'an demands not subjective belief but demonstrable verification grounded in observable, rational, and revelatory evidence. The divine invitation to "bring your *burhan*" is an appeal to reason and intellectual accountability - a method of falsifiability preceding modern logic.

Moreover, *Burhan* integrates empirical and metaphysical realities. Every phenomenon of nature, its order, symmetry, and purpose, is a proof of divine unity. The Qur'an's method of *burhan* thus constructs a theological empiricism where observation of the world leads to recognition of the Creator.

#### 6.2.4 Burhan in the Moral and Ontological Order

Beyond intellectual reasoning, *Burhan* validates moral truth. In *Sirat al-Qasas* (Q. 28:32), Moses is given *burhanayn*, two proofs, to demonstrate divine authority before Pharaoh. Here, *Burhan* bridges moral righteousness and divine authorisation. Proof becomes not merely argumentative but existential: truth manifested through righteous action.

In the Qur'anic worldview, epistemology and morality are inseparable. The validity of knowledge depends on its conformity with divine justice (*'adl*) and truth (*haqq*). Thus, *Burhan* is the ethical counterpart of epistemic verification: it affirms that knowing rightly entails acting justly.

#### 6.2.5 Burhan as Qur'anic Rationality

The Qur'anic *burhan* transcends both syllogistic logic and empirical positivism. It integrates reason (*'aql*), evidence (*bayyina*), and divine illumination (*mur*). Its logic is holistic and ontological: truth is not constructed but revealed through divine order. This vision anticipates an integrated epistemology in which revelation and reason cooperate rather than conflict.

In *Sirat Yunus* (Q. 10:35), the Qur'an asks: "Is one who guides to the truth more worthy to be followed, or one who finds no guidance unless he is guided? What is the matter with you - how do you judge?" This rhetorical structure embodies *Burhanic logic* -the method of establishing truth through contrast and coherence. It is an appeal to rational conscience (*Fu'ad*) and cognitive discernment (*lub*).

In Qur'anic epistemology, *burhan* is not a human construct but a divine logic -an intellectual illumination that fuses empirical observation, rational analysis, and spiritual insight. It marks the transition from belief to certainty, from perception to comprehension. The *Burhanic* method thus establishes the foundation of Islamic reasoning: faith supported by rational verification and cosmic coherence. Within this paradigm, every act of knowing is an act of witnessing (*shahada*), and every sign (*ayah*) is an element of divine proof.

### 6.3 Bayyina: Evident Clarity and Manifest Truth

If *Burhan* represents the intellectual logic of proof, *bayyina* embodies the manifest clarity through which truth becomes visible and undeniable. Derived from the root *b-y-n* (to make distinct, to clarify), *bayyina* in the Qur'an refers to the transparency of divine truth - knowledge that is self-evident when perceived through the purified intellect (*qalb salim*). It is the principle of manifest revelation, the epistemic state



where ambiguity dissolves, and reality stands clear. Whereas *Burhan* convinces the rational mind, *Bayyina* illuminates the perceptive soul, completing the Qur'an's twofold structure of validation.

### 6.3.1 The Nature of Bayyina

In *Sirat al-Bayyina* (Q. 98:1), the term achieves its fullest expression: “*Those who disbelieved among the People of the Book and the polytheists were not to desist until the bayyina came to them - a Messenger from Allah, reciting purified pages.*”

Here, *bayyina* is both revelation and its self-evident clarity. It signifies the transparent presentation of truth, so pure that its denial becomes moral blindness, not intellectual deficiency. The Qur'an thus identifies *bayyina* as divine revelation in its perfected, intelligible form.

### 6.3.2 Bayyina and the Clarity of Revelation

Throughout the Qur'an, Allah repeatedly emphasises the transparency of His message: *kitabun mubin* (a clear book), *ayatun bayyinat* (clear signs), and *sultan mubin* (manifest authority). This semantic family of *bayyina* underlines the Qur'an's self-verifying nature. It does not require external proof because its clarity operates as intrinsic validation. In *Sirat al-Baqarah* (Q. 2:185): “*The Qur'an is guidance for humanity, and clear evidence (bayyinat) of guidance and criterion.*”

The *bayyinat* are not abstract propositions but the experiential unveiling of truth through revelation. They establish the Qur'an's epistemic sufficiency - its ability to stand as both evidence and explanation.

### 6.3.3 Bayyina and the Human Faculty of Discernment

For *bayyina* to manifest, the human being must engage the inner faculties of perception: *qalb* (heart), *Fu'ad* (mindful conscience), and *basira* (insight). These are not merely emotional centres but epistemological organs. The Qur'an frequently criticises those who “*have hearts but do not understand*” (Q. 7:179), indicating that epistemic blindness arises not from lack of intelligence but from moral negligence.

Thus, *bayyina* requires both divine disclosure and human receptivity. It is an act of divine mercy and human purification, aligning cognitive clarity with spiritual integrity.

### 6.3.4 The Relationship Between Burhan and Bayyina

The Qur'an presents *burhan* and *bayyina* as complementary poles of validation. *Burhan* is rational demonstration; *bayyina* is manifest illumination. Together, they constitute the Qur'an's holistic epistemology of proof. In *Sirat al-An'am* (Q. 6:157), Allah says: “*Now there has come to you clear evidence (bayyina) from your Lord, and guidance and mercy.*”

Here, *bayyina* completes the logic of *burhan*: once proof has been intellectually established, clarity must be spiritually recognised. Knowledge becomes complete only when reason and light converge.

### 6.3.5 Bayyina as Ontological Clarity

The Qur'an's use of *bayyina* extends beyond doctrinal truth to encompass the very structure of reality. All creation is described as *ayatun bayyinat*, manifest signs that testify to divine unity. This means that existence itself is a self-evident revelation, and the world operates as an open text of divine clarity. In *Sirat al-Rum* (Q. 30:22): “And among His signs are the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your tongues and colours. Indeed, those are signs for those who know.”

These *bayyinat* of creation form the empirical counterpart of the Qur'anic text. The integration of cosmic and textual clarity defines the *Qur'anic realism*-a vision where ontology and epistemology mirror one another.

### 6.3.6 Epistemic Ethics of Bayyina

The recognition of *bayyina* is not merely intellectual but moral. Denying clear evidence becomes an act of injustice (*zulm*). The Qur'an repeatedly links disbelief (*kufir*) with the suppression of *bayyina*. Thus, truth's clarity imposes ethical responsibility; to know is to be accountable.

This epistemic ethics transforms the human quest for knowledge into a moral journey. Recognition of *bayyina* purifies the intellect, aligns moral will with divine truth, and fulfils the Qur'an's vision of integrated knowing.

In Qur'anic epistemology, *bayyina* represents the luminous self-evidence of truth, where revelation and creation speak in unison. It complements *Burhan* by transforming logical proof into experiential clarity. Together, they complete the divine logic of validation: truth is first reasoned (*burhan*) and then illuminated (*bayyina*). This dual structure preserves the Qur'an's unity of intellect and spirit, reason and revelation, form and essence. The one who perceives *bayyina* does not merely believe, but witnesses; and this witnessing (*shuhud*) is the final stage of epistemic certainty (*yaqin*).

## 6.4 The Ethics of Verification: Avoiding Speculation and False Knowledge

At the heart of Qur'anic epistemology lies a moral imperative: knowledge must be verified through divine proof (*burhan*) and manifest clarity (*bayyina*). The Qur'an consistently distinguishes between knowledge grounded in truth (*'ilm al-yaqin*) and conjecture (*zann*), warning against the dangers of false assumption and imitation. This distinction is not merely intellectual but ethical, because epistemic error leads to moral deviation. The ethics of verification in the Qur'an integrates cognitive responsibility with spiritual accountability: to know wrongly is to act unjustly. Therefore, Qur'anic methodology establishes verification (*tahqiq*) as both a moral and cognitive obligation, ensuring that human knowledge aligns with divine reality.

### 6.4.1 Knowledge and Moral Responsibility

In the Qur'an, knowledge (*'ilm*) is inseparable from responsibility (*taklif*). Knowing is never a neutral act; it carries moral consequence. As stated in *Sirat al-Isra'* (Q. 17:36): “And do not pursue that of which you do not know. Indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart - all of these will be questioned.”



This verse encapsulates the essence of the Qur’anic epistemic ethic: every faculty of perception is accountable before God. *‘Ilm* is therefore bound by the principle of truthfulness (*ṣidq*) and the prohibition of conjecture. Human faculties-hearing (*sam*), sight (*baṣar*), and heart (*Fu’ad*)-are tools of verification, and misuse of these faculties to follow assumption (*ẓann*) leads to error and injustice (*ẓulm*).

This establishes a profound moral principle: false knowledge is not only intellectually deficient but ethically condemnable. The Qur’an equates it with oppression of truth, a distortion of divine reality. Thus, the ethics of verification is not an optional virtue but a divine command central to the human vocation of knowing.

#### 6.4.2 Condemnation of Speculative Thought (*Ẓann*)

Throughout the Qur’an, Allah repeatedly warns against reliance on *ẓann* - uncertain speculation masquerading as truth. In *Sirat al-Najm* (Q. 53:28), the verse states: “*They do not know of it; they follow nothing but assumption (ẓann), and indeed, assumption avails nothing against the truth.*”

This passage draws a sharp epistemological boundary between certainty (*yaqīn*) and conjecture (*ẓann*). The Qur’an’s rejection of speculation is not an attack on reason but a defence of intellectual integrity. It criticises the human tendency to replace verified knowledge with inherited beliefs, emotional conviction, or imitation. In *Sirat al-An’am* (Q. 6:116), the warning is made social and political: “*If you obey most of those upon the earth, they will lead you away from the path of Allah. They follow nothing but assumption (ẓann) and are only guessing.*”

The epistemic danger here is collective falsehood: when societies normalise conjecture, truth becomes obscured by consensus. The Qur’an, therefore, demands critical independence and evidence-based conviction. Truth cannot be determined by majority opinion but by divine verification through *burhan* and *bayyina*.

#### 6.4.3 The Triad of Verification: Hearing, Seeing, and Reasoning

The Qur’an grounds its epistemology in a triadic system of verification: auditory (*sam*), visual (*baṣar*), and intellectual (*Fu’ad*). Each faculty corresponds to a stage of knowing - perceiving, analysing, and internalising. In *Sirat al-Mulk* (Q. 67:23), Allah says: “*It is He who produced for you hearing, sight, and hearts; little are you grateful.*”

Gratitude (*shukr*) here is epistemological: it means proper use of cognitive faculties in accordance with truth. Misuse of these faculties - by ignoring evidence or following false authority - constitutes ingratitude (*kufṛ al-ni’ma*). This establishes that *verification* is both a rational act and a form of worship. Moreover, *Sirat al-Nahl* (Q. 16:78) emphasises the developmental nature of knowledge: “*Allah brought you out of your mothers’ wombs knowing nothing, and He gave you hearing, sight, and hearts so that you might give thanks.*”

The verse affirms that knowledge is acquired through experience and reflection - a progressive process requiring ethical restraint. Every stage of cognition must be filtered through divine guidance, lest perception devolve into delusion.

#### 6.4.4 The False Knowledge Paradigm

The Qur'an repeatedly associates false knowledge with arrogance and heedlessness. In *Sirat al-Baqarah* (Q. 2:170), it critiques blind imitation: “*When it is said to them, ‘Follow what Allah has revealed,’ they say, ‘We follow what we found our fathers doing.’ Even though their fathers understood nothing, nor were they guided?*”

This represents the Qur'anic rejection of epistemic stagnation - inherited dogma that lacks verification. The pursuit of truth demands independent reasoning and continuous inquiry. Thus, *ilm* is dynamic, while *ẓann* is static and imitative. The former liberates the intellect; the latter enslaves it to convention.

The Qur'an's critique of false knowledge also extends to metaphysical claims without divine warrant. In *Sirat al-Isra'* (Q. 17:36), the admonition “*Do not pursue that of which you do not know*” forbids speculation about the unseen (*ghayb*) without revelation. This reinforces a disciplined epistemology: the unseen is accessible only through divine disclosure, not conjectural reasoning.

#### 6.4.5 Epistemic Justice and Truthfulness

The ethics of verification in the Qur'an rests on the foundation of *ʿadl* (justice) and *ṣidq* (truth). To distort truth knowingly or neglect verification is to commit epistemic injustice. In *Sirat al-Hujurat* (Q. 49:6), Allah commands: “*O you who believe, if a wicked person brings you any news, verify it (fatabayyanu), lest you harm people in ignorance and become regretful over what you have done.*”

Here, verification (*tabayyun*) becomes a divine command to prevent injustice. The verse defines a universal principle: epistemic care is the foundation of moral society. The Qur'an thus transforms fact-checking into an act of faith. Knowledge must not only be true but responsibly communicated.

In the Qur'an's moral logic, misinformation is not a trivial mistake but a sin against truth. It erodes trust, justice, and divine order. Hence, *tabayyun* serves as the ethical mechanism that preserves both intellectual and social integrity.

#### 6.4.6 Avoiding Speculative Theology and Metaphysical Excess

The Qur'an explicitly cautions against constructing theological claims beyond revelation. In *Sirat al-Kahf* (Q. 18:22), Allah narrates human speculation about the number of the Sleepers of the Cave and corrects it with this directive: “*Say, ‘My Lord knows best their number; none knows them except a few.’ So do not argue about them except with clear evidence (miraʿan ẓahiran).*”

This verse exemplifies the Qur'anic method of restraining metaphysical speculation. It affirms intellectual humility as a central ethical requirement of inquiry. Humans must recognise the limits of their epistemic reach, acknowledging that certain realities are reserved for divine knowledge (*ilm al-ghayb*). Such humility does not inhibit reasoning; it perfects it by aligning it with truth's boundaries.

The Qur'an condemns those who "speak about Allah without knowledge" (*bi-ghayri 'ilm*, Q. 2:169; 31:20). This is the root of false theology - attributing to God that which He has not revealed. Thus, the Qur'an establishes a discipline of epistemic restraint, distinguishing legitimate inquiry from speculative trespass.

#### 6.4.7 The Verification Process in the Qur'an

The Qur'an establishes a rigorous epistemic framework for verification (*tahqiq*), grounded in reason, evidence, and moral responsibility. Knowledge (*'ilm*) in the Qur'an is never accepted based on assumption (*ẓann*), imitation (*taqlid*), or hearsay (*sam'* without discernment); rather, it must pass through a process of rational, moral, and empirical validation. This verification process is not merely a cognitive exercise but an ethical and spiritual discipline. The Qur'an presents *burhan* (proof) and *bayyina* (clear evidence) as the twin criteria by which all claims must be tested. The Qur'anic call to *tabayyanu* ("verify clearly") in Surah al-Hujurat (Q. 49:6) captures the essence of this epistemic principle: believers are instructed to verify any information before acting upon it, lest they harm others out of ignorance. Thus, verification in the Qur'an represents a comprehensive methodology that links cognitive rigour with moral rectitude.

The Qur'anic process of verification begins with empirical observation (*nazar*), which provides the sensory data for reflection. Verses such as "*Do they not look at the camels-how they are created?*" (Q. 88:17) and "*Travel through the earth and see how He began creation*" (Q. 29:20) invite the use of empirical inquiry to establish factual grounding. However, the Qur'an does not stop at observation; it proceeds toward rational analysis (*'aql*) and reflective contemplation (*tafakkur* and *tadabbur*), by which the observed data are interpreted within the framework of divine order and purpose. The movement from observation to understanding marks the first stage of verification, where the human intellect tests perceptions against logical coherence and consistency with divine guidance.

The second stage of Qur'anic verification concerns moral and existential coherence. The Qur'an repeatedly warns against adopting ideas that lack ethical or ontological integrity. For example, "*Do not pursue that of which you do not know; surely the hearing, the sight, and the heart-all of these shall be questioned*" (Q. 17:36). This verse delineates the boundaries of legitimate inquiry: knowledge must rest on certitude (*yaqin*) and responsibility. It rejects speculation (*ẓann*), conjecture (*khurş*), and blind adherence to inherited beliefs (*taqli d*). In this sense, the Qur'anic verification process requires that knowledge correspond not only to external evidence but also to internal truthfulness—a harmony between the outer world of phenomena and the inner world of conscience.

Thirdly, the Qur'an emphasises communal verification, recognising that truth manifests through the shared pursuit of knowledge among humanity. The Qur'an appeals to collective reflection—"*Say: Travel through the earth and see what was the end of those before you*" (Q. 30:42)—not as a call to imitation but to cumulative understanding. By engaging with the world's historical, moral, and natural records, human beings are encouraged to verify divine signs in the continuity of existence. The epistemic community envisioned by the Qur'an is therefore dialogical and reflective, where knowledge grows through mutual testing and comparison against divine revelation and creation alike.

Finally, spiritual verification forms the ultimate stage in the Qur'anic process. This stage is marked by the recognition of truth (*ḥaqq*) through its manifestation in the self and the cosmos: *"We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth"* (Q. 41:53). The Qur'an thus integrates inner certainty (*yaqin al-qalb*) with outer confirmation (*bayyina*). Verification is achieved when reason, perception, and conscience converge upon the same reality-when the intellect sees what the spirit affirms. This harmony signifies that genuine knowledge is not merely verified through external proof but through a transformative internal realisation of divine order.

In summary, the Qur'anic process of verification unfolds through four interlinked dimensions: empirical observation, rational discernment, moral coherence, and spiritual insight. This multilayered epistemology ensures that human knowledge remains balanced between intellect and faith, fact and value, observation and reflection. Verification in the Qur'an thus becomes both a cognitive necessity and a moral obligation, safeguarding human understanding from error and guiding it toward the recognition of *al-Ḥaqq*, the Absolute Truth.

### 6.5.8 False Knowledge as Disconnection from Reality

False knowledge in the Qur'an is characterised by *illusion* (*ghurur*) and *ignorance* (*jahl*). It arises when humans impose subjective imagination upon objective reality. In *Sirat al-Ḥadid* (Q. 57:20), Allah warns: *"Know that the life of this world is play, amusement, adornment, mutual boasting, and rivalry in wealth and children... and the worldly life is nothing but a delusion (ghurur)."*

This illusory world represents false knowledge - understanding disconnected from ultimate reality. Genuine *ilm* penetrates the surface of phenomena to recognise divine purpose. Thus, the ethics of verification demand constant self-examination: knowledge must not be confined to the visible but must correspond with divine meaning.

### 6.7.9 Epistemic Integrity and the Unity of Truth

The Qur'an insists on the unity of truth because truth originates from a single divine source. *Sirat al-Nisa'* (Q. 4:82) declares: *"Do they not reflect upon the Qur'an? If it had been from other than Allah, they would have found much contradiction in it."*

The absence of contradiction (*ikhtilaf*) becomes the criterion for divine truth. Epistemic integrity, therefore, is measured by internal coherence - the harmony between reason, revelation, and reality. Any claim that introduces contradiction is excluded from divine knowledge.

This principle establishes the foundation for Qur'anic rationalism: true knowledge cannot conflict with revelation because both emerge from the same divine order. Therefore, the ethic of verification requires not only proof and clarity but also internal consistency - a unified epistemic framework grounded in *tawḥid*.

### 6.7.10 Ethical Dimensions of Epistemic Humility

The Qur'an repeatedly praises humility (*tawāḍuʿ*) as a prerequisite for true knowledge. *Sirat al-Ankabut* (Q. 29:49) affirms: "Rather, it is clear signs within the hearts of those who have been given knowledge."

This verse suggests that knowledge is not an external possession but internal illumination. The heart becomes the locus of epistemic light only when purified of arrogance. Thus, verification is not only cognitive but ethical - it requires sincerity (*ikhlas*) and humility before divine truth.

By contrast, false knowledge emerges from pride, as seen in *Sirat al-Baqarah* (Q. 2:34), where Iblis's refusal to acknowledge divine command stems from self-deception, not ignorance. The Qur'an presents this as the archetype of epistemic corruption: knowing but refusing to verify through submission to truth.

The Qur'anic ethics of verification establishes a comprehensive framework where knowledge, morality, and spirituality converge. True knowledge (*ilm al-yaqin*) must pass through the filters of divine proof (*burhan*), manifest clarity (*bayyina*), and ethical restraint. Speculation (*ẓann*), imitation (*taqlid*), and falsehood (*jahl*) are rejected not merely as intellectual errors but as moral violations. The Qur'an calls the human being to disciplined inquiry - to verify before believing, to discern before judging, and to act upon truth with sincerity.

Thus, verification (*tabayyun*) becomes both an act of worship and an epistemic necessity. It ensures that human cognition aligns with divine order, preserving the harmony between reason, revelation, and creation. To avoid false knowledge is to uphold justice, and to verify truth is to participate in divine wisdom. The Qur'an thereby transforms epistemology into a moral journey - where knowing rightly becomes synonymous with living righteously.

The Qur'anic logic of validation - expressed through *burhan* and *bayyina* - provides a comprehensive epistemic framework that unites reason, evidence, and ethics. It rejects both blind faith and blind empiricism, insisting that truth must be both demonstrable and morally luminous. Through *Burhan*, the Qur'an establishes a system of rational justification rooted in divine order; through *bayyina*, it reveals truth as clarity that transforms the intellect and the soul.

This dual structure creates a holistic paradigm where epistemology becomes a pathway to spirituality. Proof and clarity are not ends in themselves but stages in the human ascent toward *yaqin* (certainty). When reason, revelation, and morality converge, knowledge attains its highest form - wisdom (*ḥikmah*).

In the Qur'anic research methodology, validation is therefore not merely a logical step but an ethical state. The researcher is called to verify with humility, to reason within divine order, and to bear witness to the unity of truth. Thus, *Burhan* and *Bayyina* together safeguard the integrity of human inquiry, ensuring that knowledge serves not domination but enlightenment, not arrogance but remembrance.

## Chapter 7. Synthesis (Ḥikmah): Integrating Truth and Understanding

In the Qur'anic epistemological framework, *ḥikmah* represents the highest stage of knowledge, where understanding transforms into insight and truth becomes embodied in ethical and intellectual harmony. It is not merely the accumulation of information or the mastery of reason, but the integration of the empirical, rational, and spiritual dimensions of knowing. The Qur'an presents *ḥikmah* as both divine bestowal and human attainment through reflection, righteousness, and justice. It stands as the culmination of *'ilm*, *'aql*, *tafakkur*, *tadabbur*, *tadhakkur*, and *burhan*. Through *ḥikmah*, the Qur'an envisions an epistemic synthesis that unites knowledge with purpose, truth with action, and intellect with revelation, forming the moral and ontological foundation of the Islamic worldview.

### 7.1 The Meaning of Ḥikmah in the Qur'an

The term *ḥikmah* (wisdom) in the Qur'an encapsulates one of the most profound epistemological concepts within Islamic thought. It is not merely knowledge or intellectual capacity, but the divine integration of understanding, righteousness, and discernment grounded in truth. The Qur'an consistently presents *ḥikmah* as both a divine gift and a moral responsibility, connecting knowledge (*'ilm*) to ethical action (*'amal*) and spiritual consciousness (*taqwa*). It is a form of insight that aligns human perception with divine order, transforming information into guidance. The Qur'anic perspective on *ḥikmah* transcends intellectual abstraction; it calls for the unification of cognitive reflection and moral rectitude. Therefore, exploring the meaning of *ḥikmah* in the Qur'an is essential for comprehending how divine revelation shapes a holistic and ethical epistemology based solely on the words of Allah.

#### 7.1.1 Ḥikmah as the Apex of Qur'anic Epistemology

Within the epistemological architecture of the Qur'an, *ḥikmah* (wisdom) represents the culmination of all processes of knowing - where revelation (*wahy*), intellect (*'aql*), and moral consciousness (*taqwa*) converge into a unified comprehension of divine truth. The Qur'an's repeated invocation of *ḥikmah* situates it as the highest form of human cognition and the most intimate reflection of divine order. The verse, "*He grants wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever is granted wisdom has certainly been given much good; but none remember except those of understanding.*" (Q. 2:269),

Encapsulates the Qur'anic philosophy of wisdom as a divine gift that requires intellectual purification (*tazkiyah al-'aql*) and spiritual receptivity (*qalb salim*). *Ḥikmah* thus is not merely a function of intellectual exertion but the moral illumination of the intellect under divine guidance. It is the synthesis of *'ilm* (knowledge), *'aql* (reason), and *taqwa* (ethical awareness), generating insight that harmonises both the seen (*shahadah*) and unseen (*ghayb*) realities.

#### 7.1.2 Semantic Field of Ḥikmah: From Root to Revelation

The Arabic trilateral root ḥ-k-m conveys meanings of judgment, discernment, control, and restraint. From it are derived terms such as *ḥukm* (judgment) and *ḥakim* (ruler or arbiter). Linguistically, *ḥikmah* implies



sound judgment that prevents error and imbalance. This linguistic core aligns with the Qur'an's portrayal of *ḥikmah* as disciplined reasoning guided by divine justice.

However, unlike in pre-Islamic Arabic, where *ḥikmah* could signify cleverness or eloquence, the Qur'an transforms the term into a metaphysical and epistemological concept - a divinely infused faculty that discerns truth from falsehood through the illumination of revelation. In this Qur'anic transformation, *ḥikmah* becomes both divine communication and human realisation, binding the transcendent to the immanent (Izutsu, 2002).

### 7.1.3 Qur'anic Usage of Ḥikmah: Coupling with Kitab and Revelation

The Qur'an consistently pairs *ḥikmah* with *Kitab* (Book), signifying the integration of revealed text and interpretive understanding: “*And Allah has sent down to you the Book and the Wisdom*” (Q. 4:113).

This co-occurrence suggests that divine communication requires interpretive realisation - a balance between textual revelation and epistemic internalisation. *Kitab* represents revelation in its objective form, while *ḥikmah* denotes the subjective internalisation of that revelation as practical and moral understanding.

In multiple verses (e.g., Q. 2:231; 3:48; 4:54; 33:34), the Qur'an presents *ḥikmah* as an integral component of prophetic mission, reinforcing that revelation and wisdom are inseparable. When the Qur'an describes Jesus as one taught “*the Book and Wisdom, the Torah and the Gospel*” (Q. 3:48), it affirms that *ḥikmah* transcends textual memorisation to encompass the ontological and ethical understanding of the divine message. Therefore, *ḥikmah* represents the interpretive intelligence of revelation - the human faculty that transforms divine communication into guidance (*huda*).

### 7.1.4 Ḥikmah as Divine Bestowal and Human Responsibility

While the Qur'an affirms that *ḥikmah* is a divine bestowal (“*He grants wisdom to whom He wills,*” Q. 2:269), it simultaneously emphasises human responsibility to cultivate receptivity. This implies an interactive epistemology: God bestows wisdom, but only the morally conscious intellect can receive it. The verse concludes, “and none remember except those of understanding,” confirming that wisdom flourishes through remembrance (*dhikr*) and reflection (*tadhakkur*).

Hence, *ḥikmah* arises where revelation meets reflection - a dynamic partnership between divine communication and human cognition. The Qur'an continually invites believers to think (*yatafakkarun*), to reason (*ya'qilun*), and to understand (*yafqahun*), indicating that *ḥikmah* is not a passive reception but an active engagement with divine signs (*ayat*).

As Rahman (1980) notes, Qur'anic wisdom is participatory - an epistemic state achieved through continuous interaction between revelation and rational reflection.

### 7.1.5 Prophetic Attribution of Ḥikmah

The Qur'an attributes *ḥikmah* to several prophets as both divine instruction and moral illumination. Prophet Dawud (David) was given “*wisdom and sound judgment*” (Q. 38:20), and Luqmān was granted *ḥikmah* and commanded gratitude: “*And We certainly gave Luqmān wisdom, 'Be grateful to Allah'*” (Q.

31:12). This verse is significant because it identifies gratitude (*shukr*) as the epistemic posture of wisdom - acknowledging the Source of all truth.

Thus, *ḥikmah* is both an epistemic and ethical mode: it requires humility before divine truth. In this sense, wisdom is not autonomous reasoning but the intellect's conscious submission (*islam al-‘aql*) to divine order.

### 7.1.6 Ḥikmah and the Cosmic Order

The Qur'an often frames *ḥikmah* within a cosmological context, revealing divine wisdom in the structure of creation itself: *"He created the heavens and the earth in truth and perfected your forms, and to Him is the final destination"* (Q. 64:3).

This verse situates *ḥikmah* in the ontological architecture of the universe, where every creation is an expression of divine proportion and purpose. To comprehend *ḥikmah* thus means to perceive the metaphysical order behind physical existence.

In Qur'anic epistemology, the act of reflecting on creation (*tafakkur fī khalq Allah*) becomes a pathway to wisdom. The signs in the heavens and earth (Q. 3:190-191) are not objects of detached observation but invitations to recognise divine unity (*tawḥid*) through intellectual contemplation. Consequently, *ḥikmah* represents an ontological awareness - the recognition that truth is woven into the structure of being.

### 7.1.7 The Ethical Dimension of Ḥikmah

Knowledge divorced from morality is condemned in the Qur'an as imbalance (*ẓulm*). *Ḥikmah*, by contrast, fuses cognition with moral calibration. Luqmān's wisdom manifests in ethical admonition: *"O my son, establish prayer, enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and be patient over what befalls you"* (Q. 31:17). Here, wisdom is expressed as ethical equilibrium - the practical alignment of action with divine justice. Hence, Qur'anic *ḥikmah* serves as both epistemic integration and ethical orientation. It ensures that knowledge (*‘ilm*) and action (*‘amal*) remain inseparable dimensions of truth realisation.

In summary, the Qur'anic notion of *ḥikmah* integrates revelation (*Kitab*), cognition (*‘aql*), and morality (*taqwā*). It is a divine gift realised through reflective receptivity and ethical application. As a concept, *ḥikmah* harmonises the cosmos, the intellect, and the moral self into a unified epistemological field - the field of divine order manifest through human understanding.

## 7.2 Ḥikmah as Epistemic Integration

In the Qur'anic worldview, *ḥikmah* (wisdom) represents the ultimate stage of epistemic synthesis - the point at which knowledge (*‘ilm*), understanding (*fahm*), and moral consciousness (*taqwā*) are harmoniously integrated. It signifies not only knowing the truth but embodying it in thought, judgment, and action. Unlike fragmented intellectual approaches, Qur'anic epistemology presents *ḥikmah* as a unifying principle that bridges revelation and reason, knowledge and ethics, contemplation and practice. It transforms cognitive awareness into applied discernment, guiding humanity toward justice, balance, and righteousness. Thus, *ḥikmah* serves as the highest epistemic state in the Qur'an, where understanding



becomes transformative, and knowledge aligns with divine will, ensuring that truth is not merely apprehended but lived in accordance with divine harmony.

### 7.2.1 From Knowing to Integrating

The Qur'anic epistemological system is not linear but integrative. It proceeds from knowledge (*ilm*) to understanding (*fahm*), to verification (*yaqin*), and finally to wisdom (*hikmah*). *Hikmah* represents the moment where these cognitive processes converge, producing a balanced perception of truth that aligns intellect, revelation, and moral awareness.

Unlike fragmented epistemologies that separate faith and reason, the Qur'an envisions *ḥikmah* as the fusion of rational reflection and divine revelation into an integrated system of knowing. This epistemic synthesis transforms isolated information into living knowledge that aligns with divine intent (Al-Attas, 1995).

### 7.2.2 The Hierarchical Structure of Qur'anic Knowledge

The Qur'an constructs a cognitive hierarchy that culminates in *ḥikmah*:

- Ilm (Knowledge): Acquisition of facts and recognition of divine signs (Q. 96:1-5).
- Fahm (Understanding): Interpretive reasoning (*tadabbur*) upon those signs (Q. 47:24).
- Burhan (Proof): Logical validation of knowledge (Q. 4:174).
- Bayyina (Clarity): Evident manifestation of truth (Q. 98:1).
- Taqwa (Moral Awareness): Ethical sensitivity guiding cognition (Q. 2:2).
- Ḥikmah (Wisdom): Integration of all previous stages into a coherent epistemic unity (Q. 2:269).

Through this sequence, the Qur'an portrays wisdom not as the beginning but as the culmination of knowledge - the synthesis that converts information into realisation.

### 7.2.3 The Dialectic of Revelation and Reason

*Ḥikmah* operates at the intersection of *wahy* (revelation) and *'aql* (reason). Revelation provides the divine framework, while reason interprets and internalises it. The Qur'an encourages the use of reason repeatedly - "*Will you not reason?*" (Q. 2:44; 36:62) - while simultaneously warning that intellect divorced from divine guidance leads to delusion (Q. 45:23).

Hence, the Qur'an's epistemology does not privilege reason over revelation nor revelation over reason, but integrates them under divine unity (*tawḥid*). The truly wise (*ulu al-ḥikmah*) are those who perceive no dichotomy between thinking and believing.

### 7.2.4 Ḥikmah as Ethical Rationality

Wisdom in the Qur'an is inseparable from ethics. Knowledge without righteousness leads to arrogance, as symbolised by the verse: "*They know the outward of this world's life, but they are heedless of the Hereafter*" (Q. 30:7). The wise, by contrast, align their intellect with moral consciousness: "*Only those fear Allah who know*" (Q. 35:28).

Thus, *ḥikmah* transforms epistemology into ethical rationality - a state in which knowing is inseparable from doing good (‘*amal ṣaliḥ*). In this sense, *ḥikmah* integrates not only mental faculties but the entire human being - intellect, heart, and will - into a unified field of consciousness aligned with divine law (*ḥukm Allah*).

### 7.2.5 Ḥikmah and Divine Illumination

The Qur'an's metaphor of light (Q. 24:35) encapsulates the process of epistemic integration. Divine light (*mur Allah*) symbolises truth, and the human intellect is the lamp that receives and radiates it. When revelation illuminates reason, the result is *ḥikmah* - clarity that harmonises cognitive perception and spiritual vision.

The “*light upon light*” (Q. 24:35) metaphor signifies cumulative illumination: knowledge (‘*ilm*) refined by divine guidance becomes wisdom (*ḥikmah*). This portrays *ḥikmah* as both epistemic and ontological illumination - the merging of knowing and being.

### 7.2.6 Ḥikmah as Balance: The Mean between Extremes

Qur'anic *ḥikmah* is often expressed through balance (*mizan*). The universe itself is built in equilibrium (Q. 55:7-9), and so must human cognition be. Extremes - whether blind rationalism or irrational mysticism - are both distortions of divine order. Wisdom arises when human thought maintains equilibrium between intellect and spirit, law and compassion, reasoning and revelation.

This principle is evident in the Qur'anic directive: “*Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction*” (Q. 16:125). Here, wisdom is not just intellectual correctness but emotional and ethical balance in communication - embodying divine justice in human engagement.

### 7.2.7 Integration across the Realms: Ghayb and Shahadah

One of the profound dimensions of Qur'anic *ḥikmah* is its unification of the seen (*shahadah*) and unseen (*ghayb*) realms. The wise perceive continuity between metaphysical and physical dimensions of existence. The verse, “*He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they encompass nothing of His knowledge except what He wills*” (Q. 2:255), articulates the epistemic humility required to bridge both worlds.

Human wisdom thus lies not in total comprehension but in reverent recognition of limits - acknowledging that all true knowledge derives from divine permission (*idh'n Allah*). In this awareness, *ḥikmah* manifests as a harmonised vision that embraces mystery without denying reason.

### 7.2.8 The Teleology of Wisdom: From Knowledge to Transformation

Ultimately, *ḥikmah* is transformative knowledge - it changes the knower. In Qur'anic terms, it leads from intellectual awareness to spiritual realisation (*yaqin*). Wisdom refines the heart (*qalb*) to mirror divine truth, enabling action that reflects justice, gratitude, and humility.

The teleological purpose of *ḥikmah* is not theoretical satisfaction but existential alignment - to live according to divine order in thought, speech, and deed. As Sardar (2014) notes, Qur'anic wisdom is performative: it manifests as living truth rather than abstract speculation.

### 7.2.9 Summary: The Qur'anic Synthesis of Knowing

In conclusion, *ḥikmah* in the Qur'an operates as the synthesis of all epistemic faculties. It integrates:

- Cognitive clarity (*bayyina*),
- Rational validation (*Burhan*),
- Ethical guidance (*taqwa*),
- Revelatory truth (*Kitab*), and
- Moral transformation (*'amal*).

It transforms knowledge into realisation and understanding into illumination. Thus, *ḥikmah* represents the unity of truth, cognition, and morality - the ultimate station of Qur'anic epistemology.

## 7.3 The Ethical Dimension of Ḥikmah

The Qur'an presents *ḥikmah* not as a mere intellectual achievement but as a profoundly ethical state of being. It integrates knowledge (*'ilm*), understanding (*fahm*), and moral awareness (*taqwa*) into a unified ethical consciousness. In this view, *ḥikmah* is inseparable from righteousness, justice, and humility. It is not the possession of abstract information but the moral application of truth according to divine order. As stated in the Qur'an, "*He grants wisdom (ḥikmah) to whom He wills, and whoever is granted wisdom has been given abundant good*" (Q. 2:269). This verse associates wisdom with divine benevolence and moral excellence rather than intellectual elitism.

### 7.3.1 Ḥikmah as Moral Orientation

The Qur'an frames wisdom as the ethical compass of human cognition. Every act of knowing must be guided by moral consciousness to ensure that knowledge serves justice and compassion rather than arrogance or corruption. Wisdom restrains the self from excess, aligns intellect with conscience, and directs power toward righteousness. The Prophet Luqman, whose name is synonymous with wisdom, is described as one who used his understanding for ethical counsel and moral balance: "*We gave Luqman wisdom, [saying], 'Be grateful to Allah'*" (Q. 31:12). Gratitude becomes the first moral manifestation of wisdom, linking cognition to spiritual humility.

This moral orientation emphasises that *ḥikmah* cannot exist without an ethical context. It is not neutral or detached but grounded in the Qur'anic vision of *adl* (justice), *ihsan* (goodness), and *taqwa* (God-consciousness). Each act of discernment becomes a moral decision, as human reason must remain accountable before divine truth.

### 7.3.2 The Unity of Knowledge and Virtue

In the Qur'an, knowledge (*'ilm*) and virtue (*'amal ṣaliḥ*) are inseparable dimensions of *ḥikmah*. True wisdom manifests when understanding translates into ethical action: "*And those who have been given*

knowledge see that what has been revealed to you from your Lord is the truth and guides to the path of the Mighty, the Praiseworthy” (Q. 34:6). Here, truth (*ḥaqq*) is not static information; it is a path of conduct aligned with divine praise and justice.

Thus, *ḥikmah* embodies a moral epistemology in which cognition becomes transformative. The Qur'an warns against those who possess knowledge but misuse it for worldly gain or oppression, as such knowledge is stripped of *ḥikmah* (Q. 2:44, Q. 62:5). The ethical dimension ensures that wisdom remains a form of moral accountability, not a tool for domination.

### 7.3.3 *Ḥikmah* and *Taqwa*: Conscious Ethics

The Qur'an repeatedly associates wisdom with *taqwa*, the inner consciousness that guards one from moral deviation. “*Fear Allah, and Allah will teach you*” (Q. 2:282). This verse implies a reciprocal relationship between moral awareness and divine enlightenment. Wisdom grows from reverence; the heart that is purified through *taqwa* becomes capable of discernment.

From a Qur'anic epistemological perspective, *taqwa* is not fear in a negative sense but a discipline of conscience. It ensures that the acquisition and application of knowledge occur within moral boundaries. Without *taqwa*, intellect degenerates into arrogance, and reason becomes an instrument of deception. Hence, wisdom is both a gift and a responsibility - it must be cultivated through ethical discipline and constant remembrance (*dhikr*) of the Divine.

### 7.3.4 Justice (‘*Adl*) as the Fulfilment of Wisdom

The Qur'an defines justice (‘*adl*) as a primary expression of wisdom in society. “*Indeed, Allah commands justice, excellence, and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and oppression*” (Q. 16:90). This verse encapsulates the ethical telos of *ḥikmah* - the realisation of balance and fairness in human relations. Wisdom, therefore, is not limited to individual moral reflection but extends to social ethics and governance.

The wise person, in Qur'anic terms, acts as a custodian of justice, ensuring that personal and collective decisions reflect divine equity. *Ḥikmah* transforms abstract understanding into practical justice, preserving social harmony and moral balance. This ethical dynamism distinguishes *ḥikmah* from mere philosophical contemplation; it becomes a living virtue manifest in action.

### 7.3.5 Compassion and Forgiveness as Expressions of *Ḥikmah*

Another crucial ethical dimension of *ḥikmah* in the Qur'an is *raḥmah* (compassion). The wise person recognises that moral perfection includes forgiveness, empathy, and patience. The Qur'an extols these traits as marks of the truly wise: “*Those who restrain anger and pardon people - Allah loves those who do good*” (Q. 3:134). The ability to subdue anger and act with compassion represents the ethical refinement that arises from wisdom.

In this light, *ḥikmah* harmonises intellect and emotion, judgment and mercy. It teaches balance between firmness and gentleness, ensuring that knowledge serves humanity rather than humiliates it. Thus, ethical

wisdom is characterised by equilibrium - neither passivity nor aggression, but a measured response rooted in divine consciousness.

### 7.3.6 The Ethical Responsibility of Knowledge

The Qur'an cautions against those who possess knowledge but fail to act ethically: *"The example of those who were entrusted with the Torah and then did not take it on is like that of a donkey carrying books"* (Q. 62:5). This striking metaphor illustrates the ethical void of knowledge without moral orientation. Wisdom demands responsibility; knowledge becomes valuable only when integrated with sincerity and service.

Ethical wisdom thus redefines the purpose of learning - not for self-exaltation, but for the welfare of creation and the glorification of the Creator. The Qur'an consistently aligns ḥikmah with humility (Q. 31:18-19), suggesting that arrogance is antithetical to true wisdom. The wise person is humble, aware of human limitations before divine infinity.

The ethical dimension of ḥikmah completes the Qur'anic epistemological cycle. Knowledge begins with divine revelation, deepens through reflection (*tafakkur*), and culminates in moral embodiment. Ḥikmah becomes the living synthesis of understanding and virtue - a state where intellect is purified by ethics, and ethics are illuminated by intellect. In this holistic model, wisdom is not simply to know, but to know rightly and act justly, transforming both the self and society through divine guidance.

## 7.4 Ḥikmah and Theoretical Synthesis

The Qur'an envisions ḥikmah as the ultimate epistemic synthesis - the convergence of divine revelation, rational inquiry, and moral consciousness. This synthesis is not theoretical in a purely abstract sense but represents the ontological unity of knowledge and being. It transcends dualisms between intellect and faith, science and revelation, thought and action. In the Qur'anic paradigm, wisdom is the process by which human understanding mirrors the divine order, integrating diverse strands of truth into coherent insight.

### 7.4.1 Ḥikmah as Epistemological Harmony

The Qur'an portrays wisdom as the point where various epistemic modes - observation, reason, revelation, and reflection - meet in harmony. *"And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your languages and colours; indeed, in that are signs for those who know"* (Q. 30:22). This verse affirms that cosmic diversity is not contradiction but complementarity. Wisdom perceives unity within multiplicity, integrating empirical observation with spiritual meaning.

Hence, ḥikmah is a meta-epistemic faculty that reconciles different modes of knowing. It unites empirical reality with moral purpose and divine revelation with rational structure. Theoretical synthesis, therefore, is not an external imposition but an internal realisation of coherence between all dimensions of truth.

### 7.4.2 The Qur'anic Logic of Integration

Unlike post-Enlightenment epistemologies that separate knowledge into disciplines, the Qur'an teaches an integrative logic - the logic of *tawḥīd*. *Tawḥīd* (divine unity) serves as the epistemological foundation

of ḥikmah. All knowledge originates from the One, reflects the One, and returns to the One. As stated: *“To Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth, and to Allah all matters return”* (Q. 3:109).

In this logic, truth is not fragmented but interconnected. Natural laws, ethical norms, and spiritual realities are manifestations of a single divine order. The wise person perceives these correspondences, constructing a worldview in which science, ethics, and spirituality converge.

### 7.4.3 From Contemplation to Theory

In Qur'anic epistemology, theory (*nazar*) is not speculative abstraction but the systematic ordering of divine signs (*ayat*) into meaningful understanding. The Qur'an commands believers to observe, reflect, and deduce from nature, history, and revelation (Q. 3:190-191; Q. 29:20). Theoretical wisdom emerges from interpreting these signs coherently, forming principles that guide both moral and scientific inquiry.

Thus, theorisation in the Qur'an is both an intellectual and spiritual act. It requires humility before the infinite and awareness that all human formulations are contingent reflections of divine truth. This humility preserves the moral integrity of theory, preventing it from becoming detached from ethical purpose.

### 7.4.4 Integrating Rationality and Revelation

Ḥikmah, in its highest sense, integrates rational insight with divine revelation. The Qur'an honours reason (*'aql*) as a faculty of understanding but subordinates it to revelation as its ultimate source. *“Will they not then reflect on the Qur'an? If it had been from other than Allah, they would have found within it much contradiction”* (Q. 4:82). Here, the Qur'an invites rational verification as part of divine understanding.

This synthesis refutes both irrational fideism and materialist empiricism. Revelation without reason becomes blind belief; reason without revelation becomes moral anarchy. The Qur'an envisions wisdom as their creative interdependence, ensuring that truth is both knowable and meaningful.

### 7.4.5 Ḥikmah and the Architecture of Meaning

Wisdom in the Qur'an functions as a structural principle - an architecture of meaning through which all forms of knowledge gain coherence. Just as the universe operates by measure (*qadar*) and proportion (*mizan*) (Q. 55:7-9), so too must human understanding reflect divine balance. The wise thinker recognises patterns of order and justice that govern both physical and moral worlds.

This theoretical synthesis leads to an integrated worldview in which theology, ethics, and natural philosophy form a single continuum. It resists fragmentation by restoring the sacred unity of knowledge. Hence, ḥikmah represents not only insight but intellectual equilibrium - a harmonisation of the microcosm of human reason with the macrocosm of divine order.

### 7.4.6 Ḥikmah as the Foundation of Civilizational Thought

The Qur'an implies that societies flourish or decline according to their relation to ḥikmah. *“He raises the ranks of those who believe and those who have been given knowledge”* (Q. 58:11). The wise community



integrates science, justice, and spirituality in a balanced civilisation. The absence of ḥikmah leads to fragmentation - intellectual, ethical, and social.

In this sense, wisdom is not merely an individual virtue but a civilizational principle. It guides governance, education, and culture toward justice, knowledge, and compassion. A society governed by ḥikmah reflects the harmony of divine order in its institutions and values.

#### 7.4.7 Ḥikmah as the Unifying Principle of Knowledge

The Qur'an envisions wisdom (*ḥikmah*) as the culmination of epistemological development - where knowing, understanding, and moral being converge. It is both the synthesis of diverse knowledges and the ethical compass that ensures their righteous use. Through ḥikmah, revelation and reason, theory and practice, science and spirituality are unified under the principle of tawḥīd.

In this synthesis, the human intellect mirrors divine harmony; knowledge becomes a reflection of faith, and faith becomes enlightened by knowledge. Ḥikmah thus stands as the ultimate epistemic virtue - the light that integrates truth and goodness, intellect and conscience, in the service of divine justice.

### 7.5 The Spiritual Realisation of Ḥikmah

In the Qur'anic worldview, *ḥikmah* (wisdom) reaches its fullest expression not in intellectual mastery or moral conduct alone, but in its spiritual realisation - the point at which divine knowledge is inwardly experienced and actualised. The Qur'an presents *ḥikmah* as both an intellectual illumination and a spiritual awakening, a bridge between knowing about the Divine and knowing *through* the Divine. This realisation is neither mystical in the esoteric sense nor purely rational; rather, it is the internalisation of divine truth in the heart of the believer.

The Qur'an describes this inner transformation as a process of illumination (*mur*), purification (*tazkiyah*), and nearness (*qurb*) to Allah. Wisdom thus culminates when the intellect, the soul, and moral consciousness align in divine remembrance and surrender. As the Qur'an declares: "*Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth... light upon light; Allah guides to His light whom He wills*" (Q. 24:35). The realisation of *ḥikmah* is therefore the human participation in divine light - a spiritual condition that unifies perception, knowledge, and being.

#### 7.5.1 The Inner Dimension of Wisdom

The Qur'an constantly associates wisdom with insight (*basirah*) and understanding of the heart (*Fu'ad*). These terms indicate that the realisation of *ḥikmah* occurs not in the external faculties of logic or speech but within the interior realm of consciousness. The Qur'an asks rhetorically: "*Have they not travelled through the earth so that they may have hearts by which they understand or ears by which they hear? For indeed it is not the eyes that are blind, but the hearts within the chests*" (Q. 22:46).

This verse distinguishes between external perception and inner realisation. The eyes may see, but only the purified heart comprehends divine meaning. Thus, the spiritual realisation of wisdom is not the addition

of knowledge but the awakening of perception - a movement from information to illumination. The heart (*qalb*) becomes the seat of divine understanding, capable of reflecting truth without distortion.

The Qur'an also frames *hikmah* as a divine bestowal: "*He grants wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever is granted wisdom has been given abundant good*" (Q. 2:269). Here, wisdom is not earned through reasoning alone; it is graced through divine favour upon those whose hearts are receptive. The spiritual realisation of *hikmah*, therefore, begins with the purification of intention and the removal of arrogance, allowing the self to become a vessel of divine truth.

### 7.5.2 The Purified Heart (*Qalb Salim*) and Spiritual Wisdom

The Qur'an describes the purified heart (*qalb Salim*) as the essential condition for divine insight: "*The Day when neither wealth nor children will benefit anyone, except one who comes to Allah with a sound heart*" (Q. 26:88-89). A sound heart is one free from corruption, deceit, and spiritual blindness. It is through such a heart that *hikmah* becomes realised - not merely understood but lived.

This purification (*tazkiyah*) transforms wisdom from an intellectual possession into a spiritual orientation. The process of *tazkiyah* involves continuous remembrance (*dhikr*), moral self-discipline (*jihad al-nafs*), and detachment from falsehood. When the soul achieves clarity, wisdom manifests as light that guides perception and action: "*Whoever Allah wishes to guide - He expands his breast to Islam; and whoever He wishes to let go astray - He makes his breast tight and constricted*" (Q. 6:125). The spiritual realisation of *hikmah* thus coincides with inner expansion, a luminous receptivity to divine guidance.

The Qur'an's emphasis on *qalb* as the centre of understanding implies that true wisdom requires an integration of intellect and spirituality. The heart perceives what the intellect cannot deduce - moral truth, divine presence, and eternal meaning. This balance of rational insight and spiritual purity defines the Qur'anic conception of *hikmah*.

### 7.5.3 The Light of Divine Guidance

The Qur'an frequently uses light (*mur*) as a metaphor for the inner realisation of wisdom. The verse of light (Q. 24:35) is the most comprehensive expression of this epistemic illumination. It describes Allah as the ultimate Light, the source of all clarity, and the object of all true knowledge. The parable continues: "The parable of His light is as if there were a niche, within it a lamp; the lamp enclosed in glass; the glass as if it were a shining star." Each element - niche, lamp, and glass - represents stages in the awakening of consciousness.

In the human being, the lamp of the heart becomes the site where divine light is received. The clarity of the glass symbolises purity of intention and moral refinement. When the heart is transparent, the divine light shines unobstructed, illuminating perception and action. The Qur'an affirms that "light upon light" guides those who submit, indicating a continuum of illumination in which understanding grows progressively through faith, reflection, and obedience.



This light-oriented epistemology transforms *ḥikmah* from an intellectual virtue into a spiritual presence. The wise are those whose hearts radiate insight, whose perception is illuminated by remembrance, and whose actions reflect divine justice. The light of *ḥikmah* dispels the darkness of doubt, ignorance, and ego, allowing truth to be both known and embodied.

#### 7.5.4 Dhikr (Remembrance) as Spiritual Activation of Ḥikmah

The Qur'an repeatedly calls believers to *dhikr Allah* (remembrance of God) as a means of awakening and sustaining spiritual wisdom. "*So remember Me; I will remember you. And be grateful to Me and do not deny Me*" (Q. 2:152). Dhikr is not merely verbal repetition but an epistemic discipline that keeps the heart aligned with divine reality. Through remembrance, the self becomes aware of its origin and purpose, and wisdom is actualised as lived consciousness.

The Qur'an links forgetfulness (*ghaflah*) to spiritual ignorance. When the heart forgets its Source, wisdom becomes fragmented and distorted. "*Do not be like those who forgot Allah, so He made them forget themselves*" (Q. 59:19). Forgetfulness leads to self-alienation, while remembrance restores self-knowledge through divine awareness. Thus, *dhikr* operates as the spiritual mechanism by which *ḥikmah* remains vibrant - a continual reconnection of intellect and spirit.

The spiritual realisation of *ḥikmah* depends on this constant remembering, which transforms abstract truth into inner presence. The wise individual does not merely recall divine words but *embodies* them. In this sense, *ḥikmah* becomes a living remembrance, shaping perception, speech, and conduct in harmony with divine will.

#### 7.5.5 Tawḥid and the Unity of Knowing and Being

At its deepest level, the spiritual realisation of *ḥikmah* arises from *tawḥid* - the recognition of divine unity in all existence. The Qur'an describes Allah as the One who "*encompasses all things in knowledge*" (Q. 65:12). To realise *ḥikmah* spiritually is to perceive that every fragment of knowledge, every moral principle, and every natural phenomenon reflects the singular order of the Creator.

This perception transforms the knower into a participant in divine unity. The individual no longer sees knowledge as a possession but as a trust (*amanah*) through which the divine reality is mirrored. The Qur'an reminds humankind: "*We offered the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it and feared it; yet man undertook it*" (Q. 33:72). Spiritual wisdom is the faithful fulfilment of this trust - using knowledge to recognise, serve, and manifest divine order.

Thus, *ḥikmah* becomes a form of spiritual integration: intellect is illuminated by faith, faith is clarified by understanding, and action is sanctified by awareness. Tawḥid provides the metaphysical foundation upon which the entire edifice of Qur'anic epistemology rests - the realisation that all knowledge ultimately converges in the knowledge of Allah.

#### 7.5.6 The Tranquillity of Wisdom: Sakīnah and Spiritual Equilibrium

The Qur'an describes the descent of *sakinah* (tranquillity) as the experiential sign of divine guidance and wisdom. "*He it is who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers so that they may increase in*

*faith along with their faith*” (Q. 48:4). Sakīnah represents the inner peace that arises when knowledge and faith reach harmony. It is the calm certainty (*yaqīn*) that emerges from spiritual realisation.

This state is not emotional passivity but existential stability - the soul's recognition of its rootedness in divine reality. The wise person lives within this tranquillity, perceiving divine purpose even amid adversity. Such serenity marks the culmination of *ḥikmah*, where intellect no longer wavers in doubt, and the heart rests in the assurance of truth.

Spiritual wisdom thus produces both insight and peace; it transforms epistemology into serenity. The heart that has realised *ḥikmah* perceives all events as manifestations of divine wisdom, responding with patience (*ṣabr*) and gratitude (*shukr*). This equilibrium becomes the existential signature of spiritual maturity in the Qur'anic worldview.

### 7.5.7 The Fruit of Ḥikmah: Living in Divine Proportion

The spiritual realisation of wisdom culminates in living according to divine proportion (*mizan*) - the balance established by Allah in creation. *“And the sky He raised, and set the balance, that you do not transgress within the balance. And establish weight with justice and do not fall short in the balance”* (Q. 55:7-9). This cosmic order mirrors the ethical and spiritual order within the self.

To live in accordance with *ḥikmah* is to maintain inner and outer equilibrium - between intellect and emotion, duty and desire, individuality and universality. The spiritually wise person aligns his existence with this divine symmetry, perceiving harmony where others see chaos. Such a balance reflects both moral justice and spiritual awareness, demonstrating that wisdom is not abstract philosophy but embodied proportion.

The Qur'an portrays this harmony as the ultimate realisation of human purpose: *“Indeed, my prayer, my sacrifice, my life, and my death are for Allah, the Lord of the worlds”* (Q. 6:162). When knowledge, will, and being are unified in divine service, *ḥikmah* has reached its consummation - not as a possession of the mind but as the state of the soul.

### 7.5.8 Ḥikmah as the Light of the Heart

The spiritual realisation of *ḥikmah* represents the final ascent of Qur'anic epistemology. It begins with revelation, is refined by reflection and moral action, and culminates in illumination - the state where divine knowledge becomes lived reality. The Qur'an portrays this transformation as the movement from darkness to light, ignorance to awareness, fragmentation to unity.

In this realisation, the heart becomes the locus of divine reflection. Knowledge no longer operates as an external pursuit but as an internal awakening. The wise person does not merely understand truth; they become a vessel through which truth radiates. Thus, *ḥikmah* transcends epistemology and enters ontology - it becomes the form of being that reflects the divine.

The spiritual realisation of wisdom is, therefore, the Qur'anic ideal of human fulfilment: to know rightly, act justly, and live luminously, *“For whoever Allah grants light, there is no darkness for them”* (Q. 39:22).

*Ḥikmah* represents the Qur'anic ideal of integrated knowledge-the harmony of intellect, morality, and spirit. It is the fruit of disciplined inquiry and the sign of spiritual maturity. Through *ḥikmah*, human understanding transcends partial truths and perceives reality as a unified expression of divine wisdom.

This synthesis unites empirical perception (*naẓar*), reflection (*tafakkur*, *tadabbur*), verification (*burhan*, *bayyina*), and ethical discernment into a single continuum. The result is not only intellectual coherence but existential balance. The wise individual, in Qur'anic terms, aligns thought with truth, speech with justice, and action with compassion.

In the final analysis, the Qur'an presents *ḥikmah* as both the summit and centre of its epistemology-a vision of knowledge that integrates truth and being, science and spirituality, reason and revelation. The journey of knowing thus culminates in unity: *tawḥid* realised as understanding, justice, and peace.

## Chapter 8: Application (‘Amal, Iman): Knowledge into Action

The Qur'an never treats knowledge (*‘ilm*) as an abstract or detached pursuit. Rather, it presents knowledge as a living force that finds completion only through righteous action (*‘amal ṣaliḥ*) and sincere faith (*iman*). The Qur'anic paradigm rejects any separation between knowing and doing; true understanding manifests itself in the transformation of character, society, and environment. “*Those who believe and do righteous deeds*” (Q. 2:25; 103:3) is a repeated formula that establishes the inseparable bond between cognition and moral responsibility. In this framework, ‘Amal becomes the embodiment of epistemic truth-knowledge translated into ethical reality, while Iman represents the interior conviction that energises such action. Hence, the application of knowledge in the Qur'an is not mechanical imitation but conscious moral performance grounded in divine awareness. This chapter explores how ‘Amal and Iman function as the dynamic realisation of knowledge, transforming intellectual insight into a life of spiritual integrity and social justice.

### 8.1 The Qur'anic Fusion of Knowledge and Action

The epistemological system of the Qur'an does not conclude with cognition or theoretical insight; it culminates in *‘amal* (action) and *iman* (faith). Knowledge in the Qur'anic paradigm is never abstract or detached—it is teleological, moving toward moral enactment and existential transformation. The Qur'an repeatedly pairs *‘amal ṣaliḥ* (righteous action) with *iman* (faith), establishing a dialectical relationship between internal conviction and external behaviour (Q. 2:82; 103:2-3). This unity of knowing and doing defines the Qur'anic model of truth as lived reality. *‘Amal* without *iman* becomes mechanistic and devoid of divine orientation, while *iman* without *‘amal* remains incomplete and unmanifested.

Thus, in Qur'anic epistemology, true knowledge (*‘ilm*) finds its consummation in action aligned with divine guidance (*huda*). The human being, as a *khaliifah* (vicegerent) on earth, is tasked not merely with understanding but with actualising divine wisdom in social, moral, and ecological domains (Q. 2:30; 6:165). Knowledge becomes a covenantal trust (*amanah*) that obliges responsibility. Hence, the Qur'anic epistemic circle—perception, reflection, verification, and synthesis—finds its closure in *‘amal*, the praxis of divine truth.

### 8.2 ‘Amal: Action as Manifest Knowledge

In the Qur'anic worldview, *‘Amal* (action) is not a secondary outcome of knowledge but its visible manifestation and proof. The Qur'an repeatedly binds *‘ilm* (knowledge) with *‘amal ṣaliḥ* (righteous action), declaring that understanding devoid of action is incomplete and spiritually inert. *‘Amal* transforms theoretical awareness into lived truth, embodying the ethical and existential consequences of divine knowledge. The believer's deeds become a reflection of their inner recognition of truth, serving as a bridge between knowing and being. Thus, in the Qur'anic epistemological cycle, *‘Amal* stands as the practical realisation of revelation, where the intellect, conscience, and will converge in obedience to divine guidance.

### 8.2.1 The Ontological Ground of ‘Amal

In the Qur’an, ‘*amal* is not a mere physical or behavioural act but an ontological manifestation of inner cognition. The term stems from the triliteral root ‘-m-l, implying deliberate, conscious engagement. The Qur’an distinguishes between *fi’l* (an act) and ‘*amal* (purposeful deed): while *fi’l* may denote a casual or neutral act, ‘*amal* carries moral and epistemic intentionality. The verse “*And say, ‘Do [i’malu]; Allah will see your deeds, and so will His Messenger and the believers’*” (Q. 9:105) underscores divine surveillance over action, implying its epistemic and moral visibility in the cosmic order.

Thus, ‘*amal* operates within an epistemological continuum-it externalises knowledge. The Qur’an never separates cognition from praxis because human knowledge is validated only through righteous enactment (‘*amal ṣaliḥ*). Such action reflects inner harmony with divine order (*al-ḥaqq*) and manifests moral truth in tangible reality (Q. 18:30).

### 8.2.2 ‘Amal as Verification of Faith

The Qur’an establishes ‘*amal* as the verifying instrument of *iman*. Belief without corresponding action is epistemically void. The recurrent formula “*Those who believe and do righteous deeds*” (Q. 2:25; 4:57; 18:107) signifies that belief must manifest ethically. This coupling operates as an epistemological law: truth must translate into lived expression.

Faith (*iman*) thus functions not as passive assent but as dynamic affirmation through conduct. It is an existential orientation-trust (*amanah*), submission (*islam*), and moral steadfastness (*taqwa*). When knowledge penetrates the heart (*qalb*), it transforms into faith, and faith in turn motivates action. This cyclic process of internalisation and externalisation maintains epistemic integrity in the Qur’anic worldview.

### 8.2.3 Righteous Action (‘Amal Ṣaliḥ) as Ethical Praxis

‘*Amal ṣaliḥ* literally means “sound or wholesome action.” The adjective *ṣaliḥ* comes from *ṣ-l-ḥ*, denoting harmony, rectitude, and moral repair. Thus, ‘*amal ṣaliḥ* signifies action that restores balance (*mizan*) and sustains justice (‘*adl*). The Qur’an situates righteous action as the epistemic fruit of divine guidance: “*Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while being a believer -We will surely cause him to live a good life*” (Q. 16:97).

Here, righteousness embodies truth enacted-knowledge becoming moral ecology. In this sense, ‘*amal ṣaliḥ* has social and cosmic implications: it aligns human existence with divine order. This is why the Qur’an contrasts it with ‘*amal sayyi*’ (evil deeds), which distort the moral fabric and obscure truth (Q. 45:21).

### 8.2.4 Action as Knowledge of Being

The Qur’an often frames action as a mode of knowing. Through acting upon divine guidance, humans participate in ontological truth. ‘*Amal* thus serves as epistemic realisation-the embodiment of wisdom in the temporal world. The act of prayer (*ṣalah*), charity (*zakah*), justice (‘*adl*), or forgiveness (‘*afw*) is not a mere ritual but cognitive enactments -they shape consciousness toward divine remembrance (*dhikr Allah*)

(Q. 13:28). Hence, *'amal* in Qur'anic epistemology represents the performative culmination of all prior stages of knowing. It signifies the translation of inner illumination into world-affirming justice.

### 8.3 Iman: Faith as Epistemic Commitment

Iman in the Qur'an is far more than belief; it is an epistemic commitment to truth that encompasses cognition, emotion, and volition. Faith is not blind assent but a conscious acknowledgement grounded in understanding (*'ilm*) and affirmation of divine reality. The Qur'an describes iman as a light that illumines perception, guiding the intellect to discern between truth and falsehood (Q. 57:28). It unites reason and revelation, turning conviction into spiritual certainty (*yaqin*). Within the Qur'anic epistemic framework, iman completes the circle of knowing-what begins as divine communication and culminates in human commitment. Faith, therefore, becomes the soul of knowledge: the inner realisation that transforms awareness into enduring moral orientation.

#### 8.3.1 The Meaning and Structure of Iman

*Iman* derives from *'-m-n*, meaning security, trust, and affirmation. To have *iman* is to enter a state of epistemic and existential trust in the divine source of truth. It is not blind belief but conscious assent grounded in knowledge. The Qur'an emphasises, "*Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah-unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts find rest*" (Q. 13:28).

Thus, *Iman* is intellectual conviction coupled with spiritual tranquillity. It bridges *'ilm* and *'amal*, transforming abstract knowledge into moral energy. Faith is the interiorization of verified truth (*burhan*) and its constant recollection (*tadhakkur*) within the moral self.

#### 8.3.2 Iman and the Integrity of Knowledge

The Qur'an rejects *ẓann* (speculative assumption) as a substitute for faith (Q. 53:28). True *iman* emerges only through engagement with divine signs (*ayat*)-through observation (*naẓar*), reflection (*tafakkur*), and comprehension (*tadabbur*). When the intellect and heart recognise the harmony of creation and revelation, faith arises as an epistemic affirmation of truth.

Hence, *Iman* is the continuity of knowledge into conviction. It verifies the intellect's discovery through the heart's certainty. Faith, then, is not the opposite of reason but its consummation.

#### 8.3.3 Iman and the Moral Structure of Existence

Faith functions as the moral axis of the human being. It orients action toward righteousness and prevents epistemic corruption. The Qur'an equates disbelief (*kufr*) with the concealment of truth, not mere ignorance. Thus, *iman* entails unveiling reality and aligning one's being with divine will (Q. 24:35). Through *iman*, knowledge becomes trust, and trust becomes responsibility-a dynamic that sustains justice and compassion in human society.

## 8.4 Knowledge-Action Integration: The Epistemic Circle Completed

The Qur'an presents knowledge and action as mutually reinforcing. *'Ilm* without *'amal* is sterile, and *'amal* without *'ilm* is misguided. The verse “*Are those who know equal to those who do not know?*” (Q. 39:9) underscores the necessity of knowledge preceding action, yet the verse “*And those who strive for Us, We will surely guide them to Our ways*” (Q. 29:69) reveals that right action deepens knowledge. Thus, the epistemic circle remains active -each dimension feeding the other.

This synthesis reflects the Qur'an's moral cosmology, where every deed echoes in divine awareness (Q. 99:7-8). Human existence becomes an open field of moral experimentation under divine observation. The believer learns through action, perfects through reflection, and purifies through intention (*niyyah*).

## 8.5 The Transformative Ethic of Action

Action in Qur'anic epistemology is not merely instrumental, but transformative-it reshapes the self, society, and cosmos. Every act of justice, charity, or patience becomes an epistemic statement affirming the truth of divine order. The Qur'an repeatedly reminds humanity that deeds are inscribed (*Kitab marqum*) and shall be presented for judgment (Q. 18:49). Thus, action carries eternal epistemic consequence.

To act in alignment with divine truth is to participate in creation's moral rhythm. It transforms temporal acts into timeless meaning. Such is the Qur'anic epistemic ideal: knowledge realised through faith, embodied through action, and immortalised through divine remembrance.

## 8.6 Conclusion: Knowledge as Action, Action as Knowledge

In the Qur'anic epistemological system, the culmination of knowing lies not in theory but in transformation. Knowledge (*'ilm*) matures into wisdom (*hikmah*), faith (*iman*), and finally action (*'amal*). The human intellect, purified through verification and reflection, expresses its truth through ethical performance.

The Qur'an thus closes the epistemic circle with an ethical mandate: to enact truth as lived justice, to embody wisdom as moral being, and to transform faith into social harmony. *'Amal* and *iman* together represent the divine-human covenant-knowledge that breathes, acts, and redeems.



## Chapter 9: Transmission (Da‘wah, Tabligh): The Communication of Knowledge

The Qur’anic vision of knowledge is inherently communicative. Divine wisdom (ḥikmah) is never meant to remain hidden within the individual intellect but to flow outward through Da‘wah (invitation to truth) and Tabligh (clear communication of the message). The Qur’an positions every believer as a participant in this sacred communication, charged with the responsibility to convey truth “*with wisdom and good exhortation*” (Q. 16:125). Here, transmission is not proselytisation through compulsion but the intellectual and ethical sharing of divine guidance. Da‘wah represents the calling of humanity to awareness, while Tabligh ensures that revelation remains clear, uncorrupted, and universally intelligible. Together, they form the communicative dimension of Qur’anic epistemology, where knowledge is sustained not by secrecy but by transparency, sincerity, and mutual understanding. This chapter examines how divine knowledge becomes a living discourse through truthful communication, illuminating the path of collective awakening.

### 9.1 Knowledge as Communal Trust

The Qur’anic epistemology culminates not in individual enlightenment but in communal responsibility. Knowledge (‘ilm) in the Qur’an is not a private possession; it is a trust (*amanah*) that must be communicated and enacted for the benefit of all creation. The process of transmission-through *da‘wah* (invitation) and *Tabligh* (communication or proclamation)-is therefore a sacred extension of knowing.

In Qur’anic discourse, communication of truth is not proselytisation in the modern sense but a moral act of sharing divine light (*mur*), inviting others to awareness, justice, and peace. It is a process rooted in compassion (*rahmah*), reason (‘aql), and ethical example (‘amal ṣaliḥ). As Allah commands: “*Invite (ud‘u) to the way of your Lord with wisdom (ḥikmah) and good instruction (maw‘izah ḥasanah), and argue with them in a way that is best*” (Q. 16:125).

This verse establishes *da‘wah* as an epistemic function-the application of wisdom in discourse, the use of reasoned persuasion, and the exercise of moral restraint. Transmission in the Qur’an is thus not the conquest of minds, but the awakening of conscience through truth.

### 9.2 Da‘wah: Invitation to the Way of Truth

The Qur’anic concept of Da‘wah signifies a sacred invitation-an open, rational, and compassionate call toward divine truth. It is not coercion, but communication rooted in understanding and respect for human freedom. The Qur’an instructs: “*Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good counsel*” (Q. 16:125), establishing *da‘wah* as an intellectual and ethical dialogue. This invitation arises from knowledge (‘ilm) and sincerity (*ikhlaṣ*), seeking not conversion through force but enlightenment through clarity. In Qur’anic epistemology, *da‘wah* functions as the communicative extension of knowledge, where truth, once internalised, must be shared for the sake of human awakening and moral renewal.



### 9.2.1 The Linguistic and Epistemic Essence of Da‘wah

The Arabic root *d-‘w* means to call, invite, or summon. In the Qur’an, *da‘wah* signifies a gentle and reasoned invitation toward divine reality, rather than coercion or domination. It presupposes recognition of truth and the moral duty to communicate it. The verse “*Who is better in speech than one who calls (da‘a) to Allah, works righteousness, and says: ‘Indeed, I am of the Muslims’?*” (Q. 41:33) defines *da‘wah* as both proclamation and embodiment of divine ethics.

Epistemologically, *da‘wah* arises when knowledge becomes communicable. It is not the transfer of data, but the transmission of awareness. The one who calls others to Allah becomes a *shahid* (witness) to truth through understanding, word, and action (Q. 22:78). Thus, *da‘wah* is a natural extension of the epistemic journey-it externalises faith and wisdom into social reality.

### 9.2.2 Da‘wah as Ethical Discourse

The Qur’an frames *da‘wah* as an act of ethical speech. The Prophet is commanded: “*Say: This is my way; I invite to Allah with clear insight (‘alā baṣīrah)*” (Q. 12:108). The term *baṣīrah*-insight-connects *da‘wah* to epistemic certainty. An invitation without knowledge or clarity contradicts Qur’anic methodology. The Qur’an insists on precision of meaning, patience in persuasion, and respect for human dignity.

This transforms *da‘wah* into a dialogical process. The goal is not conversion, but illumination-an appeal to reason and conscience. *Da‘wah* as epistemic communication reflects divine mercy; it seeks to awaken latent awareness within every human soul (*fiṭrah*), guiding it toward self-recognition and harmony with the Creator (Q. 30:30).

### 9.2.3 The Internal Dimension of Da‘wah

The Qur’an also internalises *da‘wah*-the believer is first invited to the self. Before calling others, one must respond to the divine call within. “*O you who have believed, respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life*” (Q. 8:24). This verse places *da‘wah* within the heart’s awakening; the external act of calling is valid only when the internal self has responded to truth. Hence, true *da‘wah* is not institutional preaching but existential resonance. The knower becomes the inviter, the message becomes life itself, and the world becomes the field of revelation.

## 9.3 Tabligh: Communication and Clarity of Message

In the Qur’anic epistemology, Tabligh signifies not merely the act of delivering a message but the sacred responsibility of ensuring that divine knowledge is communicated with truth, clarity, and sincerity. The Qur’an repeatedly reminds its readers that the Messenger’s duty is only to convey (*al-balagh al-mubin*)-to make the truth manifest without distortion, addition, or concealment (Q. 5:92; 16:35). This principle frames Tabligh as an epistemic act, where communication is itself a continuation of revelation through truthful articulation. The purpose of Tabligh is not persuasion by rhetoric, but illumination through clarity. Hence, every form of Qur’anic communication demands transparency, intellectual honesty, and moral accountability, ensuring that divine truth remains uncorrupted in its journey from revelation to understanding.

### 9.3.1 The Concept of Tabligh in the Qur'an

*Tabligh* derives from *b-l-gh*, meaning to reach, convey, or deliver completely. The Qur'an employs the term to denote the act of faithfully communicating divine revelation without distortion or omission. The command “*O Messenger, convey (balligh) what has been sent down to you from your Lord*” (Q. 5:67) establishes *Tabligh* as the sacred duty of transmitting truth with integrity.

In the epistemological hierarchy, *Tabligh* ensures that divine knowledge reaches human consciousness uncorrupted. It represents the communicative completion of revelation-truth must not remain confined but must flow through language, teaching, and example.

### 9.3.2 Tabligh as Precision and Transparency

The Qur'an presents communication as a moral act demanding accuracy. The communicator is a trustee (*amin*), bound by the ethics of clarity. The verse “*And they distort words from their proper places*” (Q. 4:46) warns against epistemic corruption-alteration of meaning, selective transmission, or ideological reinterpretation.

Thus, *Tabligh* is not mere proclamation but the ethical articulation of divine knowledge. The communicator must embody *sidq* (truthfulness) and *amanah* (trust). The process of communication becomes sacred when it preserves the purity of the message and the dignity of the listener.

### 9.3.3 The Role of Language in Tabligh

Language in the Qur'an is both medium and revelation. The Qur'an itself declares, “*Indeed, We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an so that you may understand*” (Q. 12:2). The communicative act, therefore, depends on linguistic intelligibility and cultural context. *Tabligh* is effective when the language of truth resonates with the consciousness of its audience.

However, linguistic clarity must not compromise epistemic depth. The Qur'an often balances *bayan* (clear expression) with *ta'wil* (deeper interpretation), indicating that communication should invite reflection rather than reduce complexity. The messenger's task is to articulate truth in accessible yet profound terms, allowing intellect and heart to converge.

## 9.4 Communicative Ethics in the Qur'an

Communication (*Tabligh and da'wah*) in the Qur'an is inseparable from ethics. Words are not neutral instruments but moral vehicles through which truth is either illuminated or obscured. The Qur'an emphasises sincerity, justice, and humility in speech: “*Speak to people good words*” (Q. 2:83) and “*Do not mix truth with falsehood*” (Q. 2:42). The ethics of communication thus safeguard the integrity of divine knowledge within human discourse. Every act of communication becomes an act of responsibility-a reflection of the speaker's inner moral state. The Qur'anic communicative ethic, therefore, unites knowledge, truth, and compassion, ensuring that the dissemination of truth remains both intellectually sound and spiritually pure.

### 9.4.1 Truthfulness (Şidq) as the Foundation of Communication

The Qur’an establishes *şidq*-truthfulness-as the moral ground of all speech. False communication distorts the divine order, leading to epistemic decay. “*Do not mix truth with falsehood, nor conceal the truth while you know [it]*” (Q. 2:42). The act of communication is sacred only when it mirrors divine truth, untainted by deceit, exaggeration, or manipulation. *Şidq* ensures that *Tabligh* retains its epistemic authenticity. Speech in the Qur’an is performative; it constructs reality. Therefore, ethical integrity in communication safeguards both knowledge and community.

### 9.4.2 Gentleness and Reason in Dialogue

Divine communication itself models gentleness: “*Speak to him [Pharaoh] mildly, that perhaps he may remember or fear*” (Q. 20:44). This verse epitomises the Qur’anic ethic of dialogue-even when addressing tyranny, speech must reflect compassion. Thus, the Qur’an transforms communication into an art of moral persuasion-truth conveyed with empathy, reason, and wisdom.

Da‘wah and *Tabligh* are acts of balance: between firmness of conviction and humility of tone, between clarity and patience. The Qur’an insists that the invitation to truth cannot be coercive-“*There is no compulsion in religion; truth stands clear from error*” (Q. 2:256). The epistemic authority of truth lies in its clarity, not force.

### 9.4.3 The Listener’s Freedom and Responsibility

The Qur’an consistently acknowledges the listener’s freedom to accept or reject the message: “*The truth is from your Lord; so whoever wills-let him believe; and whoever wills-let him disbelieve*” (Q. 18:29). This preserves epistemic autonomy as a divine right. Communication in Islam is dialogical, not authoritarian-it respects the human intellect’s capacity to discern. Hence, transmission in the Qur’an is symmetrical: the communicator bears the responsibility of clarity and sincerity, while the listener bears the responsibility of discernment and moral choice.

## 9.5 Transmission as Collective Knowledge Formation

The Qur’an presents the transmission of knowledge not as an individual endeavour but as a collective, intergenerational trust (*amanah*) shared by the entire believing community. Knowledge in this sense is preserved, renewed, and expanded through communal remembrance (*dhikr*) and mutual teaching (*talim*). The transmission process transforms divine revelation into living knowledge-continuously enacted in prayer, reflection, and moral conduct (Q. 3:79; 62:2). This collective epistemology rejects monopolies of knowledge, affirming instead that wisdom and guidance are sustained through cooperation and shared understanding. The community thus becomes the vessel through which divine knowledge flows, linking the revelation of the past to the moral and intellectual challenges of the present. In this way, transmission in the Qur’an becomes both a duty and a dynamic process of collective truth-formation.

### 9.5.1 The Ummah as Epistemic Community

The Qur’an envisions humanity as a learning collective: “*You are the best community brought forth for humankind: you enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and believe in Allah*” (Q. 3:110). Here, *Iman*

and *'amal* become communal ethics. Transmission is not the privilege of prophets alone but the shared responsibility of all who know.

Thus, the *ummah* functions as an epistemic network member, a node of reflection, action, and communication. Knowledge circulates ethically through teaching, counsel (*shura*), and example, creating an ever-renewing field of collective understanding.

### 9.5.2 The Dynamics of Teaching and Learning

The Qur'an's pedagogy is participatory. The believer learns and teaches in reciprocity: "*And remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers*" (Q. 51:55). Communication thus becomes remembrance (*tadhakkur*)-the act of mutual awakening. Every encounter between teacher and learner is a shared discovery of divine signs (*ayat*).

Hence, Qur'anic transmission transforms education into a sacred exchange of consciousness, not the imposition of authority. The community becomes a living classroom where truth circulates as light, not as domination.

### 9.5.3 Prophetic Communication as Universal Model

While avoiding any extra-scriptural narrative, the Qur'an depicts the prophetic model of *Tabligh* as a universal pedagogy. The prophets embody the ethic of communication through patience, reason, and example (Q. 6:90; 7:62). They speak in truth, act with sincerity, and leave the outcome to divine will. Their success lies not in conversion but in faithful conveyance. This model instructs all human communicators: knowledge must be transmitted not for power but for enlightenment; not to dominate, but to liberate intellect and spirit.

## 9.6 Conclusion: Communication as the Renewal of Knowledge

Transmission (*da'wah* and *Tabligh*) completes the Qur'anic epistemic cycle. It is the outward movement of inner realisation-the dissemination of wisdom as light. Through communication, divine truth continues to reverberate across time and culture, renewing consciousness and guiding civilisation.

In this epistemology, the act of speaking truth is an act of worship; teaching becomes service, and dialogue becomes remembrance. The communicator participates in divine creativity, translating eternal meanings into temporal language.

Hence, the Qur'anic communication ethic transcends speech: it is a living testimony (*shahadah*) of truth enacted through compassion, knowledge, and justice. Knowledge finds completion only when shared; faith becomes perfect only when it enlightens others. As the Qur'an proclaims: "*And who is better in speech than one who calls to Allah, does righteousness, and says, 'Indeed, I am of those who submit'*" (Q. 41:33).

In this synthesis, the knower becomes the communicator, the listener becomes the seeker, and the entire human community becomes the theatre of revelation—a world awakened by divine word, lived through reason, and sustained by ethical action.

## Chapter 10: Preservation (Dhikr, Kitab): The Continuity of Knowledge

In the Qur’an, the preservation of knowledge marks the completion of the epistemological cycle, ensuring that divine truth endures across time and generations. Preservation is achieved through two interlinked principles: Dhikr (remembrance) and Kitab (the Book). Dhikr sustains the living memory of revelation within the human soul and community, while Kitab ensures its textual permanence and structural coherence (Q. 15:9; 54:17). The Qur’an portrays both as divine instruments safeguarding knowledge from distortion and forgetfulness. Through Dhikr, the believer internalises revelation as consciousness; through Kitab, society institutionalises it as a recorded trust. Together, they maintain the unity of truth across human history, bridging revelation and remembrance. This chapter explores how the Qur’an envisions continuity not as mere conservation but as active renewal, where each generation is called to remember, re-engage, and reapply divine knowledge within its own moral and intellectual context.

### 10.1 The Sacred Continuum of Knowledge

The final stage in the Qur’anic epistemological cycle—Preservation (*Dhikr, Kitab*)—marks not merely the conservation of textual revelation but the continuity of divine knowledge across time, space, and human memory. The Qur’an itself positions preservation as both an act of divine will and a human responsibility. The verse “*Indeed, it is We who sent down the Dhikr, and indeed, We will guard it*” (Q. 15:9) defines the eternal safeguarding of truth as intrinsic to Allah’s covenant with creation. Preservation in the Qur’anic worldview is not passive storage but an active, living remembrance (*dhikr*), a process through which revelation sustains consciousness, guidance, and ethical order across generations.

In this dimension, *dhikr* and *Kitab* form two inseparable poles: remembrance and record. The *Kitab* embodies divine inscription—knowledge encoded into textual form—while *dhikr* signifies the inward and collective re-activation of that knowledge within the believer’s heart and community. Preservation thus represents the final synthesis of revelation and reason, uniting *‘ilm* (knowledge), *hikmah* (wisdom), and *‘amal* (action) in a continuous circuit of remembrance.

### 10.2 Dhikr: Remembrance as Preservation of Meaning

The Qur’an repeatedly employs *dhikr* to denote remembrance, awareness, and reorientation toward divine truth. This remembrance is both cognitive—a renewal of awareness—and ontological, the reaffirmation of one’s existence in relation to Allah. The Qur’an declares: “*So remind, indeed you are a reminder (dhakkir), you are not over them a controller*” (Q. 88:21-22). Here, remembrance transcends rote recitation; it becomes the act of reviving meaning, of calling the self and others back to the Source of truth.

Preservation through *dhikr* is thus dynamic. It requires active re-engagement with revelation through reflection, repetition, and renewal. The Qur’an asserts: “*And remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers*” (Q. 51:55). Remembrance, then, is not a ritual of words but a mode of maintaining epistemic

integrity-keeping truth alive within the consciousness of humankind. The believer who remembers continuously verifies and realigns knowledge with revelation, protecting it from distortion, speculation, and forgetfulness.

The Qur'anic notion of *ghaflah* (heedlessness) represents the antithesis of preservation. Forgetfulness of divine truth leads to moral decay and epistemological loss. The verse “*And be not like those who forgot Allah, so He made them forget themselves*” (Q. 59:19) encapsulates the connection between remembrance and self-awareness. When the Divine is forgotten, human identity and purpose disintegrate. Thus, *dhikr* is not only the preservation of divine truth but the preservation of the self's epistemic coherence.

### 10.3 Kitab: The Written Preservation of Divine Knowledge

The Qur'an presents *Kitab*, literally “book” or “record”-as both a manifest revelation and a metaphysical archive. It exists as the ultimate repository of divine wisdom: “*And with Him is the Mother of the Book (Umm al-Kitab)*” (Q. 13:39). This celestial archetype signifies the timeless preservation of divine knowledge beyond human manipulation. The earthly Qur'an, in turn, reflects this eternal Kitab in linguistic form, embodying divine speech in the structure of human expression.

From a Qur'anic epistemological perspective, the *Kitab* fulfils two essential roles:

- Revelatory preservation: the recording of divine guidance in a form accessible to human understanding.
- Ethical accountability: the maintenance of a universal register of deeds, as in “*Every small and great thing is recorded*” (Q. 54:52-53).

These two dimensions-revelation and record- ensure that knowledge remains anchored both in text and in consequence. Preservation is therefore not merely about safeguarding the scripture but maintaining the integrity of its message within moral reality. The Qur'an's use of *Kitab* encompasses multiple layers of meaning:

- The revealed text (e.g., Q. 2:2; 4:105),
- The decreed law of the universe (e.g., Q. 6:59),
- The individual record of actions (e.g., Q. 18:49),
- The divine archetype beyond creation (e.g., Q. 85:21-22).

Each manifestation of the *Kitab* participates in a comprehensive system of preservation through which Allah's knowledge remains perpetually manifest and knowable.

### 10.4 The Interrelation of Dhikr and Kitab

The Qur'an establishes a profound symbiosis between *dhikr* and *Kitab*. The text exists not as an inert document but as a living reminder: “*Indeed, We have sent down to you the Dhikr so that you may explain to mankind what has been sent down to them*” (Q. 16:44). Here, the Qur'an is simultaneously described as *dhikr* and as *Kitab*, revealing the dual function of preservation through writing and remembrance. The



written word alone is insufficient without reflection; remembrance alone is unstable without textual grounding. Thus, Qur’anic preservation operates on two planes:

- Textual continuity - ensuring the immutability of the divine word.
- Cognitive continuity - ensuring that meaning remains alive through remembrance, interpretation, and ethical practice.

This dual preservation guarantees that the Qur’an is not merely memorised but realised—that it continues to shape consciousness, culture, and community. As stated: “*Rather, it is a glorious Qur’an, inscribed in a preserved tablet*” (Q. 85:21-22). The preservation is divine in origin yet requires human engagement through reflection, recitation, and living application.

### 10.5 The Human Role in Preservation

While divine protection secures the Qur’an from corruption, the human role in preservation is intellectual, moral, and linguistic. Humanity is entrusted with maintaining the authenticity of meaning, the clarity of language, and the integrity of practice. The verse “*Recite what has been revealed to you of the Book and establish the prayer; indeed, prayer restrains from indecency and wrongdoing*” (Q. 29:45) demonstrates how recitation (*tilawah*) serves not only to transmit text but to activate ethical consciousness.

The memorisation of the Qur’an (*hifẓ*) exemplifies this active preservation, rooted not in mere repetition but in internalisation. Each act of recitation renews the connection between the divine message and the human mind. Yet, beyond memorisation, preservation also entails epistemic vigilance: protecting interpretation from distortion and aligning human reasoning (‘*aql*) with revelation (*wahy*).

The Qur’an consistently warns against the corruption of previous revelations (Q. 2:75-79; 5:13-15), establishing vigilance as a necessary epistemological duty. Thus, preservation extends beyond scriptural maintenance to include guarding interpretive integrity, ensuring that divine meaning is neither altered by cultural bias nor manipulated by power.

### 10.6 Dhikr as Collective Memory and Cultural Continuity

The Qur’an envisions preservation not as an individual act but as a collective process embedded in the moral and social fabric of the ummah. Remembrance becomes the foundation of cultural continuity, transmitting divine knowledge through language, ritual, and ethical education. Allah commands: “*And remind them of the days of Allah; indeed in that are signs for every patient and grateful one*” (Q. 14:5). This act of remembrance constructs a historical consciousness in which divine intervention, guidance, and justice remain embedded within collective memory.

Preservation thus transcends the text to include the preservation of history, identity, and moral order. The Qur’anic community is tasked with transmitting this remembrance through education (*talim*), reflection (*tadabbur*), and communication (*Tabligh*), forming an unbroken chain of remembrance that bridges generations.

## 10.7 The Ontology of Preservation: From Revelation to Remembrance

In the Qur'anic epistemological cycle, preservation completes the return to the Source-the reintegration of human understanding with divine origin. The movement begins with *wahy* (revelation), flows through *ilm* (knowledge), *tafakkur* (reflection), *hikmah* (wisdom), and *'amal* (action), and culminates in *dhikr* (remembrance). This circular structure mirrors the cosmic order in which all creation returns to its Lord: “*To Him belongs the beginning and the end*” (Q. 28:70). Preservation, therefore, is not an endpoint but the renewal of revelation in each generation through remembrance and study.

The *Kitab* preserves the form of knowledge; *dhikr* preserves its life. Together, they ensure that divine wisdom remains eternally active in human consciousness. This ontology of preservation reveals that Qur'anic knowledge is a self-renewing continuity secured not by static repetition but by dynamic engagement with divine meaning.

## 10.8 The Eternal Preservation of Truth

Ultimately, preservation in the Qur'an is a divine promise of epistemic certainty. Allah's assertion, “*Indeed, it is We who sent down the Dhikr, and indeed, We will guard it*” (Q. 15:9), guarantees that truth cannot be extinguished by time or human corruption. Yet this promise also entrusts humankind with a participatory role: to remember, recite, write, and live according to the divine word. The human intellect and heart thus become instruments of preservation.

In the Qur'anic vision, truth is eternal because it is continually remembered. The continuity of knowledge is sustained not by material preservation alone but by the unbroken rhythm of remembrance that echoes through every reciter, thinker, and believer. Preservation is the culmination of revelation's purpose to make truth perpetually present.

## 10.9 The Qur'anic Cycle of Knowledge - From Revelation to Remembrance

The Qur'an presents a profoundly unified and self-sustaining epistemology complete cycle of knowledge that begins with Revelation (Wahy) and culminates in Remembrance (Dhikr). This sacred cycle embodies a divine logic of continuity in which knowledge is neither lost nor fragmented but continually renewed through divine guidance, human reflection, ethical practice, and spiritual remembrance. The Qur'anic worldview, in its totality, does not separate intellect from revelation, or science from spirituality; rather, it integrates all dimensions of knowing into a single, coherent order that mirrors the unity (*tawhid*) of Allah Himself.

The process begins with Revelation (Wahy)-the divine communication of truth from Allah to humankind. Revelation is not merely a message transmitted but the very act of creation through knowledge, the articulation of divine will in the language of human understanding. The Qur'an thus identifies itself as “*Hudan lil-nas*” (guidance for humankind) (Q. 2:185), revealing the epistemological foundation upon



which all subsequent human knowledge must rest. In this stage, Allah becomes both the source and measure of all truth. Human knowledge acquires validity only insofar as it aligns with divine revelation.

Following revelation arises *‘Ilm* (knowledge)-the human reception, comprehension, and internalisation of divine truth. The Qur’an elevates *‘ilm* as the distinguishing quality of human existence, linking it directly with creation: “*He taught Adam the names of all things*” (Q. 2:31). Knowledge in the Qur’an is not merely cognitive; it is existential-the means by which humankind becomes conscious of the order, purpose, and moral boundaries established by Allah. The pursuit of *‘ilm* is therefore inseparable from faith (*iman*); together, they form the rational and spiritual structure of human responsibility.

The next phase of this cycle is Reflection and Contemplation (*Tafakkur, Tadabbur, Tadhakkur*), through which knowledge becomes understanding. The Qur’an constantly commands believers to think, reflect, and observe: “*Do they not reflect upon the Qur’an?*” (Q. 4:82). This command establishes intellectual reflection as an act of worship-an essential step in transforming revealed knowledge into wisdom and insight. Through reflection, humankind participates in divine thought, examining the signs (*ayat*) within creation and within themselves: “*We will show them Our signs in the horizons and in themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth*” (Q. 41:53). Reflection bridges the realm of text (*Kitab*) and the realm of creation (*khalq*), integrating revelation and reason in a harmonious epistemic process.

From reflection emerges Validation (*Burhan, Bayyina*)-the Qur’anic method of verifying truth through clear evidence, rational coherence, and correspondence with divine principles. The Qur’an repeatedly appeals to *burhan* (proof) as the criterion for truth: “*Say, bring your burhan if you are truthful*” (Q. 2:111). Knowledge in Islam is thus not arbitrary or mystical; it is rigorously verified within the boundaries of revelation and logic. The Qur’anic epistemology opposes conjecture (*ẓann*) and ungrounded speculation, demanding instead that all claims to truth be supported by *bayyina*-clear, manifest evidence. This verification process ensures that knowledge remains anchored in divine order, protected from distortion, error, or manipulation.

Once verified, knowledge ascends into Synthesis (*Ḥikmah*)-the integration of truth into a coherent system of understanding and moral insight. *Ḥikmah* represents the culmination of knowledge, where intellect and revelation coalesce into wisdom. The Qur’an identifies *ḥikmah* as both a divine gift and a human achievement: “*He gives ḥikmah to whom He wills, and whoever has been given ḥikmah has been given much good*” (Q. 2:269). This wisdom is not confined to abstract reasoning but encompasses ethical discernment, practical judgment, and spiritual insight. It is the stage where knowledge becomes illuminated by understanding, transforming human perception into moral orientation. Through *ḥikmah*, the believer perceives the interconnection between the physical, moral, and spiritual dimensions of existence, aligning human will with divine purpose.

From wisdom naturally follows Application (*‘Amal, Iman*)-the embodiment of knowledge in action. The Qur’an insists that faith without action is incomplete and that knowledge unmanifested in practice loses its moral significance. “*Those who believe and do righteous deeds, they are the best of creation*” (Q. 98:7). Action becomes the proof of knowledge, the outward manifestation of inward truth. In this stage, epistemology becomes ethics: knowing is doing. The Qur’an’s repeated pairing of *iman* and *‘amal ṣāliḥ*

(righteous action) illustrates that true understanding of divine truth must translate into just and compassionate conduct. The believer becomes both a knower and a doer of truth.

The following application arises: Transmission (Da'wah, Tabligh)-the communication of knowledge. The Qur'an presents transmission not as proselytisation but as the sharing of truth through clarity, reason, and compassion. "*Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good counsel*" (Q. 16:125). Communication, in the Qur'anic sense, is an epistemic duty: knowledge must be shared, taught, and embodied within the community. Transmission thus sustains the living continuity of divine guidance within society, ensuring that truth remains accessible and alive through dialogue, teaching, and moral example. It is through *Tabligh* that the Qur'an's message transcends individual comprehension and becomes a collective inheritance of humankind.

Finally, the cycle culminates in Preservation (Dhikr, Kitab)-the divine and human safeguarding of knowledge. Preservation ensures the continuity of truth across generations, anchoring revelation in both text (*Kitab*) and memory (*dhikr*). Allah's promise, "*Indeed, it is We who sent down the Dhikr, and indeed, We will guard it*" (Q. 15:9), guarantees the permanence of revelation's form, but human remembrance guarantees its living meaning. Preservation completes the epistemological cycle by returning knowledge to remembrance act through which divine truth remains eternally present in the human soul. Through *dhikr*, revelation is not only remembered but relived; through *Kitab*, it remains inscribed as the eternal record of divine wisdom.

This cycle-from *wahy* to *dhikr*-constitutes a closed yet dynamic epistemological system. It begins with divine initiative and concludes with divine remembrance, yet throughout, human intellect, reflection, and responsibility play essential roles. The Qur'anic epistemology is thus both vertical (descending from Allah to humankind) and circular (returning through remembrance and moral action). It integrates revelation, reason, and morality into a single process of knowing that is continuous, participatory, and sacred.

This epistemic structure also safeguards against two extremes: on one side, the reduction of knowledge to rationalism, which detaches truth from divine origin; and on the other, the collapse of reason into fideism, which isolates revelation from critical reflection. The Qur'an's system of knowledge harmonises these polarities, affirming that true knowledge must be both revealed and reasoned, both divine and discoverable.

In this comprehensive model, the Qur'an itself becomes both the source and the mirror of knowledge. It is the origin of all epistemic principles and the living embodiment of preservation. The believer who engages with the Qur'an through reflection, verification, wisdom, and action becomes part of this eternal continuity of knowledge -an agent of divine remembrance in the world. Thus, preservation (*hifz*, *dhikr*, *Kitab*) is not the end but the renewal of revelation, ensuring that divine truth remains ever-present in the unfolding of human consciousness.

The Qur'an, therefore, constructs a cosmic epistemology of remembrance. All creation participates in knowledge through praise and awareness: "*There is not a thing except that it glorifies Him with His praise*,

*but you do not understand their glorification”* (Q. 17:44). The universe itself is an act of remembrance; every atom bears witness to divine knowledge. In this vision, human epistemology is a continuation of cosmic dhikr conscious participation in the eternal remembrance of Allah. The Qur’anic cycle of knowledge thus forms a sacred loop of origin, understanding, and return:

- Revelation (Wahy) - Divine initiation of truth.
- Knowledge (‘Ilm) - Human comprehension of divine reality.
- Reflection (Tafakkur, Tadabbur) - Transformation of knowledge into insight.
- Validation (Burhan, Bayyina) - Verification of truth through evidence.
- Wisdom (Hikmah) - Integration of knowledge and ethics.
- Action (‘Amal, Iman) - Embodiment of truth in life.
- Transmission (Da‘wah, Tabligh) - Communication of knowledge to others.
- Preservation (Dhikr, Kitab) - Continuity of truth through remembrance and text.

This cycle defines the Qur’anic theory of knowledge—a complete epistemology grounded in divine revelation yet sustained through human reason, reflection, and moral consciousness. It portrays knowledge as both the beginning and end of existence, with remembrance as the eternal bridge between Creator and creation. Thus, the Qur’anic epistemological system is not static but a living, continuous flow of divine truth through the hearts, minds, and actions of humankind, forever returning to the Source from which it began.

## Chapter 10: Preservation (Dhikr, Kitab): The Continuity of Knowledge

In the Qur'an, the preservation of knowledge marks the completion of the epistemological cycle, ensuring that divine truth endures across time and generations. Preservation is achieved through two interlinked principles: Dhikr (remembrance) and Kitab (the Book). Dhikr sustains the living memory of revelation within the human soul and community, while Kitab ensures its textual permanence and structural coherence (Q. 15:9; 54:17). The Qur'an portrays both as divine instruments safeguarding knowledge from distortion and forgetfulness. Through Dhikr, the believer internalises revelation as consciousness; through Kitab, society institutionalises it as a recorded trust. Together, they maintain the unity of truth across human history, bridging revelation and remembrance. This chapter explores how the Qur'an envisions continuity not as mere conservation but as active renewal, where each generation is called to remember, re-engage, and reapply divine knowledge within its own moral and intellectual context.

### 10.1 The Sacred Continuum of Knowledge

The final stage in the Qur'anic epistemological cycle-Preservation (*Dhikr; Kitab*)-marks not merely the conservation of textual revelation but the continuity of divine knowledge across time, space, and human memory. The Qur'an itself positions preservation as both an act of divine will and a human responsibility. The verse “*Indeed, it is We who sent down the Dhikr, and indeed, We will guard it*” (Q. 15:9) defines the eternal safeguarding of truth as intrinsic to Allah's covenant with creation. Preservation in the Qur'anic worldview is not passive storage but an active, living remembrance (*dhikr*), a process through which revelation sustains consciousness, guidance, and ethical order across generations.

In this dimension, *dhikr* and *Kitab* form two inseparable poles: remembrance and record. The *Kitab* embodies divine inscription-knowledge encoded into textual form-while *dhikr* signifies the inward and collective re-activation of that knowledge within the believer's heart and community. Preservation thus represents the final synthesis of revelation and reason, uniting *ilm* (knowledge), *hikmah* (wisdom), and *'amal* (action) in a continuous circuit of remembrance.

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- Ethical accountability: the maintenance of a universal register of deeds, as in “*Every small and great thing is recorded*” (Q. 54:52-53).

These two dimensions-revelation and record- ensure that knowledge remains anchored both in text and in consequence. Preservation is therefore not merely about safeguarding the scripture but maintaining the integrity of its message within moral reality. The Qur’an’s use of *Kitab* encompasses multiple layers of meaning:

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Each manifestation of the *Kitab* participates in a comprehensive system of preservation through which Allah’s knowledge remains perpetually manifest and knowable.

### 10.4 The Interrelation of Dhikr and Kitab

The Qur’an establishes a profound symbiosis between *dhikr* and *Kitab*. The text exists not as an inert document but as a living reminder: “*Indeed, We have sent down to you the Dhikr so that you may explain to mankind what has been sent down to them*” (Q. 16:44). Here, the Qur’an is simultaneously described as *dhikr* and as *Kitab*, revealing the dual function of preservation through writing and remembrance. The written word alone is insufficient without reflection; remembrance alone is unstable without textual grounding. Thus, Qur’anic preservation operates on two planes:

- Textual continuity - ensuring the immutability of the divine word.
- Cognitive continuity - ensuring that meaning remains alive through remembrance, interpretation, and ethical practice.

This dual preservation guarantees that the Qur'an is not merely memorised but realised-that it continues to shape consciousness, culture, and community. As stated: *"Rather, it is a glorious Qur'an, inscribed in a preserved tablet"* (Q. 85:21-22). The preservation is divine in origin yet requires human engagement through reflection, recitation, and living application.

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While divine protection secures the Qur'an from corruption, the human role in preservation is intellectual, moral, and linguistic. Humanity is entrusted with maintaining the authenticity of meaning, the clarity of language, and the integrity of practice. The verse *"Recite what has been revealed to you of the Book and establish the prayer; indeed, prayer restrains from indecency and wrongdoing"* (Q. 29:45) demonstrates how recitation (*tilawah*) serves not only to transmit text but to activate ethical consciousness.

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## 10.7 The Ontology of Preservation: From Revelation to Remembrance

In the Qur’anic epistemological cycle, preservation completes the return to the Source-the reintegration of human understanding with divine origin. The movement begins with *wahy* (revelation), flows through *ilm* (knowledge), *tafakkur* (reflection), *hikmah* (wisdom), and *amal* (action), and culminates in *dhikr* (remembrance). This circular structure mirrors the cosmic order in which all creation returns to its Lord: “*To Him belongs the beginning and the end*” (Q. 28:70). Preservation, therefore, is not an endpoint but the renewal of revelation in each generation through remembrance and study.

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## 10.8 The Eternal Preservation of Truth

Ultimately, preservation in the Qur’an is a divine promise of epistemic certainty. Allah’s assertion, “*Indeed, it is We who sent down the Dhikr, and indeed, We will guard it*” (Q. 15:9), guarantees that truth cannot be extinguished by time or human corruption. Yet this promise also entrusts humankind with a participatory role: to remember, recite, write, and live according to the divine word. The human intellect and heart thus become instruments of preservation.

In the Qur’anic vision, truth is eternal because it is continually remembered. The continuity of knowledge is sustained not by material preservation alone but by the unbroken rhythm of remembrance that echoes through every reciter, thinker, and believer. Preservation is the culmination of revelation’s purpose to make truth perpetually present.

## 10.9 The Qur’anic Cycle of Knowledge - From Revelation to Remembrance

The Qur’an presents a profoundly unified and self-sustaining epistemology complete cycle of knowledge that begins with Revelation (Wahy) and culminates in Remembrance (Dhikr). This sacred cycle embodies a divine logic of continuity in which knowledge is neither lost nor fragmented but continually renewed through divine guidance, human reflection, ethical practice, and spiritual remembrance. The Qur’anic worldview, in its totality, does not separate intellect from revelation, or science from spirituality; rather, it integrates all dimensions of knowing into a single, coherent order that mirrors the unity (*tawhid*) of Allah Himself.

The process begins with Revelation (Wahy)-the divine communication of truth from Allah to humankind. Revelation is not merely a message transmitted but the very act of creation through knowledge, the articulation of divine will in the language of human understanding. The Qur’an thus identifies itself as “*Hudan lil-nas*” (guidance for humankind) (Q. 2:185), revealing the epistemological foundation upon

which all subsequent human knowledge must rest. In this stage, Allah becomes both the source and measure of all truth. Human knowledge acquires validity only insofar as it aligns with divine revelation.

Following revelation arises *‘Ilm* (knowledge)-the human reception, comprehension, and internalisation of divine truth. The Qur'an elevates *‘ilm* as the distinguishing quality of human existence, linking it directly with creation: “*He taught Adam the names of all things*” (Q. 2:31). Knowledge in the Qur'an is not merely cognitive; it is existential-the means by which humankind becomes conscious of the order, purpose, and moral boundaries established by Allah. The pursuit of *‘ilm* is therefore inseparable from faith (*iman*); together, they form the rational and spiritual structure of human responsibility.

The next phase of this cycle is Reflection and Contemplation (*Tafakkur, Tadabbur, Tadhakkur*), through which knowledge becomes understanding. The Qur'an constantly commands believers to think, reflect, and observe: “*Do they not reflect upon the Qur'an?*” (Q. 4:82). This command establishes intellectual reflection as an act of worship-an essential step in transforming revealed knowledge into wisdom and insight. Through reflection, humankind participates in divine thought, examining the signs (*ayat*) within creation and within themselves: “*We will show them Our signs in the horizons and in themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth*” (Q. 41:53). Reflection bridges the realm of text (*Kitab*) and the realm of creation (*khalq*), integrating revelation and reason in a harmonious epistemic process.

From reflection emerges Validation (*Burhan, Bayyina*)-the Qur'anic method of verifying truth through clear evidence, rational coherence, and correspondence with divine principles. The Qur'an repeatedly appeals to *burhan* (proof) as the criterion for truth: “*Say, bring your burhan if you are truthful*” (Q. 2:111). Knowledge in Islam is thus not arbitrary or mystical; it is rigorously verified within the boundaries of revelation and logic. The Qur'anic epistemology opposes conjecture (*ẓann*) and ungrounded speculation, demanding instead that all claims to truth be supported by *bayyina*-clear, manifest evidence. This verification process ensures that knowledge remains anchored in divine order, protected from distortion, error, or manipulation.

Once verified, knowledge ascends into Synthesis (*Hikmah*)-the integration of truth into a coherent system of understanding and moral insight. *Hikmah* represents the culmination of knowledge, where intellect and revelation coalesce into wisdom. The Qur'an identifies *hikmah* as both a divine gift and a human achievement: “*He gives hikmah to whom He wills, and whoever has been given hikmah has been given much good*” (Q. 2:269). This wisdom is not confined to abstract reasoning but encompasses ethical discernment, practical judgment, and spiritual insight. It is the stage where knowledge becomes illuminated by understanding, transforming human perception into moral orientation. Through *hikmah*, the believer perceives the interconnection between the physical, moral, and spiritual dimensions of existence, aligning human will with divine purpose.

From wisdom naturally follows Application (*‘Amal, Iman*)-the embodiment of knowledge in action. The Qur'an insists that faith without action is incomplete and that knowledge unmanifested in practice loses its moral significance. “*Those who believe and do righteous deeds, they are the best of creation*” (Q. 98:7). Action becomes the proof of knowledge, the outward manifestation of inward truth. In this stage,



epistemology becomes ethics: knowing is doing. The Qur'an's repeated pairing of *iman* and *'amal ṣaliḥ* (righteous action) illustrates that true understanding of divine truth must translate into just and compassionate conduct. The believer becomes both a knower and a doer of truth.

The following application arises: Transmission (Da'wah, Tabligh)-the communication of knowledge. The Qur'an presents transmission not as proselytisation but as the sharing of truth through clarity, reason, and compassion. "*Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good counsel*" (Q. 16:125). Communication, in the Qur'anic sense, is an epistemic duty: knowledge must be shared, taught, and embodied within the community. Transmission thus sustains the living continuity of divine guidance within society, ensuring that truth remains accessible and alive through dialogue, teaching, and moral example. It is through *Tabligh* that the Qur'an's message transcends individual comprehension and becomes a collective inheritance of humankind.

Finally, the cycle culminates in Preservation (Dhikr, Kitab)-the divine and human safeguarding of knowledge. Preservation ensures the continuity of truth across generations, anchoring revelation in both text (*Kitab*) and memory (*dhikr*). Allah's promise, "*Indeed, it is We who sent down the Dhikr; and indeed, We will guard it*" (Q. 15:9), guarantees the permanence of revelation's form, but human remembrance guarantees its living meaning. Preservation completes the epistemological cycle by returning knowledge to remembrance act through which divine truth remains eternally present in the human soul. Through *dhikr*, revelation is not only remembered but relived; through *Kitab*, it remains inscribed as the eternal record of divine wisdom.

This cycle-from *wahy* to *dhikr*-constitutes a closed yet dynamic epistemological system. It begins with divine initiative and concludes with divine remembrance, yet throughout, human intellect, reflection, and responsibility play essential roles. The Qur'anic epistemology is thus both vertical (descending from Allah to humankind) and circular (returning through remembrance and moral action). It integrates revelation, reason, and morality into a single process of knowing that is continuous, participatory, and sacred.

This epistemic structure also safeguards against two extremes: on one side, the reduction of knowledge to rationalism, which detaches truth from divine origin; and on the other, the collapse of reason into fideism, which isolates revelation from critical reflection. The Qur'an's system of knowledge harmonises these polarities, affirming that true knowledge must be both revealed and reasoned, both divine and discoverable.

In this comprehensive model, the Qur'an itself becomes both the source and the mirror of knowledge. It is the origin of all epistemic principles and the living embodiment of preservation. The believer who engages with the Qur'an through reflection, verification, wisdom, and action becomes part of this eternal continuity of knowledge -an agent of divine remembrance in the world. Thus, preservation (*ḥifẓ*, *dhikr*, *Kitab*) is not the end but the renewal of revelation, ensuring that divine truth remains ever-present in the unfolding of human consciousness.

The Qur'an, therefore, constructs a cosmic epistemology of remembrance. All creation participates in knowledge through praise and awareness: "*There is not a thing except that it glorifies Him with His praise*,

*but you do not understand their glorification”* (Q. 17:44). The universe itself is an act of remembrance; every atom bears witness to divine knowledge. In this vision, human epistemology is a continuation of cosmic dhikr conscious participation in the eternal remembrance of Allah. The Qur'anic cycle of knowledge thus forms a sacred loop of origin, understanding, and return:

- Revelation (Wahy) - Divine initiation of truth.
- Knowledge ('Ilm) - Human comprehension of divine reality.
- Reflection (Tafakkur, Tadabbur) - Transformation of knowledge into insight.
- Validation (Burhan, Bayyina) - Verification of truth through evidence.
- Wisdom (Hikmah) - Integration of knowledge and ethics.
- Action ('Amal, Iman) - Embodiment of truth in life.
- Transmission (Da'wah, Tabligh) - Communication of knowledge to others.
- Preservation (Dhikr, Kitab) - Continuity of truth through remembrance and text.

This cycle defines the Qur'anic theory of knowledge-a complete epistemology grounded in divine revelation yet sustained through human reason, reflection, and moral consciousness. It portrays knowledge as both the beginning and end of existence, with remembrance as the eternal bridge between Creator and creation. Thus, the Qur'anic epistemological system is not static but a living, continuous flow of divine truth through the hearts, minds, and actions of humankind, forever returning to the Source from which it began.

### Part III: ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF KNOWLEDGE

The Qur’anic conception of knowledge (‘ilm, علم) is not a detached or morally neutral phenomenon; rather, it is intimately interwoven with ethical consciousness (akhlaq, أخلاق). In the epistemological cycle that begins with revelation (wahy, وحي) and culminates in remembrance (dhikr, ذكر), the ethical dimension serves as the bridge between knowing and being. This section, *Ethical Dimensions of Knowledge*, thus explores how the Qur’an integrates honesty (sidq, صدق), justice (‘adl, عدل), and responsibility (amanah, أمانة) as inseparable foundations of true understanding.

Human inquiry, in the Qur’an, is not merely intellectual; it is a moral act that reflects one’s inner taqwa (تقوى, God-consciousness) and humility before divine truth. The command: “And do not pursue that of which you do not know” (Q. 17:36) establishes a framework where epistemic restraint is a form of piety. Thus, ethics are not supplementary to knowledge—they constitute its very essence. Without justice and sincerity, information remains mere data; only when governed by taqwa and ‘adl does it become ‘ilm in the Qur’anic sense (Q. 2:283; 4:58).

This part contains two deeply interconnected chapters. Chapter 11, *Ethics of Knowing: Qur’anic Principles of Honesty, Justice, and Responsibility*, outlines the moral architecture that governs the act of knowing. It discusses taqwa, amanah, and ‘adl as the ethical roots of inquiry, examines the warning of Qur’an 17:36 against speculative speech, highlights the duty of the ulu al-albab (أولو الأبواب, people of discernment), and condemns zulm (ظلم, injustice) and kibr (كبر, arrogance) as epistemic corruption.

Chapter 12, *Moral Methodology in Research: From Intention (niyyah, نية) to Impact (‘amal, عمل)*, builds upon these foundations by linking moral intention to scholarly practice. It focuses on the purification of niyyah, the ethics of publication and discourse, and the notion of ‘ilm amanah—knowledge as a trust to be preserved and transmitted with integrity. It culminates in the synthesis of revelation (al-wahy) and rational reflection (al-aql, عقل), reaffirming that Qur’anic knowledge embraces both divine guidance and human reason within a single, unified epistemic horizon.

Hence, *Part III* completes the transition from theoretical understanding to ethical realisation. It situates knowledge not merely as a possession, but as a moral vocation—a sacred responsibility to seek truth, to act with justice, and to transmit knowledge faithfully for the welfare of humanity and the glorification of the Creator.

## Chapter 11: Ethics of Knowing: Qur'anic Principles of Honesty, Justice, and Responsibility

The Qur'an establishes an inseparable link between knowledge (علم - 'ilm) and ethics (akhlaq - أخلاق), asserting that the pursuit of truth must always be governed by moral consciousness (taqwa - تقوى), trust (amanah - أمانة), and justice (عدل - 'adl). Knowledge in the Qur'anic worldview is never value-neutral; it is an act of worship and responsibility before Allah (الله - Allah). The seeker of knowledge is morally accountable for how they acquire, interpret, and apply what they know. Thus, epistemology in Islam is simultaneously a spiritual and ethical enterprise (Nasr, 2007; Al-Attas, 1980).

The Qur'an repeatedly warns against the misuse or distortion of knowledge, condemning arrogance (kibr - كبر) and oppression (ẓulm - ظلم) as forms of epistemic corruption. True knowledge leads to humility and awareness of divine truth, whereas false knowledge fosters deception and injustice. As the Qur'an commands: *"And do not pursue that of which you do not know (la taqfu mā laysa laka bihi 'ilm; indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart - all of these shall be questioned.)"* (Q. 17:36)

This chapter examines the Qur'anic ethics of knowing as an essential dimension of the epistemological cycle from revelation (wahy - وحي) to remembrance (dhikr - ذكر). It explores how moral integrity safeguards truth, and how the Qur'an envisions the scholar (alim - عالم) and seeker (ṭalib al-'ilm - طالب العلم) as trustees of divine knowledge, responsible for maintaining honesty, justice, and responsibility in all acts of inquiry and interpretation.

### 11.1 Ethical Foundations of Inquiry (عدل - 'Adl, أمانة - Amanah, تقوى - Taqwa)

The Qur'anic epistemological framework situates all knowledge (علم - 'ilm) within a moral order governed by *taqwa* (تقوى), *amanah* (أمانة), and *'adl* (عدل). These three ethical principles define the legitimate boundaries of inquiry and ensure that the pursuit of truth remains aligned with divine justice and human responsibility. Unlike secular epistemologies that detach ethics from cognition, the Qur'an envisions every act of knowing as a moral event—an engagement between the human intellect (عقل - 'aql) and divine guidance (wahy - وحي) (Al-Attas, 1980; Nasr, 2007).

#### 11.1.1 Taqwa (تقوى) - Conscious Awareness of God in Knowledge

Taqwa, often translated as "God-consciousness" or "piety," serves as the spiritual compass for epistemic activity. The Qur'an proclaims: *"O you who believe, if you fear Allah (ittaqu Allaha - اتقوا الله), He will grant you a criterion (furqan - فرقان)." (Q. 8:29)*

Here, taqwa is directly linked to *furqan* (فرقان)—the capacity to discern truth from falsehood. It implies that genuine understanding emerges not merely from intellect but from purity of intention and moral vigilance (Izutsu, 2002). Knowledge, in this sense, is not granted to the corrupt heart but to the mindful soul. The Qur'anic researcher must therefore cultivate taqwa as a methodological principle—ensuring that inquiry is guided by sincerity (ikhlaṣ - إخلاص) and humility before the divine.

Taqwa also prevents intellectual arrogance (kibr - كبر) and the manipulation of knowledge for personal or political gain. The Qur’an condemns those who “*know the truth but conceal it*” (Q. 2:42), a warning against epistemic corruption. Thus, taqwa safeguards the ethical integrity of the knowledge process by maintaining a constant awareness that knowledge is a trust (amanah) from Allah.

### 11.1.2 Amanah (أمانة) - The Trust of Knowledge

The Qur’an describes knowledge as a divine amanah (أمانة), a sacred trust bestowed upon humankind. Allah declares: “*Indeed, We offered the trust (amanah) to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they declined to bear it and feared it; yet man undertook it. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant.*” (Q. 33:72)

This verse reveals the weight of epistemic responsibility. Human beings are entrusted not only with moral choice but also with the responsibility to seek and convey truth faithfully. Knowledge, therefore, is not property to be owned, but a trust to be safeguarded. The ethical duty of the scholar (‘alim - عالم) is to uphold this trust with sincerity and justice, never distorting facts or manipulating truth for self-interest (Al-Ghazali, 1998).

In the Qur’anic worldview, every seeker (ṭalib al-‘ilm - طالب العلم) becomes a trustee of divine signs (āyat - آيات). To betray this trust by spreading falsehood, misinterpretation, or ignorance is to violate the amanah of knowledge. The moral discipline of inquiry thus requires intellectual honesty, verification (taḥqiq - تحقيق), and humility.

### 11.1.3 ‘Adl (عدل) - Justice in Knowledge

The principle of ‘adl (عدل)-justice-represents the equilibrium between knowing and acting rightly. The Qur’an commands: “*O you who believe! Be persistently standing firm in justice (qawwamina bil-‘adl - قوامين بالقيسط), witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or your parents or relatives.*” (Q. 4:135)

Here, ‘adl transcends social or legal fairness; it becomes a moral criterion for epistemic action. Justice in knowledge demands that conclusions be proportionate to evidence, that interpretation respects context, and that inquiry avoids bias and prejudice (Nasr, 2007). The scholar must balance reason and revelation, avoiding the extremities of literalism or rationalism.

Epistemic ‘adl also requires that truth not be suppressed or distorted for worldly gain. The Qur’an equates false testimony with injustice and warns against the concealment of knowledge (Q. 2:159). Thus, every act of learning or teaching becomes an act of moral judgment, weighed in the divine scale of ‘adl.

### 11.1.4 Synthesis of the Three Principles

Together, taqwa, amanah, and ‘adl form the moral architecture of Qur’anic inquiry. Taqwa provides inner discipline; amanah establishes responsibility; and ‘adl governs the fair application of truth. Without these, epistemology collapses into manipulation and arrogance. The ethical foundations of inquiry are, therefore, not supplementary but essential to the Qur’anic methodology of knowledge. They ensure that the journey from observation (naẓar - نظر) to remembrance (dhikr - ذكر) remains guided by moral consciousness, fulfilling the Qur’anic command: “*And say: My Lord, increase me in knowledge.*” (Q. 20:114)

## 11.2 Verse Analysis: “La taqfu mā laysa laka bihi ‘ilm” (Al-Isra’ 17:36)

The verse “La taqfu mā laysa laka bihi ‘ilm - لا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ” stands as one of the most profound ethical injunctions in the Qur’an regarding human epistemology. It states: “*And do not pursue that of which you do not know; indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart - all of these shall be questioned.*” (Q. 17:36)

This verse encapsulates the moral boundary of human inquiry. It prohibits speculative assumptions, false testimony, and unverified claims. In essence, it establishes accountability (mas’uliyah - مسؤولية) as the governing law of knowledge. Every cognitive faculty-hearing (sam‘ - سمع), sight (baṣar - بصر), and heart (Fu’ad - فؤاد)-is a divine trust that must be used responsibly (Al-Razi, 1999).

### 11.2.1 Epistemic Restraint and Verification

The command “do not pursue” (*la taqfu* - لا تَقْفُ) sets a limit to intellectual speculation. It reminds the seeker that knowledge without verification (*tahqiq* - تحقيق) leads to moral and social corruption. In the age of information overload, this Qur’anic principle demands epistemic humility-recognising the limits of one’s perception and the necessity of evidence. The Qur’an consistently condemns conjecture (*ẓann* - ظنّ) when it replaces verified truth: “*Indeed, conjecture avails nothing against the truth.*” (Q. 10:36)

Thus, the ethical responsibility of the scholar is to differentiate between ‘ilm (certain knowledge) and *ẓann* (assumption). The pursuit of truth must always be grounded in verification, empirical observation, and revelation.

### 11.2.2 Accountability of the Cognitive Faculties

The verse also introduces a triadic model of human cognition-hearing, sight, and heart-that parallels the Qur’anic epistemological cycle. Each of these faculties represents a dimension of knowing:

- Sam‘ (سمع) - transmission and reception of knowledge (learning through others and revelation).
- Baṣar (بصر) - observation of the external world (empirical knowledge).
- Fu’ad (فؤاد) - internal reflection and moral reasoning (spiritual knowledge).

By declaring that all three “shall be questioned,” the Qur’an establishes that misuse of knowledge-whether by false speech, blind imitation, or moral negligence-has ethical consequences. Knowledge, therefore, is inseparable from moral accountability (Al-Ghazali, 1998).

### 11.2.3 Ethical Implications for Scholars (Ulu al-Albab - أولو الألباب)

The Qur’an repeatedly praises *ulu al-albab* (أولو الألباب)-those “endowed with intellect.” Their defining trait is not mere intelligence but moral insight. They remember Allah, reflect on creation, and uphold justice (Q. 3:190-191). For them, knowledge becomes an act of worship (‘ibadah - عبادة).

In contrast, those who speak without knowledge, who speculate, misinform, or manipulate truth, are condemned as spreading *zulm* (ظلم), oppression. The ethical scholar is thus called to uphold integrity, verify sources, and maintain humility before divine truth (Nasr, 2007; Al-Attas, 1993).

### 11.2.4 Avoiding Arrogance (*Kibr* - كبر) and Concealment of Truth (*Zulm* - ظلم)

The verse also warns indirectly against *kibr* and *zulm*, the twin vices that corrupt knowledge. Arrogance leads one to assume authority without understanding, while *zulm* distorts truth for power. The Qur’an condemns such attitudes: “*And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know it.*” (Q. 2:42)

Thus, *la taqfu ma laysa laka bihi ‘ilm* is both a cognitive and ethical command-it demands intellectual honesty, moral restraint, and constant verification. The seeker must remain aware that all knowledge is ultimately a reflection of divine truth, and every misuse of it is an act of injustice.

### 11.2.5 From Revelation to Responsibility

Within the Qur’anic epistemological cycle-from *wahy* (وحي) to *dhikr* (ذكر)-this verse functions as a moral checkpoint. It reminds the believer that knowledge is not an end in itself but a means to righteousness (*birr* - برّ). The ethical use of knowledge fulfils the divine trust (*amanah*) and ensures that revelation is preserved through truthful remembrance and just application.

In a world increasingly dominated by misinformation and ideological manipulation, the Qur’anic command “*la taqfu ma laysa laka bihi ‘ilm*” remains timeless. It demands that every scholar, student, and believer uphold the ethics of knowing, guided by *taqwa*, safeguarded by *amanah*, and balanced by *‘adl*.

## 11.3 Responsibility of Scholars and Seekers (*Ulu al-Albab* - أولو الألباب)

In the Qur’anic worldview, the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge are sacred responsibilities entrusted to a select group known as *Ulu al-Albab* (أولو الألباب)-literally, “those endowed with sound intellects.” The term occurs frequently throughout the Qur’an to designate people who combine intellectual insight (*‘aql* - عقل) with moral awareness (*taqwa* - تقوى) and spiritual humility (*tawadu’* - تواضع). These are the true scholars (*‘ulama’* - علماء) and seekers (*talibu al-‘ilm* - طالبو العلم) who integrate knowledge, faith, and ethical responsibility.

The Qur’an’s emphasis on the *Ulu al-Albab* establishes a distinctive epistemic hierarchy in which knowledge entails moral accountability. Knowledge (*‘ilm* - علم) is not a neutral possession but a divine trust (*amanah* - أمانة) that requires stewardship, sincerity, and justice (*‘adl* - عدل) (Nasr, 2007; Izutsu, 2002).

### 11.3.1 The Qur’anic Portrayal of Ulu al-Albab

The Qur’an repeatedly honours the *Ulu al-Albab* as the model of reflective believers who contemplate the signs (*ayat* - آيات) of Allah both in creation and in revelation. Allah says: “*Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those endowed with intellect (Ulu al-Albab).*” (Q. 3:190)

This verse situates knowledge within cosmic contemplation. The *Ulu al-Albab* are not passive observers; they are active interpreters of the universe, recognising divine wisdom (*hikmah* - حكمة) in natural patterns and moral order. Their epistemic process combines *nazar* (نظر)-empirical observation-with *tafakkur* (تفكر)-deep reflection, and *dhikr* (ذكر)-constant remembrance of Allah.



Such integration of sense and spirit distinguishes Qur'anic scholarship from secular intellectualism. For the Ulu al-Albab, the ultimate aim of inquiry is ma'rifah (معرفة)-experiential recognition of divine truth, not mere accumulation of data.

### 11.3.2 Moral Accountability of Scholars

The Qur'an warns that knowledge brings with it greater moral responsibility. Those who possess knowledge are held to a higher ethical standard because their awareness of truth increases their accountability before Allah. As Allah declares: *"Only those who truly fear Allah among His servants are the scholars."* (Q. 35:28)

This verse indicates that genuine scholarship ('ilm) is inseparable from *khashyah* (خشية)-reverential awe of Allah. True scholars are not arrogant but humble; their knowledge deepens their consciousness of divine majesty and their compassion toward creation.

Accordingly, the Qur'an censures those who manipulate knowledge for worldly status or power. The misuse of religious, or intellectual authority constitutes *zulm* (ظلم), a grave injustice. Allah warns against scholars who *"conceal what Allah has revealed"* (Q. 2:159) or distort divine words from their rightful meanings (Q. 4:46). Such behaviour corrupts the moral foundation of epistemology and transforms knowledge into a tool of domination.

### 11.3.3 Teaching and Transmission as Sacred Duty

For the Ulu al-Albab, teaching (talim - تعليم) and transmission (Tabligh - تبليغ) of knowledge are acts of worship ('ibadah - عبادة). The Qur'an frames the conveyance of truth as a divine command: *"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful exhortation."* (Q. 16:125)

The ethical teacher embodies hikmah (حكمة) and 'adl (عدل)-balancing reason, evidence, and compassion. Teaching is not a means of intellectual superiority but a continuation of divine communication. Hence, scholars are custodians of knowledge, not its owners.

The Qur'an condemns the hoarding of knowledge or using it to mislead. Amanah (أمانة) demands that scholars preserve and communicate truth without distortion. When knowledge is concealed, society collapses into ignorance and injustice. Thus, the Ulu al-Albab serve as mediators between revelation and community, ensuring that knowledge remains a source of guidance, not division.

### 11.3.4 The Spiritual Character of the Scholar

The Ulu al-Albab are characterised by several spiritual virtues that sustain the ethical practice of knowledge:

- Tawadu' (تواضع) - Humility before Allah and truth.
- Ikhlāṣ (إخلاص) - Sincerity of intention.
- Ṣabr (صبر) - Patience in learning and teaching.
- Adl (عدل) - Justice in reasoning and judgment.



- Taqwa (تقوى) - God-consciousness as an epistemic discipline.

These traits ensure that scholarship remains aligned with divine purpose. The Qur’an affirms that guidance is accessible only to those who approach knowledge with humility: “*And Allah does not love any arrogant boaster.*” (Q. 31:18)

Therefore, the Qur’anic scholar is both thinker and servant-engaged in the intellectual struggle (jihad al-‘ilm - جهاد العلم) to transform knowledge into moral action (‘amal - عمل) and social justice (‘adl - عدل).

### 11.3.5 Epistemic Stewardship and the Modern Context

In the contemporary age of digital information, the responsibility of scholars and seekers has multiplied. The Qur’anic model of the Ulu al-Albab demands rigorous verification (tahqiq - تحقيق) and ethical discernment amid misinformation and ideological manipulation.

Modern Muslim scholarship must reclaim its Qur’anic ethos, uniting empirical investigation with spiritual ethics. Scholars must not merely transmit data but embody wisdom. The Qur’an’s call to reflection (tafakkur) and justice (‘adl) provides a timeless framework for resisting the commodification of knowledge and the arrogance of technocracy (Nasr, 2007).

The scholar, therefore, becomes a guardian of the moral order, defending truth, preserving justice, and nurturing human dignity through knowledge. In doing so, they fulfil the Qur’anic command: “*You are the best community raised for mankind-you enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong.*” (Q. 3:110)

### 11.3.6 The Scholar as Moral Agent

The Ulu al-Albab represent the Qur’anic ideal of the scholar as moral agent and servant of truth. Their knowledge is not an instrument of control but a vehicle of compassion and justice. Their intellectual humility protects them from kibr (arrogance), while their faith anchors them in amanah (trust). In embodying these principles, they realise the prophetic mission of knowledge: to know Allah, to serve humanity, and to uphold justice.

## 11.4 Avoiding Arrogance and Manipulation of Truth (Zulm - ظلم, Kibr - كبر)

The Qur’an identifies two of the gravest moral diseases that corrupt human knowledge and civilisation- Zulm (ظلم), injustice or oppression, and Kibr (كبر), arrogance or pride. Both are epistemic vices that distort perception, hinder truth, and destroy the ethical foundation of inquiry. In Qur’anic epistemology, the search for truth demands humility (tawadu‘ - تواضع) and justice (‘adl - عدل); without them, knowledge becomes an instrument of deceit.

### 11.4.1 Zulm (ظلم) - The Injustice of Knowledge Misuse

The term zulm literally means “placing something out of its proper place.” In epistemic terms, it signifies using knowledge for corruption, manipulation, or concealment of truth. The Qur’an condemns such distortion as one of humanity’s greatest moral failures: “*And who is more unjust than one who conceals a testimony that he has from Allah?*” (Q. 2:140)

Here, *zulm* arises not from ignorance but from deliberate moral corruption-the refusal to acknowledge or reveal truth. When scholars distort facts, misuse knowledge, or silence justice, they betray their amanah (أمانة) and violate divine trust. In contrast, the Qur'an links justice ('adl) with true faith and piety: *"Indeed, Allah commands justice and excellence."* (Q. 16:90)

Thus, epistemic justice requires that every claim be grounded in evidence and every conclusion guided by fairness. To commit *zulm* in knowledge is to turn illumination into darkness (*ẓulmah* - ظلمة) and to obscure divine signs for worldly interest.

#### 11.4.2 Kibr (كِبْر) - The Arrogance That Blinds Truth

Arrogance (*kibr*) is the root of epistemic blindness. The Qur'an portrays Iblis (Satan) as the archetype of arrogance when he refused to bow before Adam, declaring: *"I am better than him; You created me from fire and created him from clay."* (Q. 7:12)

This narrative exposes the epistemic dimension of arrogance-an inflated sense of self that blinds one from divine truth. Arrogance prevents recognition of reality and transforms knowledge into ideology. As Allah warns: *"I will turn away from My signs those who are arrogant upon the earth without right."* (Q. 7:146)

Thus, *kibr* not only corrupts morality but also disables cognition-it severs the link between perception (*baṣar* - بصر) and reflection (*tafakkur* - تفكر). The arrogant cannot learn because they refuse to acknowledge ignorance.

#### 11.4.3 The Interrelation of *Zulm* and *Kibr*

The Qur'an presents *ẓulm* and *kibr* as mutually reinforcing: arrogance leads to injustice, and injustice deepens arrogance. Both sever the seeker from divine guidance (*huda* - هدى) and from the humility necessary for learning.

Epistemically, *ẓulm* manifests as suppression of evidence, bias, or distortion, while *kibr* manifests as intellectual pride or refusal to accept correction. Together they produce false knowledge-what the Qur'an calls *baṭil* (باطل), meaning vanity or falsehood. Allah contrasts this falsehood with truth (*ḥaqq* - حق) in His command: *"Say, the truth has come, and falsehood has perished; indeed, falsehood is bound to perish."* (Q. 17:81) Hence, the antidote to *ẓulm* and *kibr* is moral humility, self-purification (*tazkiyah* - تزكية), and alignment with *ḥaqq*.

#### 11.4.4 The Humble Scholar as a Model of Justice

The Qur'an celebrates humility as the epistemic virtue par excellence. The true scholar is humble because he recognises that all knowledge belongs to Allah: *"Above every possessor of knowledge is One more Knowing."* (Q. 12:76)

This acknowledgement eliminates arrogance and reorients scholarship toward servanthood. The ethical scholar does not claim mastery over knowledge but stewardship under divine authority. Such humility allows continuous learning and protects against *ta'aṣṣub* (تعصب)-dogmatic rigidity. Moreover, avoiding

kibr ensures that dialogue and disagreement remain constructive. The Qur’an commands believers to “*argue in the best manner*” (Q. 16:125), affirming intellectual humility as an essential mode of discourse.

#### 11.4.5 Knowledge and Power: The Modern Challenge

In modern times, *zulm* and *kibr* often manifest through the politicisation and commercialisation of knowledge. When education becomes a means of domination rather than enlightenment, or when scientific discovery serves greed instead of justice, the Qur’anic warning against epistemic arrogance becomes strikingly relevant (Nasr, 2007).

Islamic epistemology thus calls for a reform of knowledge production-relinking science, scholarship, and spirituality. Knowledge must return to its ethical roots in *taqwa*, ‘*adl*, and *amanah*. The Qur’an reminds humanity that arrogance leads to downfall: “*And do not walk upon the earth exultantly; you will never pierce the earth nor reach the mountains in height.*” (Q. 17:37) The verse encapsulates epistemic humility: all knowledge and power are bounded by divine will.

#### 11.4.6 Restoring Ethical Balance

To avoid *zulm* and *kibr* is to restore the balance between intellect and morality. The Qur’an envisions knowledge as a path toward justice, compassion, and self-realisation as a tool of pride. Scholars and seekers must therefore practice constant self-evaluation (*muḥasabah* - محاسبة) and remembrance (*dhikr* - ذكر) to purify their intentions.

Ultimately, the Qur’anic ethos teaches that true knowledge leads to humility, not arrogance; to justice, not oppression; to light, not darkness. “*Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth.*” (Q. 24:35) The one who knows truly is the one who walks in that light.

### 11.5 Ethics of Knowing

The ethical dimension of knowledge in the Qur’an represents the culmination of its epistemological vision—an integration of *taqwa* (تقوى, God-consciousness), *amanah* (أمانة, trust), and ‘*adl* (عدل, justice) into the very fabric of human inquiry. In the Qur’anic worldview, knowledge (‘*ilm*, علم) is never an autonomous or value-neutral pursuit; rather, it is an act of moral responsibility before Allah (الله). Every act of observation, reflection, and reasoning finds its legitimacy only when governed by ethical consciousness. This moral orientation ensures that the pursuit of truth does not become an instrument of *ẓulm* (ظلم, injustice) or *kibr* (كبر, arrogance), but a pathway toward divine harmony and human flourishing.

The Qur’an repeatedly emphasises that knowledge must lead to humility and service, not pride and domination. “*It is only those who know His servants that fear Allah*” (Q. 35:28). Here, the possession of ‘*ilm* is directly linked to *taqwa*—the awareness of divine accountability that restrains the self from corruption and conceit. Knowledge, in this sense, is both epistemic and ethical: it illuminates the intellect and purifies the soul. The moral failure of *kibr* lies in its distortion of truth; it transforms understanding into self-exaltation, thereby obstructing access to divine guidance. Similarly, *ẓulm*—the deliberate misuse or concealment of truth—undermines the justice (‘*adl*) that the Qur’an demands of every believer.

Within this framework, the role of the *ulu al-albab* (أولو الألباب)-those endowed with deep understanding-becomes central. The Qur'an entrusts them with the sacred duty of safeguarding truth, ensuring intellectual honesty, and guiding the community with wisdom (*hikmah*, حكمة) and compassion. Their authority is not derived from social status or power but from moral integrity and sincere devotion to the truth of revelation. The Qur'an commands, "*Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even if it be against yourselves or your kin*" (Q. 4:135). This verse establishes the unbreakable link between knowledge and justice, between epistemology and ethics.

The verse "*La taqfu ma laysa laka bihi 'ilm*" "*Do not pursue that of which you do not know,*" Qur'an 17:36) serves as the ethical boundary of human inquiry. It restrains intellectual arrogance and calls for methodological humility-an awareness of the limits of human perception in the face of divine omniscience. This command transforms the act of knowing into an act of moral discipline, reminding humankind that true knowledge must correspond with truth, justice, and sincerity.

In conclusion, the ethics of knowing in the Qur'an does not merely supplement epistemology-it defines it. Without *taqwa*, *amanah*, and *'adl*, knowledge becomes fragmented and corruptible. The Qur'anic model restores knowledge to its sacred function: as a trust from Allah to be pursued with honesty, applied with justice, and preserved with humility. Through this synthesis, the Qur'an establishes an enduring epistemic order where knowing is inseparable from being righteous, and understanding is an act of worship. In this moral-epistemic unity lies the true spirit of Islamic knowledge wisdom (*hikmah*) that harmonises intellect, ethics, and revelation.

## Chapter 12: Moral Methodology in Research - From Intention (*Niyyah*, نية) to Impact (*Amal*, عمل)

The Qur'anic conception of knowledge (علم, *ilm*) is not only epistemological but profoundly moral. Every act of inquiry begins with *niyyah* (نية, intention) and culminates in *amal* (عمل, action). Between these two lies the moral spectrum of research - a continuous process of seeking truth under the light of divine accountability. In the Qur'an, intention determines the spiritual value of every human act. The verse *"Whoever desires the harvest of the Hereafter - We increase for him his harvest; and whoever desires the harvest of this world - We give him thereof"* (Q. 42:20) illustrates how the orientation of the heart shapes both knowledge and outcome. Thus, moral methodology begins not with methods or techniques but with the ethical state of the seeker.

In the Qur'anic framework, the pursuit of knowledge is an act of *'ibadah* (عبادة, worship). The researcher, therefore, is not merely an observer of reality but a trustee (*amin*, أمين) of divine signs (*ayat*, آيات). This responsibility transforms the research process into a sacred journey, where purity of intention (*ikhlas*, إخلاص) governs inquiry, and humility before truth safeguards integrity. The Qur'an condemns distortion (*tahrif*, تحريف) and arrogance (*kibr*, كبر), both of which corrupt understanding and fragment moral vision. In contrast, sincere research guided by *taqwa* (تقوى, God-consciousness) leads to truthful *amal* - a constructive, ethical impact upon the world.

This chapter develops a Qur'an-based moral methodology of research that links *niyyah* with *amal*, tracing how internal sincerity manifests in external responsibility. Section 12.1 examines purity of intention and humility before truth, while Section 12.2 explores the ethics of publication, discourse, and argumentation as defined within the Qur'an's intellectual-moral framework.

### 12.1 Purity of Intention and Humility Before Truth

In the Qur'an, the moral value of knowledge begins with *niyyah* (نية, intention) - the inner orientation of the heart that determines the purpose of knowing. Unlike secular epistemology, which often treats inquiry as a neutral process, the Qur'an anchors every form of cognition within a moral and spiritual axis. Knowledge devoid of pure *niyyah* is considered not only incomplete but potentially corrupting, as it may serve ego, power, or deceit rather than truth (*haqq*, حق). Allah declares, *"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, being sincere to Him in religion"* (Q. 98:5). The principle of *ikhlas* (إخلاص, sincerity) thus becomes the epistemic foundation of all moral research.

#### 12.1.1 Intention (*Niyyah*) as the Ethical Beginning of Inquiry

The Qur'an teaches that every act begins with the inner choice of orientation - toward the self or toward Allah. This dichotomy defines whether knowledge elevates or degrades the human soul. The verse *"Whoever purifies himself does so for his own soul, for to Allah is the final return"* (Q. 35:18) illustrates that purification of intention is the first stage of epistemic purification. A sincere *niyyah* aligns the intellect

with divine purpose, ensuring that inquiry seeks truth as an act of *'ibadah*, not as a pursuit of status, domination, or fame.

The Qur'an also warns against false intentions cloaked in knowledge: *"They conceal the truth while they know"* (Q. 2:146). Here, cognitive awareness without moral sincerity becomes hypocrisy - a form of epistemic deceit. Thus, *niyyah* governs both the moral and cognitive dimensions of research. When intention is pure, knowledge leads to humility; when it is corrupted, knowledge becomes an instrument of *zulm* (ظلم, injustice).

### 12.1.2 Humility (*Tawaḍu'*, تواضع) as Epistemic Virtue

True humility in the Qur'anic sense is not weakness but recognition of one's limits before divine wisdom. The Qur'an reminds humanity: *"And above every possessor of knowledge is one more knowing"* (Q. 12:76). This verse establishes *tawaḍu'* as the ethical attitude of the scholar - an awareness that all human knowledge is partial and contingent upon divine omniscience (*'ilm Allah*, علم الله).

Humility also safeguards against *kibr* (كبر, arrogance), which the Qur'an identifies as the root of all moral deviation. The story of Iblis (إبليس), who refused to bow due to pride, is not merely a theological narrative but a timeless warning against epistemic arrogance - the delusion that one's knowledge is self-sufficient (Q. 2:34). The Qur'an declares, *"Do not walk upon the earth with arrogance; indeed, you will never tear the earth apart nor reach the mountains in height"* (Q. 17:37). The verse reveals that humility is a prerequisite not only for moral conduct but also for intellectual balance.

### 12.1.3 Sincerity (*Ikhlaṣ*) as the Essence of Truthful Research

*Ikhlaṣ* (إخلاص) signifies the purification of intention from ulterior motives. The Qur'an states, *"Indeed, We have revealed to you the Book in truth, so worship Allah, being sincere to Him in religion"* (Q. 39:2). In the context of research, *ikhlaṣ* means seeking knowledge for the sake of truth, not for recognition or gain. It transforms scholarship into a moral act of devotion, aligning human will with divine purpose.

A Qur'an-based moral methodology thus demands the scholar to constantly purify motives, ensuring that research neither distorts facts nor serves bias. The verse *"And do not mix truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know"* (Q. 2:42) prohibits intellectual dishonesty and selective citation - acts that compromise both *ikhlaṣ* and *'adl* (عدل, justice).

### 12.1.4 The Integration of Intention and Action

In the Qur'an, *niyyah* and *'amal* are inseparable. The inner orientation of sincerity must manifest in ethical conduct. *"Whoever does righteous deeds while he is a believer - their effort will not be neglected"* (Q. 21:94). The verse underscores the unity of belief, intention, and action. Moral inquiry is therefore cyclical - beginning with *niyyah*, advancing through truthful *'ilm*, and culminating in righteous *'amal*.

This triadic relation forms the Qur'anic epistemic cycle: Revelation → Reflection → Action → Remembrance. Research, when guided by pure intention and humility, becomes part of this sacred rhythm - transforming personal discovery into communal benefit.



### 12.1.5 Humility Before Divine Knowledge

The Qur'an's moral call to humility also implies epistemic restraint. *"And they ask you about the spirit. Say: The spirit is of the command of my Lord, and of knowledge you have been given only a little"* (Q. 17:85). This declaration establishes boundaries of inquiry, reminding humanity that not all realities are accessible to human reason. Recognition of this limit is not defeat but wisdom (*ḥikmah*, حكمة). It protects the researcher from overstepping moral and metaphysical boundaries. In this sense, *tawāḍu'* and *ikhlaṣ* are epistemic virtues - they purify both the intention and the method, ensuring that research remains truthful, compassionate, and God-conscious.

Purity of *niyyah* and humility before truth constitute the ethical foundation of Qur'anic research. They align the pursuit of *ilm* with divine purpose and prevent the degradation of knowledge into manipulation or vanity. A researcher grounded in *taqwa*, *ikhlaṣ*, and *tawāḍu'* transforms every act of inquiry into an act of worship, fulfilling the Qur'anic command: *"And say, 'My Lord, increase me in knowledge'"* (Q. 20:114).

## 12.2 Ethical Publication, Discourse, and Argumentation in Qur'anic Terms

In Qur'anic epistemology, the act of communication is not merely a human transaction but a sacred covenant (*'ahd*) with Allah. Knowledge (*'ilm*) in the Qur'an is described as a trust (*amanah*), and its transmission through writing, speaking, or reasoning must therefore reflect truthfulness (*ṣidq*), justice (*'adl*), and piety (*taqwa*). The Qur'an affirms that human words are never neutral: *"Not a word does he utter but that there is an observer prepared [to record it]"* (Q. 50:18). This establishes that every form of publication and argumentation is morally accountable before God.

The Qur'an cautions against speaking or asserting without verified knowledge: *"And do not pursue that of which you do not know. Indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart-about all those [one] will be questioned."* (Q. 17:36)

Hence, publication or discourse based on speculation (*ẓann*) violates Qur'anic ethics. Authentic communication demands sincerity of intention (*niyyah ṣāliḥah*) and adherence to divine truth (*ḥaqq*). The scholar is not a self-proclaimer but a witness (*shahid*) who bears testimony to the truth revealed through creation and revelation.

### 12.2.1 The Qur'anic Ethic of Speech (*qawl ḥasan*)

The Qur'an grounds ethical communication in the principle of *قَوْلٌ حَسَنٌ* (*qawl ḥasan*)-"good or beautiful speech." It instructs: *"And speak to people good words (qulu linnasi ḥusnan)."* (Q. 2:83) This verse lays the foundation for an ethic of benevolent expression. In the realm of research and publication, *qawl ḥasan* means using language responsibly, avoiding aggression, distortion, or arrogance. Knowledge must be expressed with clarity and compassion, not as a tool for self-glorification.

The Qur'an further commands: *"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom (ḥikmah) and good instruction (maw'izah ḥasanah), and argue with them in a way that is best (jādilhūm billati hiya aḥsan)."* (Q. 16:125) This verse outlines the tripartite ethics of discourse-wisdom, gentle persuasion, and virtuous

argumentation. The purpose of debate is not to defeat an opponent but to illuminate truth. The Qur'anic principle of hikmah transforms knowledge-sharing into an act of worship ('ibadah), binding intention and expression to divine accountability (Rahman, 1980).

### 12.2.2 Publication as Witness (shahadah) and Trust (amanah)

In the Qur'anic worldview, writing and publishing are acts of bearing witness (shahadah). The command, *"And do not conceal testimony, for whoever conceals it-his heart is indeed sinful."* (Q. 2:283), extends beyond legal contexts to all forms of knowledge-sharing. Suppression of facts, falsification of data, or plagiarism are therefore moral violations.

The Qur'an describes knowledge as an amanah (trust) given to humanity: *"Indeed, We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they declined to bear it... but man undertook to bear it."* (Q. 33:72) Publication ethics in the Qur'anic sense demand truthful disclosure, acknowledgement of sources, and justice in authorship. The principle of 'adl requires that even if truth contradicts personal or political interest, it must be published faithfully: *"O you who believe, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives."* (Q. 4:135)

Thus, in Qur'anic epistemology, a scholar is not a neutral observer but a moral witness (shahidbi'l-ḥaqq). Every publication is a form of shahadah, aligning human reason ('aql) with divine justice ('adl).

### 12.2.3 The Discursive Ethic: Adab al-Hiwar (أدب الحوار)

The Qur'an defines a unique ethic of dialogue, Adab al-Hiwar, emphasising humility, empathy, and rational persuasion. Argument (*jadal*) is permissible only when grounded in truth (ḥaqq) and conducted with respect (*ihsan*). The Qur'an cautions: *"And among mankind is he who disputes about Allah without knowledge, and follows every rebellious devil."* (Q. 22:3)

This verse condemns debate that is not supported by sound understanding ('ilm). Constructive dialogue (ḥiwar ḥasan) aims at clarification, not dominance. Prophet Ibrahim's conversation with his father (Q. 6:74) exemplifies this approach-gentle reasoning, not ridicule.

In modern academic discourse, Adab al-Hiwar requires respectful engagement with differing views, transparent citation, and avoidance of polemical hostility. The Qur'an commands believers to *"remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers"* (Q. 51:55). Scholarly critique, when offered with sincerity, thus becomes a form of remembrance (*dhikr*) that purifies the collective pursuit of knowledge (Nasr, 2007).

### 12.2.4 The Ethic of Writing (Kitabah) in the Qur'an

Writing (Kitabah) occupies a sacred position in Qur'anic epistemology. Revelation itself is described as a *"Book (Kitab) inscribed (maknun)"* (Q. 56:78). Human writing imitates this divine act when it preserves truth and justice. The Qur'an instructs: *"O you who believe, when you contract a debt for a specified term, write it down (uktubuhu). And let a scribe write between you in justice (bil-'adl)."* (Q. 2:282)



Though addressing financial matters, this verse conveys universal principles of accuracy, fairness, and transparency in documentation. The scribe (katib) is further warned: *“And let not the scribe refuse to write as Allah has taught him”* (Q. 2:282). In academic publication, this corresponds to avoiding suppression of findings, data manipulation, or unethical authorship.

The Qur'an also universalises the act of writing: *“And everything small or great is written down.”* (Q. 54:53) Thus, all written records are metaphysically archived, highlighting that scholarship and publication are acts of eternal accountability (*mas'uliyah da'imah*). Ethical writing in the Qur'anic sense is both a temporal responsibility and a spiritual testimony (Al-Attas, 1995).

### 12.2.5 The Qur'anic Cycle of Ethical Knowledge Transmission

The Qur'an articulates a holistic epistemological cycle ensuring moral integrity in knowledge transmission:

- Revelation (wahy) - Origin of divine truth.
- Understanding (fiqh) - Human comprehension through reflection (tafakkur).
- Communication (Tabligh) - Dissemination through ethical means.
- Remembrance (dhikr) - Preservation and application in society.

This Qur'anic epistemic cycle integrates cognition, morality, and action. When revelation inspires understanding, understanding informs communication, and communication culminates in remembrance, the cycle remains pure (ṭayyib). When any stage is corrupted-revelation ignored, comprehension is biased, or communication is deceitful, truth loses its ethical vitality.

Hence, ethical publication and discourse maintain the divine-human continuity of knowledge. The Qur'an calls believers to *“remember Allah often and glorify Him morning and evening”* (Q. 33:41), reminding us that knowledge without remembrance becomes sterile (Sardar, 2011).

### 12.2.6 Avoidance of Epistemic Arrogance (istikbar 'ilmi)

A central barrier to ethical discourse is epistemic arrogance (*istikbar 'ilmi*)-the illusion of intellectual self-sufficiency. The Qur'an warns: *“I will turn away from My signs those who are arrogant upon the earth without right.”* (Q. 7:146)

This verse reveals that arrogance obscures revelation. In academic terms, this includes the refusal to acknowledge others' contributions, exaggerating one's originality, or dismissing alternative interpretations.

The Qur'an promotes tawadū' (humility) as the foundation of true knowledge: *“And do not walk upon the earth exultantly; indeed, you will never tear the earth apart nor reach the mountains in height.”* (Q. 17:37) Epistemic humility invites continuous learning and correction. The verse *“Above every possessor of knowledge is one more knowing”* (Q. 12:76) reinforces that ultimate knowledge belongs to Allah alone. Ethical scholars thus remain seekers, not claimants, of truth (Al-Faruqi, 1982).

### 12.2.7 Ethical Responsibility in the Age of Information

In the modern information age, Qur'anic principles acquire urgent relevance. Rapid dissemination of data can easily become a source of misinformation. The Qur'an instructs: *"O you who believe, if a wicked person comes to you with news, verify it (fatabayyanu), lest you harm people out of ignorance."* (Q. 49:6) This verse embodies the modern concept of peer review and verification. The Qur'anic term fatabayyanu requires that researchers critically evaluate sources before dissemination.

Furthermore, the Qur'an condemns rhetorical deception: *"And among people is he whose speech amazes you in worldly life, and he calls Allah to witness as to what is in his heart, yet he is the fiercest of opponents."* (Q. 2:204) The Qur'an thus distinguishes between eloquence serving truth and eloquence serving vanity. Scholars must ensure that their intellectual craft aligns with sincerity (ikhlas) and public benefit (maslahah 'ammah) (Toshihiko, 2002).

### 12.2.8 From Ethical Word to Ethical World

In Qur'anic epistemology, every word spoken or written is a moral act embedded within divine accountability. The Qur'an states: *"Whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it."* (Q. 99:7-8)

Therefore, ethical publication and discourse are not peripheral matters but essential to the preservation of divine truth in human civilisation. From intention (niyyah) to impact ('amal), every stage of scholarly activity must align with the Qur'anic principles of truth (haqq), justice ('adl), and remembrance (dhikr).

When researchers write with sincerity, communicate with humility, and argue with justice, they transform human scholarship into an act of spiritual service. Ethical publication in Qur'anic terms is thus a continuation of revelation in human language—a sacred bridge between divine truth and temporal knowledge.

## 12.3 Knowledge as Trust ('Ilm Amanah): Integrating Ethics into Methodology

In the Qur'anic worldview, 'ilm (علم, knowledge) is not a commodity to be owned but an *amanah* (أمانة, trust) bestowed by Allah upon humankind. This concept transforms the pursuit of knowledge into a moral covenant, linking the act of knowing with the duty of preserving, applying, and transmitting truth responsibly. The Qur'an declares: *"Indeed, We offered the trust (al-amanah) to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they declined to bear it... but man undertook it"* (Al-Ahzab 33:72). This verse encapsulates the ethical magnitude of knowledge as divine responsibility rather than mere privilege.

To integrate 'ilm amanah into methodology means grounding every scholarly endeavour in integrity, transparency, and humility. The Qur'an emphasises that betrayal of trust (*khiyanah*, خيانة) corrupts both moral and intellectual order (Q. 8:27). Hence, knowledge divorced from ethics becomes distortion, while knowledge imbued with *amanah* becomes light (*mur*, نور). This section explores how the ethical accountability of scholars, institutions, and seekers of truth forms the heart of a Qur'an-based research paradigm.

### 12.3.1 The Ontology of Trust in Qur'anic Epistemology

In the Qur'anic worldview, knowledge (*'ilm*) is never a private possession or an instrument of domination; it is a divine trust (*amanah*) bestowed upon humankind as part of their ontological covenant with Allah. The Qur'an affirms: *"Indeed, We offered the Trust (al-amanah) to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they declined to bear it and feared it; yet man undertook it—indeed, he was unjust and ignorant."* (Q. 33:72)

This verse encapsulates the moral gravity of knowledge, portraying *'ilm* not as mere cognition or discovery but as a sacred duty to uphold truth (*ḥaqq*), justice (*'adl*), and accountability (*mas'uliyah*). The human being, by accepting the *amanah*, enters into a relationship of covenantal responsibility to seek, apply, and disseminate knowledge in harmony with divine guidance. Within the Islamic epistemological cycle—from *wahy* (revelation) to *dhikr* (remembrance)—the ethical character of knowing becomes the heart of methodology itself (Nasr, 1989; Al-Attas, 1996).

Thus, the Qur'anic paradigm of *'ilm amanah* transforms methodology into a moral discipline: to know is to be entrusted, and to be entrusted is to be morally accountable. Every act of research, interpretation, and publication becomes an act of *'ibadah* (worship) and *khidmah* (service) when aligned with divine purpose.

### 12.3.2 The Moral Architecture of 'Ilm Amanah

The Qur'an situates *'ilm* within a triadic moral architecture: truth (*ḥaqq*), trust (*amanah*), and justice (*'adl*). These interlocking principles ensure that the pursuit of knowledge does not deviate into corruption, arrogance, or exploitation.

In *Sirat al-Baqarah* (Q. 2:42), Allah commands: *"And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know [it]."* Here, concealment of truth (*kitman al-ḥaqq*) is identified as a betrayal of the *amanah* of knowledge. Similarly, in *Sirat al-Nisa'* (Q. 4:58): *"Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts (amanat) to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice (bi-l-'adl)."*

This ethical command extends beyond social or political duties; it applies equally to the scholarly responsibility to represent facts, sources, and interpretations with integrity and fairness (Rahman, 1988).

Knowledge, therefore, is not neutral. In Qur'anic methodology, neutrality detached from moral consciousness is itself a form of betrayal. The Qur'an describes those who "knew but did not act" (*'alimu wa lam ya'malu*) as those who have corrupted their *'ilm* by divorcing it from *amanah*. Thus, ethical methodology begins by affirming that the researcher stands as a trustee before God, responsible for the accuracy, purpose, and consequences of knowledge.

### 12.3.3 The Responsibility of the Knower ('Alim) as Trustee

The Qur'an describes *'ulama'* (those who possess knowledge) as individuals whose awareness of Allah (*taqwa*) deepens through knowing: *"Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who know."* (Q. 35:28) This verse identifies moral awareness (*taqwa*) as the essence of epistemic authority. True

knowledge is not defined by intellectual accumulation but by moral transformation-by how knowledge leads the knower toward humility, compassion, and justice (Nasr, 2007).

The Qur'an warns against those who acquire knowledge yet employ it for manipulation or arrogance (*kibr*): *"They know what is apparent of the worldly life, but they are heedless of the Hereafter."* (Q. 30:7) Such *heedlessness* (*ghaflah*) reflects the loss of *amanah*, when knowledge becomes divorced from remembrance of the divine. The Qur'anic knower ('*alim*) recognises both the limits of reason and the boundless responsibility of intellect. His or her methodology is anchored in *niyyah* (intention), *ikhlas* (sincerity), and '*adl* (justice). Thus, the methodological trust (*amanah manhajiiyyah*) in Islamic epistemology involves three dimensions:

- Intellectual integrity - verifying facts, contexts, and interpretations through rigorous study.
- Moral accountability - ensuring knowledge serves ethical and constructive purposes.
- Spiritual awareness - maintaining humility before the ultimate Knower (*Alim*).

#### 12.3.4 Methodological Integrity and Verification (Taḥqīq wa Tabayyūn)

A major Qur'anic principle of ethical methodology is *tabayyūn*, *critical* verification of information. The Qur'an commands: *"O you who believe, if a wicked person comes to you with news, verify it (fatabayyanu), lest you harm people out of ignorance and then become regretful."* (Q. 49:6)

This verse establishes methodological ethics: before forming conclusions or publishing results, the researcher must verify sources, ensure authenticity, and evaluate implications. This Qur'anic command aligns with what modern research calls "peer review," "data validation," and "ethical accountability."

The Qur'an repeatedly associates false testimony, rumour-spreading, and distortion with moral corruption (*fasad*): *"And do not pursue that of which you do not know (lā taqfu mā laysa laka bihi 'ilm). Indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart-about all those [one] will be questioned."* (Q. 17:36) Here, the human faculties-*sam'*, *baṣar*, and *Fu'ad*-are presented as instruments of epistemic trust. The verse implies that knowledge must be accountable to both ethical intention and epistemic rigour. In methodological terms, this requires transparency in data collection, honesty in representation, and humility in interpretation (Sardar, 1989).

#### 12.3.5 Avoiding the Corruption of Knowledge: Concealment, Misuse, and Arrogance

The Qur'an condemns those who conceal knowledge for worldly gain or prestige: *"Indeed, those who conceal what We sent down of clear proofs and guidance after We made it clear for the people in the Book-those are cursed by Allah and cursed by those who curse."* (Q. 2:159) Concealment (*kitman*) and distortion (*tahriif*) constitute betrayal of the *amanah* of '*ilm*. Likewise, misusing knowledge for power, manipulation, or fame violates the moral covenant of '*ilm amanah*. Such misuse transforms the scholar into what the Qur'an calls *ẓalim* (wrongdoer) or *mutakabbir* (arrogant one), whose intellect serves ego rather than truth.

The Qur'an thus enjoins humility as the epistemic virtue of the true scholar: *"And do not walk upon the earth arrogantly; indeed, you will never tear the earth [apart], nor reach the mountains in height."* (Q.

17:37) Epistemic humility (*tawāḍu‘ ‘ilmi*) is, therefore, a methodological requirement. It ensures that the process of research remains an act of service, not self-promotion. The Qur'anic scholar views knowledge as a divine loan, not an achievement of the self.

Modern ethics committees and institutional guidelines partially reflect this Qur'anic vision, emphasising transparency, honesty, and accountability. Yet, the Qur'anic foundation goes further-it roots these principles in the spiritual covenant between humanity and Allah.

### 12.3.6 Integrating Amanah into Contemporary Research Methodology

To operationalise *‘ilm amanah* within modern research requires reorienting the entire epistemic process, from problem formulation to dissemination, toward ethical accountability. The following key dimensions emerge:

- Epistemic Intention (Niyyah ‘Ilmiyyah): Every research endeavour begins with an intention aligned with *ḥaqq* (truth) and *khayr* (goodness). The researcher asks: Does this knowledge contribute to justice, welfare, and divine remembrance (*dhikr*)?
- Transparent Methodology (Bayan wa Ṣidq): The Qur'an values clarity and truthfulness. Thus, methods must be transparently stated, results honestly reported, and limitations acknowledged.
- Social Responsibility (Mas‘uliyah Ijtima‘iyyah): Knowledge must serve the community (*ummah*), addressing moral, ecological, and social well-being rather than reinforcing oppression or inequality.
- Interdisciplinary Humility (Tawāḍu‘ ‘Ilmi): The Qur'anic ethos encourages dialogue across disciplines and perspectives while maintaining the humility to learn from others (Q. 39:9).
- Remembrance (Dhikr) as Final Aim: The epistemic journey returns to remembrance of the Divine. Knowledge that fails to enhance *dhikr Allah* risks falling into *ghaflah* (heedlessness), losing its purpose.

In this integration, the Qur'an redefines methodology not as technique but as ethical orientation-a path of moral consciousness. The *amanah* of knowledge requires that every step in inquiry be guided by *taqwa* (God-consciousness) and *‘adl* (justice).

### 12.3.7 Knowledge Dissemination as Ethical Fulfilment of Amanah

The dissemination of knowledge -through teaching, publishing, or policy -is a continuation of the *amanah* process. The Qur'an emphasises the responsibility of transmission (Tabligh) and warns against corruption in discourse (*jadāl bi-ghayr ‘ilm*): “*And of mankind are those who dispute about Allah without knowledge, guidance, or an enlightening Book.*” (Q. 22:8)

This verse rebukes argumentation without understanding, a phenomenon still visible in modern academic debates driven by ego or competition rather than the search for truth. Disseminating knowledge ethically requires three Qur'anic virtues:

- Clarity (bayān) - ensuring communication serves understanding, not confusion.
- Justice (‘adl) - acknowledging all sources and collaborators fairly.

- Remembrance (dhikr) - situating every act of knowledge within divine consciousness.

Thus, teaching and publishing become acts of *‘ibadah* when undertaken with integrity and humility. A Qur’anic scholar fulfils his or her *amanah* not merely by producing data, but by guiding others toward *ḥaqq*.

### 12.3.8 The Eternal Covenant of Knowledge

The Qur’an concludes its vision of *‘ilm amanah* with a call to humility, gratitude, and remembrance: “*And say, ‘My Lord, increase me in knowledge.’*” (Q. 20:114) This prayer encapsulates the ethos of Qur’anic methodology: every increase in knowledge is a deepening of responsibility. The true scholar acknowledges that knowledge is never complete, nor can it exist apart from moral accountability.

Therefore, integrating *‘ilm amanah* into methodology means transforming research from a technical activity into a spiritual-ethical vocation. It unites intellect and conscience, reason and revelation, inquiry and remembrance. The Qur’anic cycle of epistemology—from *wahy* (revelation) to *‘aql* (reason), from *‘ilm* (knowledge) to *dhikr* (remembrance)—culminates in a moral posture of service to both Creator and creation.

In the contemporary world of fragmented disciplines and value-neutral science, the Qur’anic conception of *knowledge as trust* reclaims the sacred balance between intellect and virtue. It calls upon scholars to act not as possessors of truth but as trustees of divine signs (ayat)-guardians of an eternal *amanah* that began before the dawn of humanity.

## 12.4: Integrating Revelation and Rational Inquiry (al-Wahy wa al-‘Aql)

The Qur’an envisions a profound harmony between *al-wahy* (الوحي, revelation) and *al-‘aql* (العقل, reason), rejecting the dichotomy that often divides faith from intellect. Divine revelation provides *ḥudā* (هدى, guidance), while reason serves as the instrument through which humanity comprehends and applies that guidance. The Qur’an repeatedly invites reflection: “*Do they not reflect (yatafakkarun)?*” (Q. 30:8), and “*Will you not reason (ta‘qilun)?*” (Q. 2:44). These commands establish *‘aql* as a sacred faculty through which the signs of *wahy* are recognised within creation.

Integrating *wahy* and *‘aql* within methodology restores balance between transcendence and empiricism. It affirms that revelation anchors truth, while intellect interprets it in a human context. The Qur’an thus presents a unified epistemology—where divine communication and rational reflection converge in service to justice (*‘adl*) and truth (*ḥaqq*). This section elaborates on this integration as the culmination of Qur’anic moral and epistemological synthesis.

### 12.4.1 The Dual Luminous Sources of Knowledge

The Qur’an situates the human pursuit of knowledge (*‘ilm*) within two interdependent sources of illumination: revelation (*wahy*) and reason (*‘aql*). The first is divine disclosure—the Word of God descending into the human realm; the second is the human faculty of comprehension, reflection, and moral discernment. Together, they form what may be called the *Qur’anic epistemic partnership*: revelation offers



guidance (*huda*), while intellect enables understanding (*tafakkur*) and remembrance (*dhikr*). Allah declares: “[This is] a blessed Book which We have revealed to you so that they may reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding (*ulu al-albab*) may take heed.” (Q. 38:29)

This verse establishes a divinely sanctioned dialectic between *wahy* and *‘aql*. Revelation is not imposed against reason; rather, it calls reason into its highest function: reflection (*tafakkur*), comprehension (*ta‘aqqul*), and moral action (*‘amal ṣaliḥ*). Within the Qur’an’s epistemological cycle—from *wahy* to *‘ilm*, from *‘ilm* to *ḥikmah* (wisdom), and from *ḥikmah* to *dhikr*—intellect becomes the mirror through which divine truth is apprehended and manifested in ethical life (Al-Attas, 1996; Nasr, 1989).

The challenge of Islamic epistemology, therefore, is not to choose between revelation and reason but to reintegrate them—to heal the modern epistemic fragmentation that separates rational inquiry from spiritual guidance.

#### 12.4.2 Qur’an and Anthropology of Reason (‘Aql) as a Moral Faculty

The Qur’an repeatedly addresses the human faculty of reason as a moral and spiritual organ, not a merely cognitive mechanism. The verb *ya‘qilun* (“do they not reason?”) appears more than forty times, almost always in ethical contexts (Rahman, 1988). Reason, in the Qur’an, is linked with *qalb* (heart) and *Fu‘ad* (inner consciousness), indicating that thinking is inseparable from moral responsibility. “Have they not travelled through the earth so that they may have hearts by which to reason (*ya‘qilun biha*) or ears by which to hear? For indeed it is not the eyes that are blind, but the hearts within the chests that are blind.” (Q. 22:46)

Here, blindness is moral blindness, not sensory deficiency. The Qur’an, therefore, redefines *‘aql* as a faculty of ethical perception—the capacity to discern right from wrong, justice from corruption.

This conception diverges sharply from modern secular rationalism, which isolates reason from revelation and value. In Qur’anic epistemology, reason functions within revelation, not apart from it. Revelation provides orientation (*qiblah ‘ilmiyyah*), while reason provides articulation and application. The two are complementary: *wahy* gives direction; *‘aql* ensures comprehension.

Thus, intellect is not autonomous in the sense of self-sufficient; it is the servant of divine truth, entrusted with interpreting the signs (*ayat*) scattered in nature, scripture, and the self: “We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the Truth.” (Q. 41:53) Here, reason and revelation converge in a unified vision: both are pathways to truth (*ḥaqq*), both lead toward remembrance (*dhikr*), and both demand humility before the Creator.

#### 12.4.3 Revelation (Wahy) as the Source of Orientation and Meaning

Revelation (*wahy*) in the Qur’an is portrayed as the ultimate criterion of meaning and value. It is through *wahy* that the scattered perceptions of reason are ordered into a coherent moral cosmos. Allah describes revelation as: “The Spirit has brought it down from your Lord in truth, to make firm those who believe, and as guidance and good tidings for the Muslims.” (Q. 16:102)

Revelation thus performs three epistemic functions:

- Affirmation of truth (*bi-l-haqq*), ensuring that human cognition is anchored in reality, not illusion.
- Stabilisation of faith, linking belief with understanding.
- Orientation toward ethical action, transforming knowledge into guidance.

The Qur'an further characterises itself as *mur* (light) and *furqan* (criterion): “O mankind! There has come to you conclusive proof from your Lord, and We have sent down to you a clear light.” (Q. 4:174) “Blessed is He who sent down the Criterion (*al-furqan*) upon His servant that he may be to the worlds a warner.” (Q. 25:1)

These descriptions signify that revelation provides the ethical illumination through which reason discerns the right course. Without *wahy*, human intellect risks falling into relativism or arrogance (*kibr 'aqli*), constructing false certainties based on limited perception. Revelation thus protects reason from self-deception by reminding it of transcendence.

In Qur'anic epistemology, *wahy* is not irrational, but trans-rational-it transcends reason's limits while affirming its validity. It calls the intellect to humility and invites it to contemplate reality beyond sensory and empirical confines.

#### 12.4.4 The Qur'anic Logic of Integration: Between Ta'aqqul and Tadhakkur

The Qur'an employs two key cognitive verbs-*ta'aqqul* (to reason) and *tadhakkur* (to remember)-to illustrate the dual operation of the intellect. *Ta'aqqul* represents rational reflection, while *tadhakkur* represents moral remembrance. Integration of revelation and reason, therefore, occurs when reflection is guided by remembrance. “Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day are signs for those of understanding (*ulu al-albab*)-those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth.” (Q. 3:190-191)

The Qur'anic *ulu al-albab* (possessors of intellect) embody the synthesis of *'aql* and *wahy*. Their reasoning is contemplative, not speculative; their reflection leads to humility, not pride. The integration of *ta'aqqul* and *tadhakkur* forms what can be termed the ethical reason (*al-'aql al-akhlaqi*), a rationality illuminated by faith and restrained by conscience.

This Qur'anic model rejects two extremes:

- Pure rationalism, which exalts human intellect as self-sufficient.
- Blind traditionalism, which negates human inquiry in the name of faith.

Instead, it establishes a dynamic reciprocity: reason interprets revelation, revelation purifies reason. This is the intellectual covenant that sustains the Islamic scientific and philosophical tradition from al-Farabi and Ibn Sina to al-Ghazali and Mulla Sadra (Nasr, 2007).



### 12.4.5 The Epistemic Balance: Limitation of Reason and the Infallibility of Revelation

While affirming reason's dignity, the Qur'an also sets its limits. Human intellect, bound by space and time, cannot grasp the full scope of divine reality. The Qur'an declares: "*They encompass nothing of His knowledge except what He wills.*" (Q. 2:255)

This limitation does not degrade reason but situates it within a hierarchy of knowledge, a structure ascending from sensory perception (*ḥiss*), to rational inference (*ʿaql*), to revealed wisdom (*wahy*). Within this hierarchy, *wahy* provides certitude (*yaqin*), while *ʿaql* offers comprehension and application (Al-Attas, 1996).

The Qur'an also warns against speculative excess: "*And do not pursue that of which you do not know. Indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart-about all those will be questioned.*" (Q. 17:36) Here, epistemic humility (*tawadūʿ ʿilmi*) becomes a moral command. The integration of revelation and reason is thus not a merger of equals but a harmonious hierarchy: revelation provides the light, and reason operates within that illumination. Reason, when detached from *wahy*, becomes vulnerable to *ẓann* (speculation) and *ghaflah* (heedlessness). Revelation without reason, however, risks stagnation and misinterpretation. The Qur'an's methodology, therefore, calls for *ʿaql musharraʿ bi-l-wahy*-an intellect disciplined by revelation.

### 12.4.6 Historical Manifestations of Integration in the Islamic Intellectual Tradition

Throughout Islamic intellectual history, the synthesis of *wahy* and *ʿaql* has generated a harmonious civilisation of knowledge. The Qur'anic injunctions to observe, measure, and reflect inspired early Muslim engagement in astronomy, medicine, logic, and ethics, always within the framework of divine purpose.

The *Bayt al-Hikmah* of Baghdad (9th century CE) exemplified this integration: revelation provided ontological orientation, and rational inquiry provided methodological precision. The Qur'anic emphasis on *ayat*-signs in creation -encouraged scientific exploration as an act of remembrance. Scholars such as al-Bīrūnī, Ibn al-Haytham, and Ibn Rushd viewed natural science as a means of reading the divine script of nature (Nasr, 1989).

In philosophical discourse, al-Farabi and Ibn Sina developed metaphysical systems harmonising intellect and revelation, while al-Ghazali, in *Iḥyāʾ ʿUlum al-Dīn*, reaffirmed that true knowledge must culminate in ethical transformation, not mere speculation. The later illuminationists (*ishraqiyyūn*) and Sufis, such as Suhrawardī and Ibn ʿArabi, deepened this synthesis, interpreting *ʿaql* as a light derived from the Light of God (*ṣūr Allāh*).

This integrated epistemology stands in contrast to modern epistemic dualism that separates science and spirituality, faith and reason. For the Qur'an, both revelation and rationality are rays of the same divine *ṣūr*, differing in mode but united in origin.

### 12.4.7 Toward a Contemporary Qur'anic Epistemology: Re-integrating Wahy and ʿAql

In the contemporary context, the fragmentation of knowledge and the dominance of secular paradigms demand a renewal of Qur'anic epistemology. This renewal involves reintegrating revelation and rational

inquiry as complementary axes of truth. The Qur'anic framework offers four methodological principles for this reintegration:

- Unity of Truth (*tawhīd al-ḥaqq*) - All genuine knowledge, whether derived from revelation or rational inquiry, ultimately converges in the oneness of reality under divine sovereignty.
- Purpose of Knowledge (*maqṣad al-'ilm*) - Knowledge must serve ethical and spiritual elevation, not mere utility or domination.
- Accountability of Reason (*mas'ulīyyah al-'aql*) - Rational inquiry must remain answerable to divine guidance and moral law.
- Holistic Methodology (*manhaj tawhīdī*) - Research should integrate empirical observation (*nazar*), rational analysis ('*aql*), and revelational reflection (*wahy*) in a continuous dialectic.

Applying these principles would mean restructuring modern disciplines around value-centric paradigms, where natural sciences recognise metaphysical significance, and humanities acknowledge divine teleology. This Qur'anic reintegration transforms knowledge into '*ibadah* (worship) and research into *amanah* (trust).

#### 12.4.8 The Qur'anic Method of Rational Reflection: Observing the Signs

The Qur'an repeatedly commands believers to observe and contemplate the natural world as a form of revelation in creation (*al-Kitab al-manẓur*): “Do they not look into the dominion of the heavens and the earth and all things that Allah has created?” (Q. 7:185) “Say, ‘Travel through the land and observe how He began creation.’” (Q. 29:20)

This epistemic method affirms empirical investigation (*mushahadah*), yet it is directed by a metaphysical horizon: observation leads to recognition of divine unity (*tawhīd*). Thus, the Qur'anic rational method is both empirical and theological-empirical in its attention to phenomena, theological in its orientation to meaning.

Modern Islamic scholars, such as Syed Hossein Nasr (2007), argue that rediscovering this *tawhīdī science* could restore harmony between the human intellect, nature, and the sacred. When reason reflects upon creation as a sign (*ayah*), it becomes a means of worship; when it isolates phenomena from their Creator, it degenerates into mere calculation.

#### 12.4.9 Revelation and Reason in the Cycle of Dhikr (Remembrance)

The ultimate purpose of integrating *wahy* and '*aql* is to awaken *dhikr* -the consciousness of divine presence in all knowledge. The Qur'an frequently links remembrance with understanding: “And remind, for indeed the reminder benefits the believers.” (Q. 51:55) “Those who remember Allah standing, sitting, and lying down, and reflect on the creation...” (Q. 3:191) Here, reflection (*tafakkur*) and remembrance (*dhikr*) are inseparable epistemic acts. Revelation initiates remembrance; reason sustains it through reflection on divine signs. Together they generate *ḥikmah* (wisdom)-knowledge that transforms the self and society in accordance with divine justice ('*adl*) and mercy (*rahmah*).

In methodological terms, *dhikr* represents the teleological end of all research: knowledge should culminate in moral consciousness and spiritual awareness. Without remembrance, rational inquiry risks becoming a pursuit of power (*istiṭrad*), detached from ethical consequence.

#### 12.4.10 Ethical Consequences of Integrating Revelation and Reason

When *wahy* and *‘aql* operate in harmony, knowledge acquires ethical coherence. The Qur’anic vision of ethics (*akhlaq*) is not an external code imposed upon knowledge but an internal quality of knowing itself. Every act of reasoning is simultaneously an act of moral choice. Thus, in a Qur’anic methodology:

- To misuse reason for deceit is a betrayal of *‘aql amanah*.
- To ignore revelation in intellectual inquiry is to blind the intellect’s higher light.
- To harmonise them is to realise *hikmah*, the synthesis of truth and virtue.

Ethically integrated knowledge produces humility, justice, and compassion-qualities that reflect divine attributes (*ṣifāt Allah*). Disintegrated knowledge, by contrast, produces arrogance, domination, and spiritual emptiness.

#### 12.4.11 The Harmony of Light and Intellect

The integration of *wahy* and *‘aql* constitutes the heart of Islamic epistemology. Revelation is the light (*mur*); reason is the mirror. Only when the mirror is polished by humility and sincerity can it reflect the divine light without distortion. Allah commands: “*So believe in Allah and His Messenger and the light which We have sent down.*” (Q. 64:8)

In this verse, *mur*-the Qur’an -becomes the criterion of enlightened intellect. The perfected intellect does not oppose revelation but finds its fulfilment within it. The Qur’anic scholar, therefore, listens with reason, reasons with faith, and acts with remembrance.

In the modern age, reuniting *wahy* and *‘aql* is not merely a theological project; it is an existential necessity. It reclaims knowledge as a sacred trust (*amanah*) and restores the unity of truth (*tawḥid al-ḥaqq*). Through this integration, humanity may rediscover that every inquiry, scientific, philosophical, or ethical, is ultimately a journey toward the same divine source: “*To Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth.*” (Q. 39:63) Thus, the Qur’anic epistemology of *al-wahy wa al-‘aql* reveals that true knowing is a form of remembering, and true reasoning is a form of worship.

The ethical dimension of knowledge in the Qur’an represents the final synthesis of the epistemological journey that began with revelation (*wahy*) and culminates in remembrance (*dhikr*). This section has shown that knowledge without ethics is neither complete nor beneficial; rather, it becomes a source of *ẓulm* (injustice) and *fasad* (corruption). The Qur’an consistently binds *‘ilm* to *‘adl*, *ṣidq*, and *taqwa*, asserting that truth is meaningful only when pursued through sincerity and justice (Al-Maidah 5:8; Al-Naḥl 16:90).

In Chapter 11, the ethics of knowing were explored through the lenses of responsibility and restraint. The Qur’anic imperative-“*Do not pursue that of which you do not know*” (Q. 17:36)-calls humanity to intellectual humility and moral accountability. The *ulu al-albab*, the Qur’an’s term for those endowed with

deep understanding, embody this balance between intellect and virtue, using knowledge to promote harmony rather than domination.

Chapter 12 extended this moral inquiry to the realm of research and scholarly methodology. It emphasised that true knowledge must arise from *niyyah ṣaliḥah* (sincere intention) and be expressed through *‘amal ṣaliḥ* (righteous action). The Qur’an teaches that knowledge is an *amanah* (trust), and its misuse constitutes betrayal (*khiyanah*). Through ethical discourse, publication integrity, and the harmony of *al-wahy* and *al-‘aql*, scholars are called to embody truth both in method and in message.

Ultimately, the Qur’anic epistemology envisions knowledge as a living covenant between the knower and the Known, between humanity and God. To know, in Qur’anic terms, is to serve; to serve is to remember (*dhikr*); and to remember is to return to the Source of all truth. Thus, the ethical dimensions of knowledge complete the circle of revelation, action, and remembrance, affirming that every act of knowing must echo divine justice, sincerity, and mercy in the unfolding history of human understanding.

## PART IV: STRUCTURE OF QUR'ANIC LOGIC AND DISCOVERY

The Qur'anic conception of knowledge is not static; it unfolds through an organic cycle of *iman* (إيمان, faith), *ilm* (علم, knowledge), and *amal* (عمل, action). This triadic structure shapes the logic of discovery (*manṭiq al-iktishaf*, منطق الاكتشاف), a system in which intellectual inquiry, spiritual conviction, and moral implementation operate as interdependent processes. The Qur'an does not present faith as blind acceptance, nor knowledge as detached speculation; rather, it situates both within a dynamic epistemic journey that culminates in moral realisation and divine certainty (*yaqin*, يقين).

This part, “Structure of Qur'anic Logic and Discovery,” examines the higher epistemological architecture of the Qur'an-how human reasoning (*'aql*, عقل) engages divine revelation (*wahy*, وحي) through a disciplined process of validation, reflection, and discovery. While the previous part established the ethical foundations of knowing, this section addresses how truth is verified, how certainty is attained, and how knowledge translates into transformative practice.

At its core, the Qur'anic logical structure is inductive and moral. It draws from observable realities (*ayat*, آيات)-both within the cosmos and within the self-to lead the seeker toward the metaphysical unity of all truth. The Qur'an states: “We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the Truth” (Q. 41:53). This verse establishes the hermeneutic bridge between perception and revelation, suggesting that every act of discovery (*iktishaf*) is ultimately an unveiling of divine meaning (*ma'na ilahi*, معنى إلهي).

The chapters of this part unfold sequentially to demonstrate the Qur'anic cycle of logic and discovery. Chapter 13 explores the *Cycle of Faith-Knowledge-Action*, analysing how belief motivates inquiry and how action verifies belief through lived reality. Chapter 14 examines the *Three Stages of Certainty- 'Ilm al-Yaqin* (علم اليقين), *Ayn al-Yaqin* (عين اليقين), and *Haqq al-Yaqin* (حق اليقين)-as the metaphysical culmination of Qur'anic epistemology. Chapter 15 develops the *Qur'anic Logic of Verification and Discovery*, outlining how divine signs and rational processes together produce authentic understanding (*ma'rifah*, معرفة) and uncover truth (*haqq*, حق).

This section, therefore, synthesises the rational, ethical, and revelatory dimensions of Islamic epistemology into a cohesive model of knowledge production. It portrays Qur'anic reasoning not merely as theological speculation but as a divinely guided system of discovery, one that fuses *wahy* and *'aql*, observation and reflection, certainty and humility. Ultimately, the *Structure of Qur'anic Logic and Discovery* seeks to recover the Qur'an's original intellectual paradigm-a paradigm that redefines logic as a path to both truth and transcendence.

## Chapter 13: The Cycle of Faith-Knowledge-Action (دورة الإيمان - العلم - العمل)

The Qur'anic worldview presents human cognition as a living cycle where faith (iman, إيمان), knowledge ('ilm, علم), and action ('amal, عمل) form an inseparable triad. This epistemic structure is not linear but circular and dynamic -each dimension nourishes and completes the other. The Qur'an reveals that true knowledge originates from belief in divine truth and culminates in righteous deeds that manifest that truth in the world. The ethical essence of knowledge, therefore, depends not merely on intellectual apprehension but on its transformation into conscious, moral action. Within this divine cycle, iman ignites awareness, 'ilm refines understanding, and 'amal actualises faith, forming the complete architecture of Qur'anic epistemology.

### 13.1 The Interconnected Architecture of Qur'anic Epistemology

The Qur'an establishes a coherent epistemic framework that integrates the domains of faith, knowledge, and action into a unified ontological system. This system transcends dualistic divisions between the spiritual and empirical by positing that all forms of valid knowledge must begin from faith in the oneness of God (tawhīd, توحيد) and His revealed guidance. The Qur'an declares: *"God will raise those of you who believe and those who have been given knowledge by degrees"* (Q. 58:11). This verse situates belief (iman) and knowledge ('ilm) as complementary states of elevation, where knowledge becomes the refinement of faith and faith becomes the ethical foundation of knowledge (Nasr, 2007).

#### 13.1.1 Faith, Knowledge, and Action as a Unified Cycle

The Qur'anic paradigm conceives of human epistemology not as a passive accumulation of data but as an active moral journey. The sequence iman → 'ilm → 'amal expresses a spiritual ecology of knowing, where each stage reinforces the other in a circular pattern of enlightenment and responsibility. This is reflected in the verse: *"Those who believe and do righteous deeds - theirs shall be gardens beneath which rivers flow"* (Q. 2:25).

Here, belief (iman) generates action ('amal ṣāliḥ), confirming that the moral worth of faith is realised only through ethical conduct. Conversely, the absence of action renders faith incomplete, as stated: *"Why do you say what you do not do?"* (Q. 61:2). Thus, faith demands verification through action, while action must be guided by knowledge derived from revelation.

#### 13.1.2 Epistemic Integration and the Human Role

The Qur'an describes humanity as khali'iah (خليفة) - a moral trustee on earth (Q. 2:30). This designation assigns epistemic responsibility: humans must use knowledge to sustain justice, balance, and truth. Knowledge, therefore, is not self-serving but teleological -directed toward fulfilling divine purpose (al-Attas, 1995).

In the Qur'anic system, 'ilm without iman leads to arrogance (istikbar), and iman without 'ilm risks blind imitation (taqlī d). Only through 'amal can this duality be harmonised, transforming abstract awareness into lived wisdom.

### 13.1.3 Cognitive and Moral Reciprocity

The Qur'an frequently links knowing ('ilm) with moral purification (tazkiyah, تزكية). The verse, *"He it is Who sent among the unlettered a Messenger... to purify them and teach them the Book and wisdom"* (Q. 62:2), demonstrates that knowledge and purity are concurrent dimensions of the divine pedagogy. The process of teaching (talim, تعليم) is inseparable from the process of purification (tazkiyah). Hence, the Qur'anic epistemology is both cognitive and ethical, implying that learning without purification leads to the distortion of truth (Sardar, 2017).

### 13.1.4 From Faith to Discovery

The Qur'an's epistemic cycle also encompasses discovery and reflection: *"Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of night and day are signs for those who reflect"* (Q. 3:190). Reflection (tafakkur, تفكر) becomes the method of transforming revelation into understanding. Faith stimulates inquiry, inquiry produces knowledge, and knowledge culminates in grateful action (shukr, شكر).

In this architecture, human reason ('aql, عقل) functions as a reflective mirror for divine guidance, but not as an independent source of ultimate truth. Revelation (wahy, وحي) supplies the foundation upon which reason operates, ensuring epistemic integrity and moral direction (Nasr, 2010).

Therefore, the interconnected structure of faith, knowledge, and action within the Qur'an offers not only a model for spiritual development but also a framework for scientific and moral progress anchored in divine unity.

## 13.2 Iman (Faith) as the Foundation of Epistemic Awareness

Faith (iman, إيمان) in the Qur'an is not a static belief system but an active mode of perception through which truth is recognised, internalised, and enacted. It forms the ontological ground of knowledge because it orients the human heart (qalb, قلب) toward divine light and away from ignorance (jahl, جهل). The Qur'an declares: *"It is not the eyes that are blind, but the hearts within the breasts that are blind"* (Q. 22:46).

This verse locates ignorance not in sensory deficiency but in moral blindness. Thus, Iman functions as a state of moral and cognitive openness that allows the human intellect to perceive divine reality.

### 13.2.1 Faith as an Epistemic Lens

In Qur'anic epistemology, faith is the condition for the possibility of knowledge. Without iman, the human faculty of reasoning becomes unanchored, vulnerable to conjecture (zann, ظن) and deception. The Qur'an warns: *"They follow nothing but conjecture, and indeed conjecture avails nothing against the truth"* (Q. 53:28).

Faith, therefore, provides the grounding principle that distinguishes truth (haqq, حق) from illusion (batil, باطل). It is through iman that revelation is accepted, knowledge is purified, and ethical action is directed.



### 13.2.2 Cognition and the Heart

The Qur'an repeatedly uses the heart as the organ of understanding. Unlike the Greek rationalist model that centres cognition in the intellect, the Qur'an centres it in the qalb, where knowledge and faith converge. The verse states: *"Indeed, there is a reminder in this for whoever has a heart or gives ear while he is heedful"* (Q. 50:37).

The heart here represents the integrated consciousness that combines reasoning, feeling, and ethical sensitivity. Through Iman, the heart becomes receptive to truth, transforming information into wisdom (hikmah, حكمة).

### 13.2.3 Faith and the Process of Knowing

Faith is the epistemic *precondition* for true inquiry. As Al-Attas (1980) argues, "Knowledge in Islam is not value-neutral; it is born of faith and directed toward justice." The Qur'an affirms that faith transforms perception: *"And those who strive in Our cause-We shall surely guide them to Our ways"* (Q. 29:69).

This guidance (huda, هدى) is epistemological as much as spiritual. The act of believing itself becomes a method of knowing, where sincerity of heart unveils layers of divine meaning inaccessible to scepticism (Nasr, 2002).

### 13.2.4 Faith and Action

Faith demands embodiment through action. The Qur'an emphasises repeatedly: *"Those who believe and do good deeds"* (Q. 103:3). This union of faith and action signifies that belief is validated through moral performance. To claim faith without practice is to sever the epistemic cycle. Hence, the Qur'an calls such people *munaḥiqun* (hypocrites), who *"say with their tongues what is not in their hearts"* (Q. 48:11). Faith becomes verified in the world through the moral effects it generates-justice, compassion, and truthfulness.

### 13.2.5 Faith and Intellectual Humility

True faith instils humility before divine knowledge. The Qur'an reminds humanity: *"And of knowledge, you have been given only a little"* (Q. 17:85). This statement instils epistemic modesty-an awareness of human limitation and divine transcendence. Faith thus protects knowledge from arrogance, ensuring that inquiry remains oriented toward service rather than domination (Sardar, 2017).

Iman, in the Qur'anic logic, is both the source and end of epistemic awareness. It is the illumination (mur, نور) that makes understanding possible, the ethical compass that guides inquiry, and the moral energy that animates righteous action. Without iman, knowledge degenerates into manipulation; without knowledge, iman stagnates into sentimentality. The Qur'an calls believers to harmonise both dimensions, forming a living cycle where knowing is believing, and believing is doing.

## 13.3 'Ilm (Knowledge, علم) as Illumination of Faith

Knowledge ('ilm, علم) in the Qur'anic worldview is not an autonomous human endeavour but a divine light (mur, نور) that illumines the heart of one grounded in faith (iman, إيمان). It is both a means of

approaching God and a sign of His mercy. The Qur'an asserts that knowledge, when divorced from faith, degenerates into arrogance and confusion; yet when integrated with iman, it transforms into wisdom (hikmah, حكمة) that elevates both the individual and society.

### 13.3.1 Knowledge as Divine Light (Mur)

The Qur'an describes knowledge as illumination that dispels darkness: *"Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth... Light upon Light! Allah guides to His Light whom He wills"* (Q. 24:35).

This verse metaphorically identifies divine revelation as the *source of all epistemic illumination*. The light of faith allows the seeker to perceive truth, while 'ilm is the intellectual form of that light. Without Iman, the light of knowledge becomes fragmented. As Nasr (2007) observes, Qur'anic epistemology rests on the metaphysical principle that "true knowledge is participation in divine light."

In another verse, the Qur'an contrasts illumination and ignorance: *"Is one who was dead and We gave him life and made for him a light whereby he walks among people like one in darkness from which he cannot come out?"* (Q. 6:122). Here, knowledge is a *living light* that enables moral orientation in society. The enlightened individual becomes a source of clarity and justice.

### 13.3.2 The Ontological Unity of Faith and Knowledge

Faith (iman) is the existential ground of knowledge, while knowledge ('ilm) is faith articulated in consciousness. The Qur'an unites these dimensions in a profound verse: *"He teaches you what you did not know"* (Q. 2:151). This act of divine teaching follows purification (tazkiyah) and belief. Thus, knowledge follows faith and moral readiness.

Al-Attas (1995) emphasises that knowledge in Islam is "recognition of the proper place of everything within the order of creation." This recognition begins with belief in the divine order (tawhīd, توحيد). Hence, 'ilm is not merely empirical accumulation but *understanding through divine perspective*.

### 13.3.3 Knowledge as a Moral Responsibility

The Qur'an consistently frames knowledge as an *amanah* (trust): *"Indeed, We offered the Trust (al-amanah) to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they declined to bear it and feared it; but man undertook it"* (Q. 33:72).

This verse implies that the burden of knowledge is ethical. Humans are accountable for how they use and disseminate knowledge. Without faith to guide its use, knowledge may lead to oppression (ẓulm, ظلم) and corruption (fasad, فساد). Thus, 'ilm must be bound to iman to maintain moral order.

### 13.3.4 Epistemic Transformation and Reflection

The Qur'an repeatedly calls humanity to reflect (tafakkur, تفكر), observe (nazar, نظر), and comprehend ('aql, عقل): *"Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day are signs for people of understanding"* (Q. 3:190).

Here, ‘ilm grows through engagement with signs (ayat, آيات) both in revelation and creation. The integration of these two domains - al-wahy (الوحي) and al-kawn (الكون) - forms the Qur’anic method of discovery. As Sardar (2017) explains, the Qur’an “demands reflection on nature not for domination but for recognition of divine wisdom.”

### 13.3.5 Faith Illuminated by Knowledge

When ‘ilm strengthens iman, faith evolves from passive belief to active certainty (yaqin, يقين). The Qur’an declares: *“It is only those of His servants who have knowledge that truly fear Allah”* (Q. 35:28).

Fear here (khawf, خوف) is not terror but awe - an epistemic reverence that results from understanding divine reality. Thus, knowledge deepens faith by unveiling the order, purpose, and beauty of creation.

Inversely, faith without knowledge risks stagnation, while knowledge without faith breeds arrogance. The Qur’an cautions against those who *“know the outward of this world, but are heedless of the Hereafter”* (Q. 30:7). The Qur’anic scholar thus learns to balance outward investigation with inward reflection, ensuring that knowledge serves remembrance (dhikr, ذكر) rather than distraction.

### 13.3.6 The Qur’anic Pedagogy of Light

The Prophet’s mission is described as one of illumination: *“A light and a clear Book have come to you from Allah; by it Allah guides those who seek His pleasure to paths of peace”* (Q. 5:15-16). This establishes ‘ilm as a *pathway* to divine peace (salam, سلام). The ethical consequence of knowledge is harmony between self, society, and creation. In Qur’anic pedagogy, learning is not an end in itself but a process of becoming *aware of divine order* through humility, gratitude, and justice (Al-Attas, 1995).

In the Qur’an, ‘ilm is the light that illuminates iman, transforming faith from mere conviction to experiential awareness. It is both a divine trust and a moral compass, guiding believers toward justice and equilibrium. True knowledge begins in faith, matures through reflection, and culminates in ethical transformation - thus completing the Qur’anic epistemic cycle.

## 13.4 ‘Amal (Action, عمل) as the Completion of Knowledge

Action (‘amal, عمل) in the Qur’an represents the culmination and verification of knowledge. It is the manifestation of faith and intellect in the moral world. The Qur’an repeatedly links knowledge to action and condemns those who “know” but do not “do.” Hence, ‘amal is not merely external behaviour but a conscious enactment of divine knowledge in human life.

### 13.4.1 Action as Proof of Faith

The Qur’an declares: *“Those who believe and do righteous deeds - they are the best of creation”* (Q. 98:7). Faith and action are inseparable. Without ‘amal, iman remains abstract; without ‘ilm, ‘amal risks error. This unity forms the ethical verification of knowledge. According to Al-Attas (1980), “Right action is knowledge made manifest.”

Action thus becomes the *proof* (burhan, برهان) of knowledge's truthfulness. The Qur'an rebukes hypocrisy: "*O you who believe! Why do you say what you do not do?*" (Q. 61:2). This divine question exposes epistemic dissonance-where words ('ilm) and deeds ('amal) diverge.

### 13.4.2 'Amal as Transformation

Qur'anic epistemology sees action as a form of transformation, not performance. The purpose of knowledge is to change the self (nafs, نفس) and society toward divine justice. The Qur'an proclaims: "*Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves*" (Q. 13:11). Here, internal moral reformation precedes external social change. Thus, 'amal becomes both personal and collective - a bridge between inner knowledge and outer reality.

### 13.4.3 Action Anchored in Intention (Niyyah, نية)

The value of 'amal lies in its intention (niyyah). The Qur'an warns that even outwardly righteous deeds are void if divorced from sincerity: "*They show off before people, but remember Allah little*" (Q. 4:142). Action without inner truth is hypocrisy (nifaq, نفاق). Hence, true 'amal is the faithful embodiment of inner belief guided by divine awareness.

### 13.4.4 The Moral Logic of Action

Every act in the Qur'an carries epistemic and ethical weight. Actions are judged not by their outcomes but by their alignment with truth (haqq, حق) and justice ('adl, عدل). The Qur'an emphasises this accountability: "*Whoever does an atom's weight of good shall see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil shall see it*" (Q. 99:7-8). Through this logic, action becomes *revelatory*-each deed unveils the true nature of one's knowledge and faith.

### 13.4.5 Action as Continuation of Revelation

In the Qur'an, 'amal functions as a continuation of revelation in the lived world. The believer becomes a medium through which divine wisdom manifests in history. When the Qur'an commands: "*Work, for Allah will see your deeds, and so will His Messenger and the believers*" (Q. 9:105). It establishes a theology of accountability and visibility. Human action reflects divine knowledge in the moral order.

### 13.4.6 From Knowledge to Justice

The Qur'an binds knowledge, faith, and action within a justice-oriented framework: "*Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses for Allah, even though it be against yourselves*" (Q. 4:135). This verse defines the purpose of knowledge - to uphold justice through informed and sincere action. Justice ('adl) thus becomes the highest expression of 'amal guided by 'ilm and iman (Nasr, 2010).

### 13.4.7 The Integration of Faith, Knowledge, and Action

The full Qur'anic epistemology culminates when 'ilm informs 'amal, and 'amal verifies iman. The Qur'an refers to this integration as the path of *ṣiraṭ al-mustaqīm* (الصراط المستقيم) - the straight path of harmony between knowing, believing, and doing (Q. 1:6). This triadic unity ensures that human existence becomes both intellectually enlightened and ethically effective.

In Qur'anic philosophy, 'amal is the *completion* of the epistemic cycle. It is knowledge embodied, faith realised, and divine trust enacted. The Qur'an envisions an ethical civilisation where thought leads to belief, belief to knowledge, and knowledge to righteous action. True understanding is not measured by words but by deeds that reflect divine light in the world.

### 13.5 The Living Cycle of Qur'anic Knowledge

The Qur'anic cycle of *iman- 'ilm- 'amal* represents the living architecture of divine epistemology. It begins with faith-an inner affirmation of truth- progresses through knowledge, and culminates in action, which verifies and renews that faith. This cyclical harmony reflects the Qur'anic vision of human purpose: to know, to act, and to return to Allah in understanding.

The Qur'an describes this integrated cycle in a single phrase: *“Those who believe and do righteous deeds, and are guided by their Lord because of their faith”* (Q. 10:9). Faith generates guidance; knowledge directs it; action fulfils it.

In an age of fragmented knowledge, the Qur'anic model restores unity between mind and heart, science and spirituality, knowing and doing. It defines knowledge not by possession but by transformation, where every act of learning becomes a step toward the divine.

## Chapter 14: The Three Stages of Certainty (‘Ilm al-Yaqin, ‘Ayn al-Yaqin, Haqq al-Yaqin)

The Qur’anic epistemology presents knowledge not as static possession but as a dynamic journey toward certainty (*yaqin*). This journey unfolds through three interconnected dimensions- *‘Ilm al-Yaqin* (knowledge of certainty), *‘Ayn al-Yaqin* (vision of certainty), and *Haqq al-Yaqin* (truth or reality of certainty). Each stage reflects a deeper engagement between the human intellect (‘*aql*), revelation (*wahy*), and experiential realisation (*dhawq*), forming the architecture of faith-based knowing.

The Qur’an situates these gradations of certainty as a process of purification of consciousness: from understanding through signs (*ayat*) to witnessing the reality of divine truth in the self and cosmos. As stated, “No! If you knew with certainty (‘ilm al-yaqin), you would surely see the blazing fire. Then you will surely see it with the eye of certainty (‘ayn al-yaqin). Then you will surely be made to know it with the truth of certainty (haqq al-yaqin)” (Q. 102:5-7).

Thus, *yaqin* is both epistemological and moral-it transforms knowledge (‘ilm) into conviction and conviction into ethical action (‘amal). This chapter explores these three stages as a unified epistemic path rooted in Qur’anic ontology and the ethics of truth. The analysis integrates rational reflection and divine revelation, illustrating how *yaqin* culminates in the synthesis of intellect, experience, and divine reality.

### 14.1 Conceptual Foundations of *Yaqin* in the Qur’an

#### 14.1.1 Defining *Yaqin* in Qur’anic Epistemology

The term *yaqin* (يقين) occupies a central place within the Qur’anic structure of knowledge (‘ilm) and faith (*iman*). It encapsulates the state of unwavering conviction and inner assurance that unites intellectual understanding with spiritual realisation. In the Qur’an, *yaqin* is not merely the absence of doubt but the presence of an enlightened vision anchored in divine truth. The human intellect (‘aql) engages in the process of seeking and interpreting signs (*ayat*), yet *yaqin* represents the culmination of this process when reason and revelation converge to reveal ultimate reality (*haqq*).

The Qur’an treats *yaqin* as both a psychological and ontological condition. It is a state of consciousness that emerges from understanding divine signs in nature and revelation, transforming mere knowledge into experiential truth. The stages of *‘Ilm al-Yaqin*, *‘Ayn al-Yaqin*, and *Haqq al-Yaqin* (Q. 102:5-7; 56:95) together form the Qur’anic epistemic framework where knowing, seeing, and being are interwoven. Thus, *yaqin* is not an intellectual end-state but a process of spiritual becoming, a dynamic movement toward divine certainty.

#### 14.1.2 Linguistic and Semantic Roots of *Yaqin*

Etymologically, the word *yaqin* originates from the trilateral Arabic root *y-q-n*, which conveys meanings of firmness, stability, and immovability (Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-‘Arab*). The linguistic structure implies an absence of wavering or doubt (*shakk*) and a state of settled assurance. The verb *yaqana* denotes “to be



sure,” “to be convinced,” or “to not doubt a thing.” Its verbal noun, *yaqin*, signifies the complete establishment of knowledge in the heart and mind (Al-Farahidi, *Kitab al-‘Ayn*).

In Arabic rhetoric, *yaqin* represents the highest degree of knowledge (‘*ilm al-yaqin*), a level beyond conjecture (*ẓann*) or suspicion (*shakk*). Qur’anic Arabic often juxtaposes these contrasting states: “*They have certainty (yaqin) about the Hereafter*” (Q. 2:4), versus “*They are in doubt about it*” (Q. 11:110). Hence, *yaqin* stands as the culmination of intellectual effort, emotional tranquillity, and divine illumination.

Linguistically, *yaqin* also denotes continuity and permanence. Unlike transient emotions or speculative reasoning, it implies a lasting cognitive stability. In classical Arabic thought, certainty was classified into degrees:

- *‘Ilm al-yaqin* - knowledge by inference,
- *‘Ayn al-yaqin* - knowledge by direct sight,
- *Haqq al-yaqin* - knowledge by existential realisation.

These gradations are not semantic variations but sequential epistemic transformations, through which the human intellect ascends from rational understanding to spiritual union. The Qur’anic usage reinforces this hierarchy as a framework of divine pedagogy-the method by which God teaches through both reason and revelation.

### 14.1.3. Qur’anic Occurrences and Contextual Meanings of *Yaqin*

The word *yaqin* and its derivatives occur in several key passages across the Qur’an, each revealing a distinct epistemological nuance. For instance:

- “*And worship your Lord until certainty (yaqin) comes to you.*” (Q. 15:99) Here, *yaqin* is often interpreted as the moment of ultimate truth, death, or the final realisation of divine reality. It signifies the end of doubt and the arrival of absolute knowledge.
- “*Indeed, this is the truth of certainty (haqq al-yaqin).*” (Q. 56:95) In this verse, *yaqin* transcends conceptual knowledge, expressing the lived experience of truth. The Qur’an identifies itself as embodying *haqq al-yaqin*, a divine revelation whose reality can be both understood and witnessed.
- “*And in the earth are signs for those who have certainty (li’l-muqinin).*” (Q. 51:20) This contextualises *yaqin* as an active state of perception. Those who attain *yaqin* do not merely believe abstractly but see divine meaning reflected in creation.
- “*We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the Truth.*” (Q. 41:53) Although the term *yaqin* does not appear explicitly here, the verse conveys its essence: certainty grows through reflective engagement with the world and the self.

Thus, the Qur’anic references to *yaqin* encompass rational certainty (‘*ilm*), empirical witnessing (‘*ayn*), and ontological realisation (*haqq*). The process is cumulative and transformational, shaping the believer’s understanding of reality from intellect to inner illumination.



#### 14.1.4 *Yaqin* as the Metaphysical and Cognitive Goal of *Iman*

In the Qur'anic worldview, *iman* (faith) and *yaqin* (certainty) are mutually reinforcing. Faith initiates the journey toward certainty, while certainty perfects faith by grounding it in knowledge and experience. The Qur'an describes the believers as those “*who believe in the unseen*” (Q. 2:3), implying that *iman* begins with trust in divine revelation before full comprehension. Yet, as the believer reflects, observes, and contemplates, *iman* deepens into *yaqin*-an unshakeable conviction built upon both reason and revelation.

The metaphysical dimension of *yaqin* is tied to the ontological nature of truth (*haqq*). While *Iman* affirms the reality of divine existence, *Yaqin* actualises it within consciousness. It is the difference between believing that a fire exists and feeling its heat. The Qur'an frames this transformation through the stages of inner awareness. When *Iman* matures into *yaqin*, the human heart attains *iṭmi'nan* (tranquillity), as in “*O tranquil soul, return to your Lord*” (Q. 89:27-28).

Cognitively, *yaqin* marks the completion of the epistemic process. The intellect (‘*aql*) examines the signs, the spirit (*ruh*) receives illumination, and the heart (*qalb*) attains steadfast conviction. This triadic integration of knowing, perceiving, and being reflects the Qur'anic balance between rational and spiritual faculties. The purpose of knowledge is not accumulation but realisation-the embodiment of truth in one's consciousness and conduct.

Moreover, *yaqin* defines the moral identity of the believer. The Qur'an repeatedly associates certainty with ethical integrity and steadfastness. For example, “*And those who are certain of meeting their Lord*” (Q. 2:46) denotes not only intellectual conviction but also moral perseverance grounded in divine awareness. Thus, *yaqin* is both an epistemological achievement and an ethical disposition-the culmination of faith that transforms knowledge into virtue.

#### 14.1.5 Relationship Between *Yaqin*, ‘*Ilm*, and ‘*Aql*

The Qur'an distinguishes between several modes of knowing, each serving a particular dimension of human cognition. ‘*Ilm* (knowledge) refers to the acquisition of information and understanding through observation, reflection, and learning. ‘*Aql* (reason) denotes the faculty of discernment and judgment, enabling humans to interpret signs and differentiate truth from falsehood. *Yaqin*, however, represents the synthesis and transcendence of these two when knowledge and reason reach their fullest clarity through divine illumination.

The Qur'an invites humankind repeatedly to use ‘*aql*: “*Will you not reason?*” (*afala ta'qilun*), and to seek ‘*ilm*: “*Say, are those who know equal to those who do not know?*” (Q. 39:9). Yet it also warns that reason and knowledge alone are insufficient if detached from revelation and inner sincerity. The attainment of *yaqin*, therefore, requires harmony between intellectual pursuit and spiritual receptivity.

This relationship may be visualised as a triadic epistemology:

- ‘*Aql* (Reason) - The faculty that reflects upon divine signs and forms hypotheses about reality.
- ‘*Ilm* (Knowledge) - The structured understanding derived from reflection and observation.

- Yaqin (Certainty) - The consummation of knowledge into unshakable conviction and spiritual insight.

The progression from ‘*aql* to ‘*ilm* to *yaqin* mirrors the Qur’anic methodology of discovery. Reason (‘*aql*) identifies the sign, knowledge (‘*ilm*) interprets it, and certainty (*yaqin*) internalises it as truth. This integration ensures that human inquiry remains both intellectually rigorous and spiritually grounded.

The Qur’an also positions *yaqin* as the corrective to the limitations of ‘*aql* and ‘*ilm*. Rational faculties can err, and knowledge can be partial or misused. Certainty emerges when these faculties are purified through divine guidance. As stated: “*It is not the eyes that are blind, but the hearts that are blind within the chests*” (Q. 22:46). Here, blindness symbolises the absence of *yaqin*-the inability to see truth despite having reason and knowledge.

Therefore, *yaqin* is both an epistemic illumination and a moral awakening. It refines ‘*aql* into insight and transforms ‘*ilm* into wisdom (*hikmah*). When knowledge becomes certain, it naturally yields justice, humility, and compassion-the ethical fruits of true understanding.

#### 14.1.6 Qur’anic Epistemology as Processual: From Knowing to Becoming

The Qur’an presents knowledge as a living, dynamic process-a continuous unfolding of awareness rather than a static possession. This processual epistemology situates *yaqin* at the apex of an ever-evolving spiritual and intellectual journey.

From the Qur’anic perspective, the human being is created with faculties for hearing, sight, and reason (Q. 16:78), all intended to facilitate the search for truth. Yet this search must move beyond sensory data and abstract reasoning to inner realisation. *Yaqin* signifies the culmination of this transformation, when knowledge ceases to be merely conceptual and becomes existential-embodied in one’s being.

This dynamic understanding contrasts sharply with reductionist models of knowledge that isolate the knower from the known. In the Qur’an, knowledge is relational-it connects the human consciousness with the divine order. The process of attaining *yaqin* thus involves both intellectual inquiry and moral purification (*tazkiyah*). As the soul is refined, perception deepens, and the knower becomes aligned with truth.

The Qur’an’s epistemology may therefore be summarised as a journey through three phases:

- Tafakkur (Reflection): Rational contemplation of the signs of God in creation.
- Tadhakkur (Remembrance): Recollection of divine guidance within the self.
- Tahaququq (Realisation): The embodiment of certainty, becoming what one knows.

This triadic movement reflects a holistic approach to human cognition, uniting the external and internal dimensions of knowledge. It is not enough to “know” the truth; one must “become” truthful. The Qur’an thus elevates epistemology to the level of ethics and ontology.

In this sense, *yaqin* is the measure of authentic knowledge. It transforms the scholar's quest into worship (*'ibadah*), the philosopher's inquiry into remembrance (*dhikr*), and the scientist's observation into divine recognition (*ma'rifah*). The Qur'an concludes this process by linking certainty with serenity: "*Those who believe and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of God-verily, in the remembrance of God do hearts find rest.*" (Q. 13:28).

Hence, *yaqin* represents not only the end of intellectual pursuit but the beginning of inner peace-a synthesis of cognition, devotion, and ethical existence.

The Qur'anic concept of *yaqin* redefines the purpose and nature of knowledge. It is not the mere acquisition of facts but the realisation of truth through a harmony of reason, revelation, and moral consciousness. Linguistically rooted in firmness and assurance, *yaqin* signifies an epistemic stability that transcends doubt and speculation. Scripturally, it manifests as a process unfolding through *'Ilm al-Yaqin* (knowing), *'Ayn al-Yaqin* (seeing), and *Haqq al-Yaqin* (being).

Within this structure, *Iman* functions as the seed, *'ilm* as the stem, and *yaqin* as the fruit of spiritual-intellectual growth. The Qur'an teaches that certainty is both the destination of knowledge and the foundation of righteous action. It bridges the human intellect and the divine truth, ensuring that cognition serves transformation.

In contemporary terms, the Qur'anic doctrine of *yaqin* invites the re-spiritualization of epistemology. Knowledge divorced from moral and ontological grounding risks becoming sterile or destructive. The Qur'an thus restores purpose to inquiry: to know is to witness, and to witness is to live truthfully.

#### **.14.2 The First Stage - 'Ilm al-Yaqin (Knowledge of Certainty)**

The Qur'anic notion of *'ilm al-yaqin*-"knowledge of certainty"-represents the foundational stage of spiritual cognition, where intellectual apprehension and faith-based conviction converge in the believer's consciousness. Derived from the triliteral root *yaqana* (يَقَنُ), meaning "to be certain, sure, or firm," this stage constitutes the first dimension in the Qur'anic triadic framework of certainty (*'ilm al-yaqin*, *'ayn al-yaqin*, and *haqq al-yaqin*). Within the structure of Islamic epistemology, *'ilm al-yaqin* signifies the transformation of conceptual knowledge into conviction grounded in divine truth. It is the moment when knowledge moves from abstraction to assurance-when belief in revelation becomes intellectually internalised and experientially validated through reasoning, reflection, and observation of divine signs (*ayat*) (Q. 45:3-5).

The Qur'an repeatedly employs the term *yaqin* to describe the culmination of a process of faith and understanding. As Allah commands: "*And worship your Lord until certainty (yaqin) comes to you*" (Q. 15:99). Here, *yaqin* is the ultimate goal of servitude, implying that true knowledge of God (*'ilm al-yaqin*) emerges from continuous engagement with divine revelation, culminating in unwavering assurance. This stage, therefore, is not static but dynamic-a constant unfolding of insight through the interaction of reason (*'aql*), revelation (*wahy*), and moral consciousness (*taqwa*) (Q. 2:2-3).

### 14.2.1 Linguistic and Conceptual Dimensions of 'Ilm al-Yaqin

The term *'ilm al-yaqin* combines two central epistemological concepts of the Qur'an: *'ilm* (knowledge) and *yaqin* (certainty). Linguistically, *'ilm* denotes both cognitive awareness and comprehension of truth, whereas *yaqin* signifies immovable conviction-knowledge so firm that doubt (*shakk*) or conjecture (*zann*) cannot coexist with it (Q. 10:36). The Qur'an differentiates *yaqin* from mere *'ilm* by grounding it in the heart's perception rather than the intellect alone (Q. 22:46). Thus, *'ilm al-yaqin* refers to knowledge that transcends speculation; it is knowledge perceived as reality rather than theory.

In its morphology, the noun *yaqin* suggests permanence. It derives from *yaqana*, which implies "to settle, to be unmoved," reflecting the Qur'anic metaphor of mountains (*jibal*)-symbols of stability (Q. 16:15). When *'ilm* becomes *yaqin*, knowledge attains the solidity of a mountain, unshaken by doubt or illusion. This linguistic union indicates that *'ilm al-yaqin* is not simply intellectual cognition but cognitive steadfastness anchored in divine truth (Q. 2:147).

### 14.2.2 Qur'anic Contexts of 'Ilm al-Yaqin

The phrase *'ilm al-yaqin* appears explicitly in the Qur'an in Surah al-Takathur: "*Nay! If you knew with the knowledge of certainty ('ilm al-yaqin), you would surely see Hellfire.*" (Q. 102:5-6). This verse situates *'ilm al-yaqin* as a threshold between unseen truth and experienced reality. The addressees are reminded that true knowledge extends beyond material accumulation toward awareness of eschatological reality. In this sense, *'ilm al-yaqin* exposes the veil between the temporal and the eternal; it is the comprehension that life and death, reward and punishment, are not speculative metaphors but ontological certainties.

Other verses reinforce this epistemological hierarchy. For example, "*This is indeed the truth of certainty (haqq al-yaqin)*" (Q. 56:95) refers to the highest level, yet it presupposes the earlier attainment of *'ilm al-yaqin*. Similarly, Qur'an 69:51 declares: "*And indeed, it is the truth of certainty.*" These intertextual linkages show that the Qur'an builds a continuum -knowledge leading to vision, and vision leading to realisation.

In the Qur'anic worldview, therefore, *'ilm al-yaqin* forms the rational foundation of faith. It represents the believer's intellectual engagement with revelation through reflection upon signs in the cosmos (*ayat fi al-afaq*) and within the self (*ayat fi anfusikum*) (Q. 41:53). Such engagement transforms faith from imitation (*taqlid*) to verification (*tahqiq*), creating a synthesis between intellect and revelation.

### 14.2.3 Knowledge of Certainty as Cognitive Transformation

In Qur'anic epistemology, *'ilm al-yaqin* is a process of cognitive purification -the movement from ignorance (*jahl*) to illumination (*mur*). The Qur'an repeatedly contrasts knowledge grounded in *yaqin* with knowledge rooted in conjecture. For instance: "*And most of them follow nothing but conjecture; surely conjecture avails nothing against the truth*" (Q. 10:36). Here, Allah delineates that authentic knowledge (*'ilm al-yaqin*) cannot arise from assumption or imitation but only from rational comprehension aligned with divine revelation.

This transformation involves the entire human faculty: mind, heart, and soul. The intellect (‘*aql*) perceives rational evidence; the heart (*qalb*) internalises meaning; and the spirit (*ruh*) affirms truth. Together, these yield ‘*ilm al-yaqin*, a synthesis of intellect and faith. The Qur’an affirms this integrative process in the verse: “*Those who remember Allah standing, sitting, and lying down, and reflect upon the creation of the heavens and the earth, saying, ‘Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly.’*” (Q. 3:191). Here, reflection (*tafakkur*) transforms intellectual observation into moral and spiritual certainty.

The Qur’an thus presents ‘*ilm al-yaqin* as a cognitive-spiritual bridge: the intellect verifies what the heart believes. The believer’s rational inquiry does not oppose revelation but confirms it, as in “*We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth*” (Q. 41:53). This verse captures the essence of ‘*ilm al-yaqin*: truth is not imposed upon the mind but revealed through reflection and inner realisation.

#### 14.2.4 The Relationship Between ‘*Ilm*, ‘*Aql*, and *Yaqin*

In Qur’anic discourse, ‘*ilm* (knowledge), ‘*aql* (reason), and *yaqin* (certainty) represent a triadic hierarchy of knowing. ‘*Ilm* provides the data of revelation and experience; ‘*aql* organises and interprets that data; and *yaqin* transforms understanding into conviction. The Qur’an commands believers to use their intellect- “*Do they not reason?*” (Q. 36:68)-and simultaneously directs them to ground their reasoning in faith. This synthesis is the essence of ‘*ilm al-yaqin*.

Unlike modern epistemologies that separate rational inquiry from belief, the Qur’an unites them. Reason becomes a vehicle toward certainty, not a barrier to it. The believer’s rational faculty (‘*aql*) acts as a mirror reflecting divine truths already inscribed within creation. The Qur’an emphasises this ontological link: “*He taught Adam the names of all things*” (Q. 2:31), symbolising the primordial knowledge embedded within human nature. Thus, ‘*ilm al-yaqin* arises when the intellect recognises divine order within creation and aligns itself with revelation.

The Qur’an also distinguishes between two cognitive failures: ignorance due to denial (*kufr*) and ignorance due to heedlessness (*ghaflah*). The first rejects truth despite knowledge (Q. 2:88), while the second ignores knowledge despite its availability (Q. 7:179). ‘*Ilm al-yaqin* remedies both by awakening the intellect through reflection and aligning it with revelation.

#### 14.2.5 The Processual Journey of Certainty

‘*Ilm al-yaqin* in the Qur’an is not merely a state but a gradual unveiling of truth. Certainty evolves through stages, corresponding to different modes of human knowing. The Qur’an’s triadic structure- ‘*ilm al-yaqin*, ‘*ayn al-yaqin*, *haqq al-yaqin*-depicts a process from intellectual realisation to visionary witnessing to existential unity.

At the first stage, ‘*ilm al-yaqin*, knowledge is acquired through reflection, revelation, and contemplation. This corresponds to the believer’s initial awakening-the moment when faith becomes intellectually verified. The Qur’an speaks of this progression through the story of Abraham (Ibrahim), who sought to understand how Allah gives life to the dead. Allah asked him, “*Do you not believe?*” Abraham replied,

“Yes, but only that my heart may be at peace” (Q. 2:260). Here, Abraham already possessed *‘ilm al-yaqin* but desired *‘ayn al-yaqin*, direct witnessing.

Thus, the Qur’an portrays certainty as experiential deepening rather than static possession. Each stage builds upon the previous, transforming belief into vision, and vision into reality. In this process, *‘ilm al-yaqin* serves as the foundation: it provides intellectual anchoring without which higher certainties cannot emerge.

#### 14.2.6 The Ethical and Existential Implications of ‘Ilm al-Yaqin

Epistemologically, *‘ilm al-yaqin* has moral consequences. Knowledge of certainty demands ethical transformation; knowing the truth entails acting upon it. The Qur’an repeatedly links knowledge with righteous conduct (*‘amal ṣaliḥ*), warning against the hypocrisy of knowing without doing (Q. 61:2-3). This is because *‘ilm al-yaqin* without moral embodiment remains incomplete and becomes mere data rather than illumination.

The ethical function of *‘ilm al-yaqin* is evident in verses such as: “Indeed, those who are certain of the Hereafter believe in it and guard their prayers” (Q. 6:92). Here, *yaqin* motivates obedience, transforming belief into practice. Similarly, Qur’an 39:9 asks: “Are those who know equal to those who do not know?”- implying that knowledge validated by certainty results in moral excellence.

Therefore, *‘ilm al-yaqin* integrates epistemology with ethics. It defines a mode of knowing that is simultaneously cognitive and performative: to know is to transform. Certainty is not achieved by passive contemplation but through continual spiritual refinement, remembrance of Allah (*dhikr*), and engagement with divine guidance.

#### 14.2.7 ‘Ilm al-Yaqin in the Cosmological and Eschatological Context

The Qur’an extends *‘ilm al-yaqin* beyond individual cognition to cosmic and eschatological dimensions. It reveals that the universe itself operates according to principles of certainty. Allah declares: “And on the earth are signs for those who have sure faith, and in yourselves-do you not see?” (Q. 51:20-21). The cosmos becomes a field of knowledge -every atom reflecting divine wisdom. The believer, through reflection, attains *‘ilm al-yaqin* by perceiving the unity of creation and Creator.

In eschatological terms, *‘ilm al-yaqin* prepares the soul for ultimate realisation. The knowledge of the Hereafter, repeatedly affirmed in the Qur’an, is not a speculative but revelatory truth. “The Hour is surely coming -of that there is no doubt” (Q. 40:59). This certainty anchors moral accountability, ensuring that human life is directed toward eternal realities.

*‘Ilm al-yaqin* marks the first awakening of the human intellect to divine reality. It represents the Qur’anic ideal of knowledge grounded in revelation, purified of conjecture, and integrated with ethical consciousness. Through it, faith becomes intellectually substantiated, reason becomes spiritually illuminated, and the believer’s worldview becomes unified under divine truth.



In the triadic ascent of certainty, *‘ilm al-yaqin* forms the foundation -the rational and moral groundwork for *‘ayn al-yaqin* (vision of certainty) and *haqq al-yaqin* (truth of certainty). It is the starting point of the soul's journey from knowing about God to knowing through God. The Qur'an thus establishes knowledge not as an accumulation of facts but as a transformation of being unfolding certainty that draws the believer nearer to the Real (*al-Haqq*).

### 14.3 The Second Stage - ‘Ayn al-Yaqin (Vision of Certainty)

The Qur'anic framework of *yaqin* (certainty) describes a spiritual-epistemological ascent that progresses from *‘ilm al-yaqin* (knowledge of certainty) to *‘ayn al-yaqin* (vision of certainty), and ultimately to *haqq al-yaqin* (truth of certainty). If *‘ilm al-yaqin* represents intellectual conviction derived through reasoning and revelation, *‘ayn al-yaqin* constitutes the experiential and perceptive witnessing of that truth. It is the transition from knowing through inference to knowing through direct spiritual perception-the movement from mental affirmation to unveiled vision.

The Qur'an illustrates this transformation through its language of seeing (*ru'yah*), witnessing (*shuhud*), and perceiving (*baṣirah*), which signify the deepening of cognition into intuitive realisation. *‘Ayn al-yaqin* is the level where truth becomes visually and existentially self-evident; the believer perceives divine reality not merely as an abstract belief but as a living certainty inscribed in creation and the self. The Qur'an captures this stage in verses such as: “*You will surely see Hellfire; then you will see it with the eye of certainty (‘ayn al-yaqin)*” (Q. 102:6-7). This verse affirms that the unseen truths known by the intellect will ultimately be seen, transforming belief into direct witnessing.

This section explores the Qur'anic conception of *‘ayn al-yaqin* as the vision of truth, examining its linguistic roots, epistemic structure, and metaphysical significance. It also analyses how *‘ayn al-yaqin* integrates revelation and perception, connecting the Qur'anic discourse of sight with the broader theological and cognitive processes that lead to spiritual illumination.

#### 14.3.1 Linguistic and Conceptual Foundations of ‘Ayn al-Yaqin

Linguistically, *‘ayn al-yaqin* is composed of two key terms: *‘ayn* (عين) and *yaqin* (يقين). The term *‘ayn* in Arabic signifies both the physical eye and the essence or source of a thing. It denotes direct perception-seeing with one's own eyes-and also conveys the idea of immediacy, authenticity, and presence. The Qur'an employs *‘ayn* in multiple semantic layers: as the organ of vision (Q. 20:39), as the source of water or life (Q. 18:60), and as the symbol of divine observation (“*And you are under Our eyes,*” Q. 52:48).

When joined with *yaqin*, the phrase *‘ayn al-yaqin* indicates a mode of knowing that is no longer dependent on reasoning or inference but grounded in direct perception. It signifies “certainty through vision”-knowledge transformed into immediate realisation. The Qur'an distinguishes between seeing with physical eyes (*‘ayn al-bashar*) and perceiving with the inner eye (*baṣirah*). The latter is not sensory but intellectual and spiritual vision-a seeing with the heart (*qalb*), as expressed in “*It is not the eyes that are blind, but the hearts within the chests that are blind*” (Q. 22:46).



Thus, *‘Ayn al-yaqin* is not mere optical sight; it is the illumination of the inner vision whereby the unseen (*ghayb*) becomes unveiled to the soul. The Qur’an’s repeated invitation to “look,” “see,” and “observe” (*unẓuru, afala tubṣirūn, afala tatafakkarūn*) demonstrates that perception itself is a mode of knowledge-one that culminates in *yaqin*.

### 14.3.2 The Qur’anic Context of ‘Ayn al-Yaqin

The term *‘ayn al-yaqin* appears explicitly in Surah al-Takathur: “*Nay! If you knew with the knowledge of certainty (‘ilm al-yaqin), you would surely see Hellfire; then you will surely see it with the eye of certainty (‘ayn al-yaqin).*” (Q. 102:5-7).

This passage defines *‘ayn al-yaqin* as the direct experiential realisation of what was previously known through intellect. It emphasises the transition from knowing to seeing, from rational conviction to undeniable vision. The first stage (*‘ilm al-yaqin*) involves comprehension of truth through signs and arguments, whereas *‘ayn al-yaqin* involves witnessing that truth as an existential reality.

In an eschatological context, the verse refers to the moment of resurrection when all veils of perception are lifted, and the unseen becomes seen. However, within the Qur’anic framework, this unveiling also occurs in spiritual experience within life when the believer attains inner sight of divine reality. As the Qur’an states: “*Thus We show Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth so that he may be among those who have certainty*” (Q. 6:75). Here, *‘ayn al-yaqin* is realised through divine disclosure (*kashf*)-Allah enables Abraham to *see* beyond appearances into the metaphysical order of existence.

This Qur’anic articulation suggests that *‘ayn al-yaqin* is both an eschatological and ontological event vision that occurs in the Hereafter in its fullest sense but begins in this life as spiritual unveiling through reflection, purification, and divine grace.

### 14.3.3 The Epistemological Transition from Knowing to Seeing

The distinction between *‘ilm al-yaqin* and *‘ayn al-yaqin* marks a profound epistemological shift. *‘Ilm al-yaqin* is discursive and relies on reflection, reasoning, and interpretation. *‘Ayn al-yaqin*, however, is intuitive and direct- it is *knowledge by presence* (*‘ilm ḥuḍurī*), where the knower and the known coincide in perception.

The Qur’an repeatedly bridges these two modalities. In Qur’an 3:191, believers are praised for reflecting on creation (*tafakkur*) and arriving at certainty through observation: “*Those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and lying down, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth.*” Here, reflection transitions into vision; what begins as mental contemplation culminates in spiritual seeing.

Similarly, Qur’an 6:75 shows that Abraham’s certainty arose not merely from reasoning but from divine demonstration-he was *shown* the realities of creation. Thus, *‘ayn al-yaqin* transcends abstract deduction. It is an unveiling (*tajalli*) of truth within consciousness, where the intellect gives way to illumination.

This process mirrors the Qur'anic pedagogy of signs (*ayat*). The Qur'an calls creation itself a visible text sign of divine meaning. *'Ayn al-yaqin* arises when the believer no longer perceives phenomena as isolated objects but as transparent symbols of divine presence. The world becomes a mirror of truth, and the perceiver becomes its illuminated witness.

#### 14.3.4 The Metaphysics of Vision in the Qur'an

Vision in the Qur'an is not limited to the physical faculty of sight; it is an ontological condition. To "see" in the Qur'anic sense is to become aware of divine reality through spiritual awakening. The Qur'an describes this transformation as the removal of veils: "*So your sight today is sharp*" (Q. 50:22). The verse addresses the human soul on the Day of Resurrection, yet its principle applies to every moment of awakening when perception transcends illusion.

The Qur'an also depicts the false vision of those blinded by arrogance and heedlessness: "*They have hearts with which they do not understand, eyes with which they do not see*" (Q. 7:179). True vision, therefore, is moral and spiritual before it is sensory. The seeing heart perceives what the physical eyes cannot: the divine order underlying existence.

At the level of *'ayn al-yaqin*, the believer's perception becomes unified, and external and internal realities reveal the same truth. The world ceases to be opaque and becomes luminous with divine meaning. Every event, object, and phenomenon is recognised as a sign pointing to Allah. This is not pantheistic identification but the Qur'anic *tawhīd al-shuhūd* -the unity of witnessing, where multiplicity is seen as a reflection of the One.

#### 14.3.5 The Ethical and Spiritual Function of 'Ayn al-Yaqin

While *'ilm al-yaqin* emphasises intellectual certainty, *'ayn al-yaqin* emphasises a transformative vision that reshapes moral consciousness. The one who "sees with certainty" acts differently than one who merely "knows." The Qur'an repeatedly ties true vision to moral awareness. "*Indeed, in that is a reminder for whoever has a heart or gives ear while he is witness*" (Q. 50:37). The act of witnessing (*shuhūd*) here implies spiritual attentiveness-the capacity to see the truth of one's actions and their consequences.

At this stage, ethical action arises not from command alone but from direct perception of reality. When the believer perceives the Hereafter as vividly as the present, moral discipline becomes natural, not imposed. The Qur'an describes such insight: "*They see it (the Day) as distant, but We see it as near*" (Q. 70:6-7). The believer endowed with *'ayn al-yaqin* lives in awareness of divine nearness and accountability.

Thus, *'ayn al-yaqin* transforms epistemology into ethics. It is no longer sufficient to believe or to know; one must *see* the moral and metaphysical order. Such vision results in humility, detachment from illusion (*ghurūr*), and sincere devotion (*ikhlaṣ*). As the Qur'an declares: "*This is an insight for people and guidance and mercy for a people who have certainty*" (Q. 45:20).

#### 14.3.6 'Ayn al-Yaqin and the Unveiling of the Unseen (al-Ghayb)

The Qur'an defines faith (*iman*) as belief in the unseen (*al-ghayb*) (Q. 2:3). Yet *'ayn al-yaqin* brings the unseen into the horizon of spiritual visibility. It does not abolish the mystery of the unseen but renders it

inwardly accessible through divine light (*mur*). Allah declares: “*Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth*” (Q. 24:35). The parable that follows describes the illumination of the believer’s heart as a niche containing a lamp lit from a blessed source—a symbol of perception through divine illumination.

At this level, the unseen is no longer merely believed in but perceived within the heart’s inner sight. The Qur’an frequently uses light imagery to express this epistemic unveiling: “*And whoever Allah has not granted light-for him there is no light*” (Q. 24:40). The believer’s certainty thus becomes luminous, while the disbeliever remains in layers of darkness.

Through ‘*ayn al-yaqin*, the Qur’an transforms epistemology into theophany: truth is not an object of thought but an experienced presence. When the divine light dawns within the human consciousness, what was unseen becomes manifest, and the believer’s vision expands beyond empirical limitation.

#### 14.3.7 Cosmological Vision: Seeing Divine Signs in Creation

The Qur’an presents creation itself as a theatre of divine signs (*ayat*). To attain ‘*ayn al-yaqin* is to see these signs as transparent revelations of divine wisdom. The Qur’an repeatedly commands: “*Do they not look at the camels, how they were created?*” (Q. 88:17) and “*Look again: do you see any flaw?*” (Q. 67:3). These verses invite human beings to transform ordinary sight into contemplative vision.

At the level of ‘*ilm al-yaqin*, one infers God’s existence through reasoning about the order of creation. At ‘*ayn al-yaqin*, one directly perceives that order as a manifestation of divine will. Nature becomes scripture, and observation becomes worship. The Qur’an declares: “*We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth*” (Q. 41:53). This statement encapsulates the movement toward ‘*ayn al-yaqin*: a gradual unveiling of divine reality through observation and reflection.

Thus, the cosmos is not merely an environment but a revelatory phenomenon, an *ayah* that can awaken vision. The believer perceives not only what is visible but also what it signifies, realising that “*He who created all things has made them in due proportion and measure*” (Q. 25:2). Seeing creation in this way constitutes ‘*ayn al-yaqin*—the recognition of divine presence in the order of existence.

#### 14.3.8 The Eschatological Fulfilment of Vision

The Qur’an indicates that the fullness of ‘*ayn al-yaqin* will be realised in the Hereafter when veils are completely lifted: “*You were heedless of this, so We have removed from you your covering, and your sight today is sharp*” (Q. 50:22). At that moment, perception becomes absolute—truth stands unveiled before every soul. The believer’s faith, once grounded in knowledge and partial vision, becomes total comprehension.

However, the Qur’an also implies that those who cultivate inner sight in this life will already experience a form of that eschatological vision. For them, the unseen world is not distant but continually manifest through divine remembrance (*dhikr*) and reflection. Their spiritual insight anticipates the ultimate unveiling of the Hereafter.

This duality-present vision and future revelation demonstrates that *'ayn al-yaqin* bridges temporal and eternal dimensions. It is both an epistemic and an ontological state, uniting the knower, the act of knowing, and the known under divine light.

### 14.3.9 Conclusion

*'Ayn al-yaqin* represents the Qur'anic stage where knowledge transforms into vision. It is the unveiling of the heart's perception, where divine truth becomes experientially self-evident. If *'ilm al-yaqin* is the foundation of conviction, *'ayn al-yaqin* is its flowering moment when faith sees.

Through this stage, the Qur'an presents a holistic epistemology where perception, reason, and revelation are integrated into a unified act of knowing. Vision is not merely optical but spiritual: the soul sees through divine light, and existence is revealed as a sign of the Real (*al-Ḥaqq*).

Ultimately, *'ayn al-yaqin* bridges the finite and the infinite. It transforms human understanding into witnessing, leading the believer toward *ḥaqq al-yaqin* -the final realisation of truth itself. Thus, the Qur'an establishes certainty not as an abstract ideal but as a lived and illuminated consciousness-a vision that sees through the eyes of faith.

## 14.4 The Third Stage - Ḥaqq al-Yaqin (Truth of Certainty)

The Qur'anic conception of *ḥaqq al-yaqin* (حق اليقين)-translated as "the Truth of Certainty"-represents the apex of epistemic and spiritual realisation. It is not simply knowledge *about* truth or a vision *of* truth, but a state of *being in* truth. This stage marks the complete unification between knowing, seeing, and becoming, where knowledge (*'ilm*), perception (*'ayn*), and essence (*ḥaqq*) converge in a singular experience of reality. It is the culmination of the Qur'anic epistemological journey that begins with inquiry (*'ilm*), matures through perception (*'ayn*), and fulfils itself in realisation (*ḥaqq*).

### 14.4.1 Linguistic and Theological Meaning of Ḥaqq al-Yaqin

The term *ḥaqq* (حق) signifies truth, reality, and that which is established without doubt. In the Qur'an, *al-Ḥaqq* is one of the Divine Names of Allah (Q. 22:6), indicating the ultimate source of all reality. When paired with *yaqin* (certainty), it forms an expression that transcends intellectual understanding to denote a total ontological alignment with divine truth. The phrase *ḥaqq al-yaqin* appears explicitly in *Sirat al-Waqi'ah* (Q. 56:95) and *Sirat al-Ḥaqqah* (Q. 69:51), where the Qur'an asserts: "Indeed, it is the truth of certainty (*innahū la-ḥaqq al-yaqin*)" (Q. 69:51).

This declaration occurs in the context of affirming the reality of divine revelation and the Hereafter. The Qur'an thus presents itself as the embodiment of *ḥaqq al-yaqin*, a direct expression of divine reality rather than a mediated human construction (Al-Attas, 1995).

### 14.4.2 The Ontological Shift: From Knowing to Being

While *'ilm al-yaqin* concerns the acquisition of certain knowledge and *'ayn al-yaqin* relates to perceiving that truth, *ḥaqq al-yaqin* involves existential transformation. The knower becomes inseparable from the known; truth is not observed from a distance but lived and internalised. This transformation echoes the

Qur'anic statement: *“Allah will raise those who believe among you and those who have been given knowledge, by degrees”* (Q. 58:11).

The ascent “by degrees” (*darajat*) suggests a progressive deepening of certainty, culminating in the unity of truth and self. At this highest stage, knowledge ceases to be representational-it becomes participatory. The believer embodies divine guidance, and his consciousness becomes a mirror reflecting the attributes of truth, justice, and mercy (Nasr, 2007).

#### 14.4.3 Ḥaqq al-Yaqin and the Qur'an as Living Truth

The Qur'an itself is presented as *ḥaqq al-yaqin*, not merely containing truths but *being* truth in form, content, and effect. It declares: *“And indeed, it is a Book of exalted power”* (Q. 41:41-42), “Falsehood cannot approach it from before it or behind it; it is a revelation from the Wise, the Praiseworthy.”

Here, the Qur'an defines its own authority not as a text to be verified externally, but as self-authenticating the truth of certainty manifest in language. The act of reciting, understanding, and embodying the Qur'an thus becomes the human avenue toward *ḥaqq al-yaqin*.

#### 14.4.4 The Transformative Dimension of Ḥaqq al-Yaqin

The Qur'an describes believers who attain this state as those whose hearts and actions are fully surrendered to divine command: *“Those who believe and do righteous deeds, their Lord will guide them because of their faith”* (Q. 10:9).

At *ḥaqq al-yaqin*, the moral, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions of the self are perfectly harmonised. Knowledge is no longer external information but a living state of awareness; every act becomes a reflection of divine consciousness (*taqwa*). This integration dissolves the dichotomy between knower and known, affirming the Qur'anic axiom: *“We shall show them Our signs on the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the Truth”* (Q. 41:53).

This verse demonstrates that *ḥaqq al-yaqin* is attained when external observation (*afaq*) and inner realisation (*anfus*) converge, leading to total conviction.

#### 14.4.5 Ḥaqq al-Yaqin and Eschatological Awareness

An essential dimension of *ḥaqq al-yaqin* is eschatological consciousness, realisation of ultimate accountability and divine justice. The Qur'an presents the Hereafter as the domain in which truth becomes fully unveiled, stripping away illusion and doubt: *“You were heedless of this; now We have removed your covering, so your sight today is sharp”* (Q. 50:22).

Here, the clarity of vision symbolises the attainment of *ḥaqq al-yaqin* in the ultimate sense-truth revealed without mediation. Thus, *ḥaqq al-yaqin* is both an epistemic state achieved in life through faith and knowledge, and an eschatological reality experienced after resurrection (Rahman, 1980).

#### 14.4.6 The Ethical Imperative of Truth-Realisation

To reach *ḥaqq al-yaqin* entails moral purification (*tazkiyah*) and steadfastness in truth (*ṣidq*). The Qur'an asserts that only those who embody truth in their lives can be guided to this ultimate certainty: "*That Allah may reward the truthful for their truth*" (Q. 33:24).

Truth in action-ethical integrity, justice, and sincerity-becomes both the condition and the consequence of attaining *ḥaqq al-yaqin*. This stage, therefore, integrates epistemology with ethics; knowing the truth implies living truthfully.

#### 14.4.7 The Dynamic Continuum: From 'Ilm to Ḥaqq

The Qur'an's tripartite model of certainty- *'ilm al-yaqin*, *'ayn al-yaqin*, and *ḥaqq al-yaqin*-is not a static hierarchy but a continuum. Each stage deepens and transforms the previous one, leading from intellectual understanding to visionary perception, and finally to existential realisation. The Qur'an's layered epistemology thus presents knowledge as a dynamic process of becoming, grounded in faith (*iman*) and culminating in spiritual truth (*ḥaqq*).

This process exemplifies the holistic Qur'anic view of knowledge as light (*mur*), guidance (*huda*), and mercy (*rahmah*). The believer's journey through these stages transforms both consciousness and conduct, aligning the human intellect with divine wisdom.

#### 14.4.8 Conclusion: The Realisation of Truth in the Human Self

*Ḥaqq al-yaqin* is the Qur'an's highest epistemological horizon, where truth is not merely believed, seen, or known, but *realised*. It marks the completion of the human journey toward divine proximity, as expressed in: "*O tranquil soul, return to your Lord, pleased and pleasing. Enter among My servants and enter My Garden*" (Q. 89:27-30).

In this verse, the state of the tranquil soul (*al-naḥs al-muṭma'innah*) corresponds to *ḥaqq al-yaqin*, where the self achieves total harmony with divine truth. Thus, Qur'anic epistemology is not only a science of knowledge but a path of transformation from faith (*iman*) to knowledge (*'ilm*) to truth (*ḥaqq*).

### 14.5 The Progression of Yaqin: From Knowing to Being

The Qur'anic conception of *yaqin* (certainty) presents a dynamic and integrative framework of knowledge that transcends mere cognition. It portrays human knowing as a progressive journey-an ascent from *'ilm al-yaqin* (knowledge of certainty), through *'ayn al-yaqin* (vision of certainty), culminating in *ḥaqq al-yaqin* (truth of certainty). These stages represent not discrete compartments of understanding but successive unveilings of the same truth at different ontological depths. The process moves from reflection to realisation to the embodiment stage, bringing the believer closer to the Divine Reality (*al-Ḥaqq*).

#### 14.5.1 The Threefold Structure of Certainty: Knowing, Seeing, and Being

The Qur'an's triadic structure of *yaqin* is one of its most profound epistemological contributions. Each level- *'ilm*, *'ayn*, and *ḥaqq*-marks a distinct degree of nearness to truth, yet all are interconnected aspects of the same continuum.



Ilm al-Yaqin - Knowing through Reflection: At the first level, *'ilm al-yaqin* denotes certainty attained through rational inquiry and reflection (*tafakkur*). The Qur'an continually invites believers to think, ponder, and analyse signs in creation: "*Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for people of understanding*" (Q. 3:190).

This reflective knowing is discursive and inferential; it relies on observation, analogy, and reasoning (*'aql*). It forms the intellectual foundation of faith (*iman*), allowing human consciousness to rise from ignorance to knowledge (Izutsu, 2002). Yet this knowledge, while necessary, remains indirect-it provides conviction through inference rather than experience.

'Ayn al-Yaqin - Seeing through Realisation: The second degree, *'ayn al-yaqin*, transcends conceptual knowing to become experiential seeing. It occurs when the truths previously known abstractly are witnessed directly in the soul or in the phenomena of the world. The Qur'an refers to this transformation of awareness when it states: "*You will surely see it with the eye of certainty ('ayn al-yaqin)*" (Q. 102:7).

Here, perception is not limited to physical sight but signifies a spiritual unveiling (*kashf*)-an inward realisation where the signs of Allah become manifest as self-evident realities. The heart (*qalb*) becomes the locus of seeing, and knowledge matures into vision (Nasr, 2007).

Haqq al-Yaqin - Being through Truth: At the highest degree, *haqq al-yaqin* signifies the fusion of knower and known, where knowledge becomes being. It is no longer about perceiving truth but embodying it. The Qur'an describes its own revelation as *haqq al-yaqin* (Q. 69:51), indicating that divine truth is not an object external to the human subject but a reality that can transform and inhabit the knower. At this stage, knowing becomes existence itself, and consciousness becomes anchored in divine reality.

Together, these three degrees trace a movement from epistemology to ontology: from conceptual reflection, to direct realisation, to existential embodiment. The human intellect thus passes through successive unveilings until it mirrors the divine light (*mur al- 'ilm*).

### 14.5.2 Integration with the Qur'anic Triad: Iman- 'Ilm- 'Amal

The Qur'anic paradigm integrates *yaqin* within the moral and practical triad of *iman* (faith), *'ilm* (knowledge), and *'amal* (action). This triad establishes that true knowledge must emerge from faith and culminate in righteous action, forming a circular process of ethical and spiritual transformation. "*Those who believe and do righteous deeds, their Lord will guide them because of their faith*" (Q. 10:9).

Faith provides the existential orientation-an openness of the heart to divine truth. Knowledge articulates and clarifies this faith through reason and contemplation. Action then manifests the truth of that knowledge in the world. The believer thus becomes a vessel through which divine wisdom is actualised.

In the context of *yaqin*, *iman* corresponds to the disposition that initiates the journey (*'ilm al-yaqin*), *'ilm* embodies the reflective and perceptive process that deepens understanding (*'ayn al-yaqin*), and *'amal* represents the embodied realisation of truth in ethical conduct (*haqq al-yaqin*). The triad thus reflects a complete epistemic cycle where knowing, believing, and doing converge (Al-Attas, 1995).



### 14.5.3 Yaqin as an Epistemic Light (Mur al-‘Ilm)

In Qur’anic symbolism, knowledge is frequently described as light (*mur*)-an illumination that dispels ignorance and reveals the reality of things. The verse, “*Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth*” (Q. 24:35), establishes the metaphysical foundation for all knowing: divine illumination is the source of all epistemic clarity. *Yaqin* represents the intensification of this light within the human consciousness. As the seeker advances from *‘ilm* to *‘ayn* to *ḥaqq*, the luminosity of understanding grows purer and more direct.

At the first level, the light shines through reflection and reason. The second, it penetrates the heart through unveiled realisation. At the third, the light consumes the self in truth-it becomes a state of pure awareness beyond duality. This luminous epistemology aligns with the Qur’an’s description of guidance: “*Is one whose heart Allah has opened to Islam so that he walks in light from his Lord [like one who is in darkness]?*” (Q. 39:22).

Thus, *mur al-‘ilm* is not an abstract metaphor but the very experience of truth as illumination. It transforms knowledge from data into wisdom, from perception into vision, and from awareness into being.

### 14.5.4 Ethical Implications: Responsibility and Sincerity in Certainty

Each progression of *yaqin* heightens moral accountability (*amanah*) and sincerity (*ikhlas*). As knowledge becomes more certain, the ethical burden of embodying it increases. The Qur’an warns against those who know but do not act upon their knowledge (Q. 62:5), equating knowledge without practice to burden without purpose.

At *‘ilm al-yaqin*, responsibility entails honest inquiry and intellectual humility. At *‘ayn al-yaqin*, it requires inner purification so that the heart’s perception is not clouded by ego or desire. At *ḥaqq al-yaqin*, responsibility becomes the knower must live as truth, reflecting divine justice and mercy in every action.

Thus, *yaqin* is not only an epistemic achievement but a moral transformation. Certainty demands that knowledge be used ethically, for to know with certainty and act unjustly is to betray the very light one has received. The Qur’an states: “*Do not pursue that of which you do not know. Indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart-all of those will be questioned*” (Q. 17:36).

This verse situates epistemology within accountability: the faculties of knowing are moral trusts. The deeper one’s *yaqin*, the greater one’s duty to uphold truth with justice (*‘adl*) and sincerity (*ṣidq*).

### 14.5.5 Revelation (Wahy) as the Final Arbiter of Certainty

While human intellect and experience are essential to the process of knowing, the Qur’an asserts that true certainty (*yaqin*) cannot be achieved without divine revelation (*wahy*). The intellect can perceive the signs of creation, and reason about their meaning, but only revelation unveils the metaphysical source of those signs. As the Qur’an declares: “*And thus We have revealed to you a spirit of Our command. You did not know what the Book or faith was, but We made it a light by which We guide whom We will*” (Q. 42:52).

Here, revelation (*wahy*) is identified as both *ruh* (spirit) and *mur* (light)-the principle that animates and illumines all authentic knowledge. It functions as the divine compass, ensuring that human certainty remains centred on truth, not ego. Without revelation, intellectual certainty risks becoming self-referential and idolatrous.

In the Qur’anic view, revelation validates and completes reason. The intellect (‘*aql*) is a faculty of reflection, but revelation provides the framework of ultimate meanings. Together, they form a balanced epistemology: reason discovers, revelation confirms; reason questions, revelation answers; reason seeks, revelation fulfils.

Thus, *wahy* preserves the theocentric orientation of *yaqin*-it anchors certainty in divine truth rather than human subjectivity. As Al-Attas (1995) notes, revelation is “the final criterion that distinguishes between knowledge that guides and knowledge that misleads.” In this sense, revelation is both the source and safeguard of epistemic certainty.

#### 14.5.6 From Knowing to Being: The Qur’anic Path of Integration

The progression from ‘*ilm* to ‘*ayn* to *ḥaqq* parallels the Qur’anic journey from *iman* to ‘*ilm* to ‘*amal*, culminating in *taqwa*-God-consciousness. This journey signifies not merely the acquisition of information but the transformation of existence. The believer’s intellect, heart, and will are harmonised through the continuous remembrance of God (*dhikr Allah*), which purifies knowledge from pride and directs it toward service.

Ultimately, the Qur’an envisions knowledge as an act of worship. To know is to acknowledge the divine reality; to see is to glorify it; to be in truth is to surrender to it. This total integration reflects the Qur’anic ethos: “Say: My prayer, my sacrifice, my life, and my death are for Allah, the Lord of all worlds” (Q. 6:162).

At *ḥaqq al-yaqin*, every dimension of existence becomes a testimony of truth. The self is no longer a seeker but a witness (*shahid*) of divine reality, fulfilling the purpose of knowledge as illumination and submission.

#### 14.5.7 Yaqin as the Heart of Qur’anic Epistemology

The Qur’an’s doctrine of *yaqin* offers a holistic paradigm of knowing that integrates intellect, intuition, and being. It portrays certainty not as the negation of doubt but as its transcendence through divine awareness. From reflective knowing (‘*ilm al-yaqin*), to visionary realisation (‘*ayn al-yaqin*), to existential truth (*ḥaqq al-yaqin*), the human soul journeys through layers of perception until it becomes light itself.

This journey situates epistemology within spirituality, ethics, and revelation. It defines knowledge as a sacred trust (*amanah*)-an act of divine participation requiring humility, sincerity, and justice. Through *yaqin*, the Qur’an transforms knowing from a cognitive event into an ontological awakening, affirming that the highest form of knowledge is to *be* in truth. “And say: The truth has come, and falsehood has vanished; indeed, falsehood is ever bound to vanish” (Q. 17:81).

## 14.6 Conclusion

The Qur'anic conception of *yaqin* (certainty) represents a transformative epistemic journey that transcends conventional divisions between rationality and spirituality. Within the Qur'an, *yaqin* is not a static state of mind but a *progressive unfolding of consciousness*-a movement from intellectual understanding (*'ilm al-yaqin*), to direct realisation (*'ayn al-yaqin*), and ultimately to existential truth (*ḥaqq al-yaqin*). This tripartite hierarchy demonstrates that human knowledge is not confined to sensory or discursive cognition; rather, it aims toward a divine anchoring in which truth is both *known* and *embodied*.

The Qur'an situates this epistemic ascent within the very fabric of faith (*iman*). Rational knowledge (*'ilm*) forms the initial base, inviting reflection upon creation and the divine signs within the self and the cosmos (Q. 51:20-21). Yet reflection alone does not suffice-it must evolve into *'ayn al-yaqin*, the stage of realisation in which knowledge becomes experiential, transforming the knower's perception. Finally, *ḥaqq al-yaqin* represents the synthesis of knowing and being, when certainty is no longer an intellectual proposition but an existential state harmonised with divine reality (Q. 69:51). Thus, *yaqin* operates as the epistemic bridge between the intellect (*'aql*) and revelation (*wahy*), binding cognition to worship and inquiry to submission (Nasr, 2012).

In this Qur'anic hierarchy, rational knowledge and spiritual insight are not oppositional forces but complementary dimensions of the same truth-seeking process. The Qur'an consistently challenges the believer to use reason as a means to approach divine awareness, not as an end in itself (Q. 3:190-191). The rational faculty (*'aql*) is a sacred trust through which human beings discern divine order, while the heart (*qalb*) functions as the locus of spiritual perception that refines cognition into certainty (Q. 22:46). Hence, *yaqin* reconciles intellect and intuition: the former grasps the structure of the world; the latter perceives its divine meaning. Together, they cultivate an *ethical being*, where knowledge becomes inseparable from moral consciousness and accountability.

Furthermore, *yaqin* serves as the bridge between knowledge (*'ilm*) and worship (*'ibadah*). The Qur'an indicates that true knowledge naturally leads to humility and submission before the Creator: "Only those who know fear Allah" (Q. 35:28). This statement encapsulates the essence of epistemic piety-the idea that knowing reality culminates in reverence, not arrogance. In this sense, *yaqin* purifies epistemology of self-centred claims to mastery and redirects it toward divine-centred understanding, ensuring that the pursuit of truth remains a form of worship rather than domination (Al-Attas, 1995).

In contemporary epistemological discourse, the Qur'anic notion of *yaqin* offers an integrative paradigm that redefines the pursuit of truth. Modern science and philosophy, often fragmented by empiricism and scepticism, can rediscover a holistic epistemic framework where cognition, intuition, and ethics converge. *Yaqin*, as the Qur'an presents it, transforms knowledge from mere accumulation of information into a luminous process of self-illumination *al-'ilm*-where certainty is not imposed but unveiled through divine guidance. Thus, the Qur'anic hierarchy of *yaqin* refines both the scientific and the spiritual search for truth, harmonising the intellect's quest for understanding with the soul's yearning for divine proximity.

Ultimately, yaqin is not only the culmination of knowledge but the very path that leads from knowing to being, from reflection to realisation, and from understanding to surrender. In this way, the Qur'an situates human epistemology within a sacred cosmology where every act of knowing is a step toward witnessing the Truth itself.

## Chapter 15: The Qur'anic Theory of Knowledge as a Unified Epistemology

The Qur'anic worldview presents a comprehensive logic of knowing that harmonises faith (iman), knowledge ('ilm), and action ('amal) as interdependent dimensions of human consciousness and responsibility. Within this divine epistemic structure, knowledge is neither autonomous nor secularized; it originates from al-Haqq (الحق) - the Absolute Reality - and thus retains a sacred character grounded in truth, justice, and moral purpose (Q. 2:147; Q. 10:32). The Qur'an does not view the intellect ('aql) as an independent source of truth but as a divinely endowed faculty meant to engage with wahy (revelation) through reflection (*tafakkur*) and discernment (*tadbūr*). This integration between revelation and rationality generates a unique epistemological cycle where understanding unfolds as both an act of cognition and of worship (Nasr, 1989).

Part IV explores this structure of Qur'anic logic and discovery, moving through the dynamic relationship between faith, knowledge, and action (Chapter 13), the hierarchy of certainty (yaqin) as the inner ascent of the knower (Chapter 14), and finally, the Qur'anic theory of knowledge as a unified epistemology (Chapter 15). Each of these components reflects an organic movement from divine origin to human realisation - from revelation to remembrance (*dhikr*), from reflection to transformation (*tahawwul*). Knowledge, in this structure, is not a static possession but a journey of becoming, a continuous unveiling of truth through engagement with the signs (*ayat*) of Allah in creation and revelation (Q. 41:53).

This part argues that Qur'anic logic represents not merely a religious framework but a methodological paradigm for inquiry and verification. Its principles of balance (*mizan*), justice ('*adl*), and trust (*amanah*) provide an ethical grammar for all knowledge production. Thus, epistemic discovery in Islam is inseparable from ethical accountability - a process through which knowing becomes a form of servitude ('*ubudiyyah*), and reflection becomes remembrance. The Qur'an commands, "Say: My Lord, increase me in knowledge" (Q. 20:114), situating the pursuit of knowledge within a continuous moral elevation.

Through this structure, the believer-scholar transcends the dichotomy between reason and revelation, science and faith, thought and devotion. The Qur'an reconstitutes knowledge as both illumination (*mur*) and trust (*amanah*) - a means of restoring the harmony between knowing, being, and doing. The chapters that follow uncover this structure in depth, showing how Qur'anic epistemology moves from intellectual inquiry to existential realisation, culminating in a unified vision of truth.

### 15.1 The Divine Origin and Ontology of Knowledge

The Qur'an presents an ontological vision of knowledge ('ilm) that situates all forms of understanding within the creative and sustaining reality of Allah. Knowledge, in this framework, is not an autonomous human construct but a divine emanation-a trust (*amanah*) bestowed upon humankind as part of their vicegerency (*khilafah*) on earth. The Qur'an makes this explicit when it states: "He taught Adam the

*names-all of them*” (Q. 2:31). This verse is not merely a reference to linguistic instruction; it symbolises the divine bestowal of the capacity to discern, categorise, and comprehend reality. Knowledge here is ontologically rooted in divine revelation (*wahy*) and existentially anchored in human consciousness as the faculty that enables recognition of truth (*haqq*).

### 15.1.1 The Source of All Knowledge: Allah as al-Alim

The Qur’an repeatedly affirms that the ultimate source of all knowledge is Allah, who is *al-Alim* (The All-Knowing). The verse “*And Allah is Knowing of all things*” (Q. 2:282) establishes a foundational epistemic principle: divine knowledge is absolute, perfect, and comprehensive, while human knowledge is relative and contingent. The divine attribute *al-Alim* occurs more than 150 times in the Qur’an, underscoring the absolute omniscience of God as the foundation of reality (Nasr, 2012).

In contrast to the modern secular epistemology that locates knowledge in empirical verification or rational inference, the Qur’anic perspective situates knowledge within a metaphysical order. Allah’s knowledge precedes creation, encompasses it, and remains unaffected by temporal limitations. “Indeed, with Him are the keys of the unseen; none knows them except Him” (Q. 6:59). Here, knowledge is not a product of experience but the very principle through which existence itself becomes intelligible. The divine will (*iradah*) and knowledge (*ilm*) are thus coextensive-creation unfolds through divine command (*kun fa-yakun*; Q. 36:82).

### 15.1.2 Ontology of Knowledge: From the Divine to the Human

The ontological structure of knowledge in the Qur’an is hierarchical yet integrative. At its apex is divine knowledge-infinite, uncreated, and perfect. Beneath this level lies revelatory knowledge (*ilm al-wahy*), which is transmitted to prophets as guidance for humanity. The third level is acquired or reflective knowledge (*ilm al-kasbi*), accessible through human faculties such as reason (*aql*), perception (*basar*), and contemplation (*tafakkur*).

This tripartite model reveals a continuum rather than a dichotomy. Human knowledge is not detached from divine knowledge but derives its legitimacy and purpose from it. The Qur’an emphasises this when it states, “*He taught man what he did not know*” (Q. 96:5). The verb *allama* (to teach) signifies active divine involvement in the epistemic process. Knowledge, therefore, is a divine act of communication, and human learning is an act of reception and reflection upon that communication.

Al-Attas (1995) interprets this verse as indicating that knowledge is not constructed ex nihilo by human intellect; it is *unveiled* through divine signs (*ayat*), both within creation and revelation. The Qur’an itself is described as a “*clear proof and guidance*” (*bayyinat wa hudan*; Q. 2:185), establishing that revelation and empirical inquiry coexist as complementary pathways to truth.

### 15.1.3 The Creation as Epistemic Field: Signs (Ayat) of Knowledge

In the Qur’anic worldview, the cosmos is not a closed system of matter but a living tapestry of divine signs (*ayat*). “*Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of the night and*

*day, are signs for those of understanding*” (Q. 3:190). The term *ayah* (plural: *ayat*) has a dual meaning—it refers both to the verses of the Qur'an and to the phenomena of creation. This semantic unity underscores the Qur'an's integrated epistemology: revelation and nature are two expressions of the same divine truth (Rahman, 1980).

The human intellect is thus called to decipher the language of these signs, to read the world as one reads the Qur'an. The verse continues: *“Those who remember Allah standing, sitting, and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth”* (Q. 3:191). The act of reflection (*tafakkur*) transforms perception into cognition, and cognition into spiritual realisation. This triadic process—observation, reflection, and remembrance—forms the epistemic method of the Qur'an.

The Qur'an's emphasis on natural signs points to an epistemological principle: knowledge is relational. It arises from the interaction between divine communication and human contemplation. Hence, knowing is not merely a cognitive act but an existential engagement with the divine order. As Iqbal (1934) observed, the Qur'anic vision “does not divorce thought from life or speculation from action; it invites man to participate in the creative act of God.”

#### 15.1.4 Human Faculties as Instruments of Knowledge

The Qur'an affirms that Allah has endowed humankind with the faculties necessary to pursue knowledge: hearing (*sam'*), sight (*baṣar*), and intellect (*Fu'ad*). *“And Allah brought you out of the wombs of your mothers not knowing a thing, and He made for you hearing, vision, and hearts that you might give thanks”* (Q. 16:78). Each of these faculties operates not in isolation but in harmony, forming the architecture of human epistemic capacity.

The intellect (*'aql*) is portrayed as a discerning faculty capable of drawing moral and existential conclusions from empirical observation. Yet, the Qur'an criticises those who *“have hearts with which they do not understand”* (Q. 7:179), indicating that cognition without moral consciousness is incomplete. Knowledge divorced from ethics becomes ignorance, while intellect guided by revelation becomes wisdom (*hikmah*).

The heart (*qalb*) occupies a central position in this epistemic structure. Unlike modern rationalism, which confines knowing to the intellect, the Qur'an views the heart as the seat of understanding and moral perception (Nasr, 2012). *“Have they not travelled through the earth so that they have hearts by which to reason?”* (Q. 22:46). This verse establishes that *qalb* integrates rational analysis with spiritual intuition, forming what may be termed holistic cognition. The Qur'an's ontology of knowledge thus transcends mere intellectualism, orienting human understanding toward divine awareness.

#### 15.1.5 Revelation (Wahy) as Ontological Ground of Epistemic Truth

Revelation (*wahy*) functions as the ultimate criterion of truth and the grounding principle of epistemology in the Qur'an. While reason (*'aql*) and perception (*ḥiss*) are valuable instruments, their judgments must be measured against divine revelation to ensure alignment with the ultimate reality. *“Falsehood cannot*



*approach it, neither from before it nor from behind it; it is a revelation from the Wise, the Praiseworthy”* (Q. 41:42).

This divine protection of revelation from corruption guarantees epistemic certainty (*yaqin*). Revelation, therefore, does not negate reason; it calibrates it. The Qur'an encourages rational engagement- *“Will they not ponder upon the Qur'an?”* (Q. 4:82)-but warns against intellect detached from divine guidance. The relationship between *'aql* and *wahy* is synergistic: reason deciphers the signs, while revelation provides the key to their meaning.

Sardar (2011) emphasises that this symbiosis establishes a distinct Islamic epistemology in which knowledge is both rational and transcendental. Revelation acts as a metaphysical compass, orienting all inquiries toward moral and existential truth. Hence, knowledge becomes an act of submission (*Islam*)-the alignment of the intellect and the will with the divine order.

### 15.1.6 The Ethical Ontology of Knowledge

In the Qur'an, knowledge is inseparable from ethics. The verse *“Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who know”* (Q. 35:28) indicates that true knowledge engenders humility and reverence. Knowledge, therefore, has an ontological function: it transforms the knower into a moral being. The ethical dimension of knowledge distinguishes the Qur'anic view from secular epistemologies that treat knowing as value-neutral.

The Qur'an's integration of knowledge and morality implies that epistemic error is not merely cognitive but ethical, a deviation from truth and justice. To misuse knowledge is to betray the divine trust (*amanah*). Hence, the Qur'an repeatedly warns against concealing or distorting knowledge: *“Do not mix truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know [it]”* (Q. 2:42).

Al-Attas (1995) identifies this fusion of ethics and epistemology as the foundation of *adab* -the discipline of knowledge. In this sense, the Qur'an envisions knowledge not only as a means of understanding but also as a mode of being. The knower's moral integrity becomes part of the epistemic process, linking ontology, ethics, and cognition in an inseparable unity.

### 15.1.7 Knowledge as a Manifestation of Divine Light (Mur al-‘Ilm)

The Qur'an describes guidance (*huda*) and knowledge as forms of divine light: *“Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth”* (Q. 24:35). This verse conveys that all forms of truth and illumination emanate from the divine source. Just as physical light makes vision possible, divine light makes comprehension possible. Knowledge, therefore, is not self-generated but a reflection of the *mur* that emanates from God.

Nasr (2012) interprets this metaphor as the metaphysical foundation of Qur'anic epistemology: all authentic knowledge participates in divine illumination. The human mind, like a polished mirror, reflects this light to the extent that it is purified of ego and heedlessness. Thus, epistemology becomes an act of spiritual purification as much as an intellectual pursuit.

### 15.1.8 Summary: The Ontological Unity of Knowing and Being

The Qur'anic ontology of knowledge reveals a unity of metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. Knowledge originates in divine omniscience, is mediated through revelation, realised through reason and perception, and completed through moral transformation. It is not merely about *knowing* but about *becoming*-a journey from awareness to wisdom, from intellect to submission.

In this unified vision, every act of knowing is an act of worship, every discovery a form of remembrance, and every insight a reaffirmation of divine unity (*tawḥid*). The Qur'an's epistemic structure thus provides a profound corrective to the fragmentation of modern thought, reuniting science, faith, and ethics within a single ontology of truth.

## 15.2 Human Faculties and the Structure of Knowing in the Qur'an

The Qur'an establishes a profound anthropology of knowledge that integrates perception, reflection, and spiritual consciousness into a single epistemic framework. Unlike secular epistemology, which divides cognition into sensory and rational domains, the Qur'an conceives of human knowing as a unified process involving the hearing (السَّمْعُ, *al-sam*'), sight (الْبَصَرُ, *al-baṣar*), intellect (العَقْلُ, *al-'aql*), and heart (الْقَلْبُ, *al-qalb*). These faculties are not isolated instruments but interdependent dimensions of human awareness through which divine signs (*ayat*) are apprehended and interpreted.

This holistic model of knowing underscores the Qur'anic view that human cognition is both a divine gift and a moral responsibility. The human being (*insan*) is not a passive observer of reality but an active interpreter (*mufasssir*) of divine meaning. Each faculty corresponds to a level of engagement with the world-perceptual, rational, and spiritual-together forming a complete epistemological architecture that reflects divine wisdom (*hikmah*).

### 15.2.1 Hearing and Sight: The Sensory Foundations of Awareness

The Qur'an repeatedly reminds humanity that their journey of knowledge begins with sensory perception, bestowed by Allah as a divine endowment: “*And Allah brought you out of the wombs of your mothers not knowing a thing, and He made for you hearing (السَّمْعُ) and vision (الْأَبْصَارُ) and hearts (الْأَفْئِدَةُ) that you might give thanks.*” (Q. 16:78)

This verse identifies the first ontological state of the human being as *not knowing* (*la ta'lamuna shay'an*). The faculties of hearing and sight thus form the primary gateways of epistemic development. They enable empirical awareness of the external world and provide the raw material for reflection and understanding. However, the Qur'an warns that sensory perception alone is insufficient without proper reflection and remembrance (*dhikr*).

The Qur'an frequently pairs *sam*' and *baṣar* to emphasise their dual role in perception and comprehension. “*Indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart-about all those one will be questioned*” (Q. 17:36). This verse establishes an ethical accountability (*mas'uliyah*) for the use of human faculties, implying that knowledge is not neutral but morally charged. What one chooses to perceive, listen to, or ignore shapes the moral quality of one's knowledge.

Al-Attas (1995) interprets this Qur'anic structure as a call to epistemic discipline: the sensory faculties must be purified and guided by divine remembrance to become trustworthy instruments of truth. Without *taqwa* (God-consciousness), the senses can deceive, leading to arrogance and error. Thus, the Qur'an's ontology of the senses integrates empirical observation within a sacred moral framework.

### 15.2.2 The Intellect (‘Aql): The Faculty of Discernment and Understanding

In the Qur'an, the term ‘*aql* (عقل) never appears as a noun but always as a verb, such as *ya ‘qilun* (“they understand”) or *ta ‘qilun* (“you reflect”). This grammatical feature reflects the Qur'an's dynamic conception of reason, not as a static possession but as an active process of engagement with divine signs. Reason (‘*aql*) in the Qur'an is not an autonomous faculty that constructs truth but a discerning instrument that recognises truth already manifested in creation and revelation.

“Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day are signs for those who use reason (يَعْقِلُونَ, *ya ‘qilun*)” (Q. 2:164). Here, ‘*aql* is linked to reflection upon the natural order, suggesting that reason functions properly when directed toward recognising divine design (*nizām ilahī*). The Qur'an does not reject rational inquiry; rather, it situates it within the teleological framework of recognition of divine unity (*tawhīd*).

According to Rahman (1980), ‘*aql* in the Qur'an is not speculative abstraction but moral intelligence—the capacity to discern good from evil and truth from falsehood. The verse “*Do they not reflect within themselves? Allah did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them except in truth and for a specified term*” (Q. 30:8) links rational contemplation with ethical awareness, implying that cognition divorced from morality is incomplete.

The Qur'an also criticises intellectual arrogance: “*They have hearts with which they do not understand*” (Q. 7:179). Here, ‘*aql* is not functioning because it has been severed from *qalb*, the heart. Thus, reason's perfection depends on its union with the heart's moral and spiritual insight.

Nasr (2012) observes that in the Qur'anic paradigm, the intellect (‘*aql*) is a light within the soul, reflecting divine knowledge rather than generating it. Rationality, therefore, is not an end in itself but a mirror of revelation. When purified through remembrance, ‘*aql* becomes an instrument of *ḥikmah*—wisdom that integrates thought, ethics, and faith.

### 15.2.3 The Heart (Qalb): The Centre of Consciousness and Faith

Among all faculties, the heart (*qalb*) occupies the highest epistemological rank in the Qur'an. It is the organ of both knowledge and moral discernment, integrating sensory input and rational reflection into spiritual insight. “*Do they not travel through the land so that they have hearts by which to reason, or ears by which to hear? For indeed, it is not the eyes that are blinded, but blinded are the hearts within the breasts*” (Q. 22:46).

This verse establishes that true blindness is spiritual, not physical. The *qalb* is the locus of perception that transcends empirical data, functioning as the centre of awareness where truth (*ḥaqq*) is internalised. The Qur'an presents the heart as both cognitive and volitional-it knows, loves, and submits.

The dynamic nature of the *qalb* is reflected in its etymology; *qalaba* means "to turn" or "to change." The Qur'an acknowledges this volatility: the heart can incline toward truth or deviation. Hence, it must be constantly purified (*tazkiyah*). *"On the Day when neither wealth nor children will benefit, except one who comes to Allah with a sound heart (قلب سليم, qalb Salim)"* (Q. 26:88-89).

In Qur'anic epistemology, a sound heart is the foundation of sound knowledge. The heart that remembers Allah is illuminated by divine light (*mur*), while a heedless heart becomes veiled (*ghaflah*). *"Whoever Allah wills to guide-He expands his breast to Islam; and whoever He wills to misguide-He makes his breast tight and constricted"* (Q. 6:125). Thus, *qalb* mediates between the divine and human realms, transforming cognition into spiritual realisation.

Al-Attas (1995) argues that in Islamic epistemology, the heart is not a metaphor but a real organ of cognition- *'aql* resides in the heart, not the brain. The integration of *qalb* and *'aql* produces what he terms *'ilm al-yaqin* (knowledge of certainty), the foundation of spiritual and intellectual balance.

#### 15.2.4 The Integration of Faculties: From Perception to Realisation

The Qur'an envisions knowledge as a process of integration, wherein hearing, sight, intellect, and heart operate harmoniously. This integration transforms *'ilm* (knowledge) from mere information into realisation (*taḥqiq*). The verse *"We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth"* (Q. 41:53) encapsulates this process: sensory experience (*afaq*), introspection (*anfus*), and divine recognition converge in epistemic certainty (*yaqin*). The Qur'anic epistemic model thus follows a triadic progression:

- Perception (*idrak*) - gathering data through *sam'* and *baṣar*.
- Reflection (*tafakkur* / *ta'aqqul*) - interpreting the signs through *'aql*.
- Realisation (*tadhakkur* / *yaqin*) - internalising truth through *qalb*.

Each faculty perfects the next, creating a cyclical structure of knowing. This process is dynamic and moral; failure in one faculty disrupts the whole. The Qur'an warns against epistemic fragmentation: *"They have hearts with which they do not understand, eyes with which they do not see, and ears with which they do not hear. Those are like cattle; rather, they are more astray"* (Q. 7:179).

Sardar (2011) emphasises that this verse reflects the Qur'an's rejection of purely materialist cognition. Knowledge without spiritual awareness leads to dehumanisation. The human being becomes a *consumer of data* rather than a *knower of truth*. The Qur'anic model, by contrast, sanctifies knowledge by rooting it in *tawḥid*-the recognition of divine unity across all forms of knowing.

### 15.2.5 The Spiritual Intelligence (Furqan) as Divine Discrimination

The culmination of integrated knowing in the Qur'an is the emergence of *furqan*, the capacity to distinguish truth from falsehood. “O you who believe! If you fear Allah (تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ, *tattaqu Allah*), He will grant you a criterion (فُرْقَانًا, *furqanan*)” (Q. 8:29). This verse reveals that true discernment arises not merely from intellectual capacity but from spiritual purity. *Furqan* represents divine illumination within the heart that enables accurate moral and epistemic judgment.

Al-Attas (1995) interprets *furqan* as the inner light that results from *taqwa*, a state of moral vigilance before God. When the heart is purified, it becomes a mirror of divine truth, capable of perceiving reality as it is (*haqq al-yaqin*). This inner discrimination surpasses rational deduction, integrating intuition, revelation, and moral consciousness.

In this way, *Furqan* represents the synthesis of all human faculties under divine guidance. It is the epistemic manifestation of faith (*iman*) in action, enabling the believer to act justly, think clearly, and know truly.

### 15.2.6 Ethical Accountability of Knowledge: The Questioning of the Faculties

The Qur'an concludes its epistemic anthropology with a striking assertion of moral accountability: “Indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart—about all those one will be questioned” (Q. 17:36). This verse reappears here as a reminder that knowledge in the Qur'an is never value-neutral. The misuse of cognitive faculties constitutes a moral failure.

Knowledge thus entails responsibility (*mas'uliyah al-'ilm*). To know is to be accountable for what one does with that knowledge. Concealment of truth (*kitman al-haqq*), distortion (*tahrif*), and arrogance (*kibr*) are condemned because they betray the purpose of knowing: to bear witness to divine reality (*shahadah*). “And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know [it]” (Q. 2:42).

The ethical dimension of knowledge transforms epistemology into a form of worship (*'ibadah*). Every act of learning, reflection, and discovery becomes part of the human vocation as Allah's vicegerent (*khali'ah*) on earth. As Nasr (2012) notes, the Qur'anic structure of knowing culminates not in domination of nature but in harmony with divine order.

### 15.2.7 Summary: The Qur'anic Architecture of Knowing

The Qur'an presents a comprehensive model of knowledge grounded in divine unity (*tawhid*) and human responsibility. The faculties of hearing, sight, intellect, and heart form a seamless epistemic network linking perception, reason, and revelation. Their integration transforms knowledge from empirical accumulation into moral illumination. The Qur'anic anthropology of cognition establishes that:

- Knowledge originates as divine light (*mur al-'ilm*).
- Human faculties are its mirrors and mediators.
- Ethics and remembrance safeguard its integrity.

- Accountability ensures its righteous use.

Thus, the human being is not merely a knower (‘*alim*) but a trustee of divine knowledge (*amin al-‘ilm*). When these faculties function in harmony, they reflect the divine name *al-Alim* within creation, fulfilling the purpose of human existence: to know, to remember, and to act in truth.

## 15.3 The Qur’anic Logic of Discovery and Verification

### 15.3.1 Discovery and Verification as Twin Dimensions of Qur’anic Epistemology

In the Qur’an, the pursuit of truth is a process of *kashf* (unveiling) and *tahqiq* (verification). Both processes are inseparable dimensions of divine epistemology: discovery (*istidlal*) reveals the signs (*ayat*) of Allah in creation, while verification ensures that human interpretation remains aligned with divine truth. Knowledge (‘*ilm*) in the Qur’an is not simply gathered but *witnessed* through disciplined perception (*baṣirah*), reflection (*tafakkur*), and sincere intention (*niyyah*). These epistemic processes form the Qur’anic logic of discovery and verification, where *truth* is not self-derived but divinely anchored.

The Qur’an repeatedly calls human beings to engage in both discovery and confirmation of reality. In Surah Fuṣṣilat (Q. 41:53), Allah declares: “*We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the Truth.*” This verse defines the essential epistemic trajectory: discovery through *signs* (*ayat*) and verification through *clarity* (*tabayyun*). Thus, Qur’anic knowledge operates within a dual structure - exploration of phenomena and confirmation through divine correspondence.

### 15.3.2 Discovery (*Kashf*) as Epistemic Unveiling

The Qur’an positions *kashf* - unveiling or discovery - as an act of divine permission rather than human autonomy. Knowledge is uncovered through the engagement of human faculties, but the depth of its reality is granted by Allah: “*And He taught you what you did not know, and ever has the favour of Allah been great upon you*” (Q. 4:113).

Here, knowledge emerges not from human self-sufficiency but from divine teaching (‘*allama*), emphasising that discovery is a form of *divine unveiling* (*tajalli*). This epistemic act requires spiritual humility and moral readiness. The Qur’an warns that those who approach knowledge arrogantly are veiled from truth, as in Surah al-Muṭaffifin (Q. 83:14): “*No! Rather, the stain has covered their hearts because of what they used to earn.*”

This *rān* (rust) symbolises epistemic obstruction - the moral corruption that blinds one’s inner vision. Therefore, true discovery in the Qur’anic paradigm requires purification (*tazkiyah*) of the soul, aligning cognition with faith (*iman*).

The Qur’an presents *kashf* as a process of unveiling divine signs within the layered structure of existence - in the cosmos (*afaq*), within the human self (*anfus*), and in revelation (*wahy*). This triadic unveiling establishes the unity of natural, moral, and revealed knowledge.



### 15.3.3 Verification (*Tahqiq*) as the Principle of Certainty

Discovery without verification can lead to illusion or conjecture (*ẓann*), which the Qur'an repeatedly cautions against: *“And do not pursue that of which you do not know (‘ilm). Indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart-about all those [one] will be questioned”* (Q. 17:36).

This verse situates verification within the ethical accountability of human faculties. Hearing, seeing, and understanding must all be disciplined by truth. Verification (*tahqiq*) thus becomes both an intellectual and moral act - testing, confirming, and aligning knowledge with divine reality.

The Qur'an rejects epistemologies based on assumption (*ẓann*) and urges rational and experiential verification. Surah al-Najm (Q. 53:28) states: *“They do not know of it; they follow nothing but conjecture, and indeed conjecture avails nothing against the truth.”*

Hence, *tahqiq* safeguards human reasoning (*‘aql*) from falling into unverified claims. It is an epistemological filter that demands evidence (*bayyinah*), coherence (*ḥaqq*), and moral intention (*niyyah ṣaliḥah*).

In the Qur'an, verification also means *establishing truth in action* (*‘amal*). Knowledge becomes real when it manifests ethically - a verification through practice. Thus, Qur'anic verification is not only cognitive but performative, uniting epistemology and ethics.

### 15.3.4 The Qur'anic Method of Verification: From Signs (*Ayat*) to Certainty (*Yaqin*)

The Qur'anic method moves from signs (*ayat*) to knowledge (*‘ilm*), then to certainty (*yaqin*). Each stage involves both discovery and verification. The observation of signs demands *tafakkur* (reflection) and *tadabbur* (deep consideration), which transform sensory perception into intellectual and spiritual understanding.

Surah Al ‘Imran (Q. 3:190-191) declares: *“Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and day are signs for those of understanding - those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and reflect upon the creation of the heavens and the earth.”*

The term *yatadabbarun* signifies a reflective process that leads from external observation to internal realisation. The ultimate verification (*tahqiq al-ḥaqq*) occurs when reflection culminates in recognition of divine order and purpose.

Qur'anic epistemology thus integrates empiricism (*naẓar*), rationality (*‘aql*), and spirituality (*iman*). Each epistemic operation must correspond with divine reality to ensure that *discovery* leads to *certainty*.

### 15.3.5 Rational Verification (*Tahqiq al-‘Aqli*) and Moral Discernment

The Qur'an appeals to human reason (*‘aql*) as a faculty of verification rather than speculation. Rational verification functions within divine parameters - reason must confirm, not replace, revelation. In Surah al-Baqarah (2:269): *“He gives wisdom (ḥikmah) to whom He wills, and whoever has been given wisdom has certainly been given much good.”*



Here, *hikmah* represents reason guided by revelation - rational verification infused with moral consciousness. The Qur'an also challenges blind imitation (*taqlid*), commanding humans to investigate truth independently: “*When it is said to them, ‘Follow what Allah has revealed,’ they say, ‘Rather, we follow that which we found our fathers upon.’ Even though their fathers understood nothing, nor were they guided?*” (Q. 2:170).

Thus, Qur'anic verification is rationally active but revelation-centred. *‘Aql* becomes the instrument of discerning divine truth through inquiry and reflection, while revelation (*wahy*) remains the final arbiter of validity.

### 15.3.6 Empirical and Reflective Discovery: Signs in the Horizons and the Self

The Qur'an employs empirical discovery not as secular science but as *sign-based cognition*. Observing nature and history is encouraged as a path to divine awareness. Surah al-Ghāshiyah (Q. 88:17-20) commands: “*Do they not look at the camels-how they are created? And in the sky, how is it raised? And at the mountains, how are they set up? And on the earth, how is it spread out?*”

Here, empirical discovery becomes an act of worship. Observation (*naẓar*) leads to remembrance (*dhikr*), and remembrance leads to verification of faith. Thus, Qur'anic discovery integrates external evidence with internal realisation.

Similarly, the Qur'an situates *historical inquiry* as a form of epistemic discovery: “*Travel through the earth and see how He began creation*” (Q. 29:20). The act of “seeing” (*anzuru*) extends beyond the sensory to intellectual perception - a journey toward uncovering divine order within the flux of history.

### 13.3.7 Verification through Revelation (*Wahy*) and Consistency (*Tawfiq*)

While human inquiry discovers, revelation verifies. Revelation (*wahy*) provides the divine framework that confirms what reason and observation uncover. In Surah al-Haqqah (Q. 69:51), the Qur'an declares: “*And indeed, it is the truth of certainty (haqq al-yaqin).*”

This verse signifies the ultimate stage of verification - divine correspondence between human understanding and revealed truth. Revelation thus ensures *tawfiq* - harmony between mind, matter, and meaning.

Revelation corrects the errors of conjecture, limits the arrogance of intellect, and sanctifies the purpose of inquiry. The Qur'an thus positions *wahy* as both the *beginning* and *culmination* of epistemic verification.

### 13.3.8 The Ethics of Verification: Integrity, Justice, and Responsibility

Verification in the Qur'an is not merely intellectual but moral. Truth must be established with justice (*‘adl*) and honesty (*ṣidq*). Surah al-Hujurat (Q. 49:6) provides a foundational epistemic principle: “*O you who believe, if a wrongdoer comes to you with information, verify it (fatabayyanu), lest you harm people in ignorance and become regretful for what you have done.*”

This *fatabayyun* (verification) verse establishes an ethical methodology - critical evaluation, cautious judgment, and fairness in knowledge transmission. It parallels modern principles of peer review and data validation, but with a moral-spiritual foundation.

Knowledge, in the Qur'anic sense, becomes a trust (*amanah*), requiring responsibility in discovery, accuracy in verification, and humility in communication. Ethical integrity is the guarantor of epistemic validity.

### 15.3.9 Qur'anic Verification and the Contemporary Epistemic Crisis

The modern world often separates discovery (science) from verification (ethics). The Qur'an, however, fuses them, ensuring that every cognitive act has moral and spiritual dimensions. It rejects knowledge divorced from responsibility, echoing Surah al-Qaṣaṣ (Q. 28:77): “*Seek through what Allah has given you the home of the Hereafter, and do not forget your share of the world; and do good as Allah has done good to you.*”

Here, epistemic balance (*tawazun*) is commanded - knowledge must serve both worldly and eternal good. The Qur'an thus redefines verification as *ethical coherence* between understanding and application.

### 15.3.10 Conclusion: From Discovery to Certainty through Verification

The Qur'anic logic of discovery and verification completes the cycle of epistemology: faith (*iman*) initiates inquiry, discovery (*kashf*) reveals the signs, verification (*taḥqiq*) confirms the truth, and certainty (*yaqin*) seals the process. Each stage transforms the seeker morally and intellectually, grounding knowledge in divine coherence.

This logic ensures that epistemology remains holistic - balancing intellect and revelation, reason and spirituality, exploration and humility. The Qur'an, as the eternal guide, provides not only the map of discovery but also the criterion of verification, leading humankind toward *ḥaqq al-yaqin* - the Truth of Certainty.

## 15.4 Integration of Faith, Reason, and Revelation in Qur'anic Epistemology

### 15.4.1 The Need for Epistemic Integration

The Qur'an envisions knowledge (*‘ilm*) as a unified, divinely grounded system in which faith (*iman*), reason (*‘aql*), and revelation (*wahy*) operate in harmony. This integration is the essence of Qur'anic epistemology: it dissolves the artificial dichotomy between the sacred and the rational, and between the spiritual and the empirical. Modern epistemologies often separate cognition from morality, or reason from faith. The Qur'an, however, reconstitutes them as complementary dimensions of the same divine reality (*ḥaqq*).

Allah declares: “*Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth*” (Q. 24:35).

This *mur* symbolises both ontological and epistemological illumination: truth itself is divine light, and all forms of knowledge participate in it. Faith, reason, and revelation are not competing sources of truth but interdependent lights converging upon the same reality. The Qur'anic worldview thus embodies what scholars call *tawhīd al-ma'rifah*-the unity of knowledge (Nasr, 2007).

### 15.4.2 Faith (Iman) as Epistemic Grounding

Faith (*iman*) in the Qur'an is not blind belief; it is a cognitive assent to truth rooted in awareness of Allah. It represents the heart's receptivity to divine knowledge. The Qur'an states: "*Those who believe and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah-verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest*" (Q. 13:28).

Faith is the first epistemic response to revelation. It transforms knowledge from external data into internal conviction. Without *iman*, the intellect (*'aql*) operates without purpose or guidance, producing speculation (*ẓann*) instead of certainty (*yaqīn*).

The Qur'an warns against knowledge that is detached from faith: "*They know the outward of the worldly life, but they are heedless of the Hereafter*" (Q. 30:7). Here, the Qur'an distinguishes between *informational knowledge* (data, technique) and *transformational knowledge* (wisdom, *ḥikmah*). Faith converts cognition into meaning, situating knowledge within moral responsibility and divine purpose.

Thus, *Iman* functions as an epistemic orientation-a compass directing human inquiry toward divine truth. It ensures that knowledge is not merely the accumulation of facts but the recognition of ultimate reality (*al-ḥaqq*).

### 15.4.3 Reason ('Aql) as the Faculty of Discernment

The Qur'an repeatedly calls upon humankind to use *'aql*-intellect and discernment. This faculty is portrayed not as an autonomous source of truth but as a divinely entrusted instrument for understanding *ayat* (signs). "*Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of the night and day, are signs for those of understanding (ulu al-albab)*" (Q. 3:190).

Reason in the Qur'an is both empirical and metaphysical. It discerns divine patterns in the natural world while acknowledging that all understanding depends upon divine permission: "*And they will never encompass anything of His knowledge except what He wills*" (Q. 2:255).

Thus, reason operates within the bounds of revelation. The Qur'an criticises those who rely solely on rational speculation: "*They do not know of it; they follow only conjecture, and conjecture avails nothing against the truth*" (Q. 53:28).

True reasoning (*ta'aqqul*) is reflective, not speculative. It engages with divine revelation and the empirical world simultaneously, seeking coherence between the two. Reason becomes an act of worship when it functions in submission (*Islam*) to Allah's order. In this way, *'aql* is the epistemic bridge between *iman* and *wahy*-the faculty that translates belief into understanding and perception into conviction.

#### 15.4.4 Revelation (Wahy) as the Source and Standard of Knowledge

Revelation (*wahy*) is the divine communication that gives knowledge its ultimate foundation. In the Qur’an, revelation is not merely a historical event but an ongoing epistemological principle-it defines the boundary between divine truth and human conjecture. “*And He taught Adam the names-all of them*” (Q. 2:31).

This verse establishes revelation as the *ontological origin* of human knowledge. The act of divine teaching (‘*allama*) signifies that knowledge is not constructed ex nihilo by human intellect but received as *amanah* (trust).

Revelation corrects human misjudgment and safeguards reason from distortion. It provides *furqan*-the criterion by which truth is distinguished from falsehood: “*Blessed is He who sent down the Criterion upon His servant, that he may be to the worlds a warner*” (Q. 25:1).

The Qur’an thus functions as the metacognitive framework of all valid knowledge: it interprets reality, defines epistemic boundaries, and reorients human discovery toward divine purpose. Without revelation, both reason and faith risk falling into imbalance-reason into arrogance, and faith into sentimentality. Therefore, *wahy* is the supreme verification (*tahqiq al-haqq*) that ensures the unity of knowledge remains divine-centred, not ego-centred (Izutsu, 2002).

#### 15.4.5 The Triadic Integration: Iman-‘Aql-Wahy as a Unified Epistemic Cycle

The Qur’an constructs an integrated epistemic cycle where *iman* initiates, ‘*aql* mediates, and *wahy* validates the pursuit of knowledge. Each element functions as a mode of perceiving truth, and together they create *yaqin* (certainty).

- Iman (Faith): the inner recognition of divine truth - the beginning of understanding.
- Aql (Reason): the rational engagement with creation and revelation - the process of discernment.
- Wahy (Revelation): the divine confirmation - the completion of certainty.

This triadic logic reflects the Qur’anic command for holistic knowing: “*So give good news to My servants - those who listen to the word, then follow the best of it; those are the ones whom Allah has guided, and those are the people of understanding*” (Q. 39:17-18).

The *listening* represents faith’s receptivity, *following the best* represents reason’s discernment, and *guidance* represents revelation’s verification. Together, they yield *yaqin* - certainty born of harmony between belief, intellect, and divine instruction.

This triadic unity underpins what al-Attas (1989) calls *adab al-‘ilm* - the proper integration of ethical, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions of knowing. Knowledge is not neutral; it must embody humility, justice, and gratitude.

#### 15.4.6 Integrative Reasoning: Between Empirical Inquiry and Divine Meaning

In the Qur'an, reason and revelation coexist in dynamic tension, not opposition. The Qur'an repeatedly challenges humankind to observe, reflect, and infer from creation - while reminding them that true meaning lies beyond the empirical. *"Do they not look into the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and all things that Allah has created?"* (Q. 7:185).

This verse links empirical observation (*naẓar*) to metaphysical contemplation (*tafakkur*). The Qur'an legitimises empirical discovery but situates it within the metaphysical horizon of divine unity (*tawḥid*).

Therefore, the Qur'anic method does not reject scientific inquiry; rather, it demands its moral and theological grounding. Every act of discovery becomes an act of *dhikr* (remembrance), transforming the pursuit of knowledge into worship.

Modern epistemologies often fragment knowledge into isolated domains - scientific, philosophical, ethical - leading to disconnection between truth and meaning. The Qur'an re-unifies them under *tawḥid*, where knowledge is both rational and sacred, empirical and revelatory, intellectual and moral (Nasr, 2007).

#### 15.4.7 Faith and Reason in Dialogical Harmony

Qur'anic discourse portrays faith and reason not as hierarchical but as dialogical partners. Faith gives direction to reason, while reason gives depth to faith. Both are guided by revelation. *"And those who strive for Us, We will surely guide them to Our ways. Indeed, Allah is with those who do good"* (Q. 29:69).

The verb *jahadu* ("strive") in this verse implies cognitive struggle - the intellectual *jihad* toward understanding divine truth. Guidance (*huda*) follows this striving, indicating that divine assistance perfects rational effort.

Thus, the Qur'an encourages reasoning within the framework of faith - a dynamic interplay of reflection (*tafakkur*), remembrance (*tadhakkur*), and verification (*tahqiq*).

This synthesis creates what Izutsu (2013) calls the "semantic unity of the Qur'anic worldview," where faith and intellect are expressions of a single divine consciousness manifesting through human cognition.

#### 15.4.8 Revelation as the Criterion of Integration

While faith and reason serve as epistemic instruments, revelation remains the *criterion* (*mi'yār*) ensuring their coherence. It prevents faith from degenerating into superstition and reason from sliding into materialism. *"And those who disbelieve say, 'Why has the Qur'an not been revealed to him all at once?' Thus [it is] that We may strengthen thereby your heart; and We have spaced it distinctly"* (Q. 25:32).

The gradual revelation (*tanzil*) illustrates divine pedagogy - knowledge unfolds through time to guide, test, and transform human understanding. Revelation thus acts as a continuous corrective to both intellectual arrogance and spiritual complacency.

The Qur'an also provides an epistemic law of verification: *"If it had been from [any] other than Allah, they would have found within it much contradiction"* (Q. 4:82). This verse elevates internal coherence

(*tawafuq*) as a divine criterion of truth. Revelation thus becomes both epistemic foundation and logical framework, validating human inquiry through its harmony with divine order.

### 15.4.9 Ethical Integration: Knowledge as Responsibility

The synthesis of *iman*, *'aql*, and *wahy* culminates in *'amal* (action). Knowledge that does not translate into ethical responsibility is incomplete. The Qur'an repeatedly equates knowledge with accountability: *"Indeed, those who conceal what We sent down of clear proofs and guidance after We made it clear for the people in the Scripture - those are cursed by Allah"* (Q. 2:159).

Knowledge, therefore, carries *amanah* (trust). The integration of faith, reason, and revelation ensures that this trust is preserved through sincerity (*ikhlas*), justice (*'adl*), and humility (*tawadu*).

Epistemic ethics demand that every discovery be weighed against revelation's moral compass. Rational or scientific pursuits must align with divine justice, compassion, and truth. This integration transforms epistemology into *'ibadah* (worship): a continuous act of realising truth through obedience.

### 15.4.10 Toward a Qur'anic Paradigm of Unified Knowing

The integration of faith, reason, and revelation represents the core of Qur'anic epistemology. Faith anchors the heart, reason refines the intellect, and revelation illuminates both. Together, they form an epistemic unity (*tawhid al-ma'rifah*) that transcends dualism between the sacred and the rational.

This integrated model provides a paradigm for contemporary scholarship, offering an ethical and spiritual foundation for knowledge in an age of fragmentation. The Qur'an redefines epistemology as a journey from belief to understanding, from reflection to verification, and from knowing to being. *"And say, 'My Lord, increase me in knowledge'"* (Q. 20:114). This prayer encapsulates the Qur'anic logic of epistemic growth - humility before divine truth and perpetual striving toward unity of understanding.

Through the harmony of *iman*, *'aql*, and *wahy*, the Qur'an establishes a timeless epistemology that integrates mind, soul, and revelation - restoring knowledge to its divine origin and ethical purpose.

The journey through Part IV has illuminated how the Qur'an constructs an integrated logic of discovery rooted in the unity of faith, knowledge, and action. The cycle of *iman*-*'ilm*-*'amal* in Chapter 13 established the foundation: that knowledge without faith is directionless, and faith without action is incomplete. Chapter 14 advanced this understanding through the three stages of *yaqin* - *'ilm al-yaqin* (knowing through reflection), *'ayn al-yaqin* (seeing through realisation), and *haqq al-yaqin* (being through truth) - demonstrating that certainty in the Qur'an is both epistemic and ontological, a progression from knowing about truth to embodying it (Q. 69:51; Q. 102:7-8). Finally, Chapter 15 synthesised these insights into a unified epistemology, where revelation (*wahy*), reason (*'aql*), and sensory experience (*hiss*) converge in a holistic framework of understanding.

At the heart of this Qur'anic logic lies the conviction that knowledge is a divine trust (*'ilm amanah*) and that human inquiry must be guided by humility, justice, and sincerity. Discovery, therefore, is not the

conquest of nature but participation in the signs of God. Verification (*tahqiq*) in this sense is both intellectual and moral: to verify truth is to align oneself with it in action and intention. The Qur'an's epistemic vision redefines progress as proximity to truth and excellence as moral responsibility.

This synthesis prepares the way for Part V: Reconstruction of Islamic Epistemology in Contemporary Context, where the insights of Qur'anic logic are translated into the language of modern intellectual challenges. The next part will explore how Qur'anic epistemology can reconstruct contemporary paradigms of science, philosophy, and ethics - offering a model of knowledge that is spiritually rooted, rationally rigorous, and ethically transformative.



## PART V: RECONSTRUCTION OF ISLAMIC EPISTEMOLOGY IN CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

The contemporary world faces an epistemological fragmentation: knowledge has been divorced from ethics, inquiry severed from revelation, and truth confined to empiricism. Modernity's intellectual framework, rooted in secular rationalism, has reduced *'ilm* (knowledge) to mere data or technique, neglecting its metaphysical and moral dimensions. Against this backdrop, the Qur'anic epistemology-rooted in the unity of *tawhīd* (توحيد), the trust of *amanah* (أمانة), and the illumination of *mur al-'ilm* (نور العلم)-offers a profound reconstruction of the concept, purpose, and process of knowing. The Qur'an restores meaning to epistemology by reintegrating faith (iman), reason ('aql), and revelation (wahy) into a unified ontological and methodological framework (Nasr, 1989; Al-Attas, 1980).

Part V of this work, *Reconstruction of Islamic Epistemology in Contemporary Context*, seeks to translate the preceding theoretical framework into the language of the modern intellectual crisis. It demonstrates how the Qur'anic model of knowledge, developed through the earlier analysis of faith, certainty, and discovery, can engage with and reform contemporary paradigms of science, philosophy, and ethics. This reconstruction is not an act of nostalgia but an intellectual revival (*ihya' al-fikr al-Islami*) grounded in the enduring universality of divine wisdom (*hikmah*).

The Qur'an presents *'ilm* as a sacred covenant between the knower and the Real (*al-Haqq*), and therefore its reconstruction today must begin by revisiting the insights of classical Islamic thinkers who developed systematic methodologies from revelation-figures like Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Al-Ghazali, and Ibn Rushd. Chapter 16 will thus map how these thinkers preserved Qur'anic principles within diverse philosophical and scientific traditions.

Chapter 17 then contrasts Qur'anic and modern scientific methods, showing that while both value observation and verification, the Qur'an grounds discovery within moral teleology and divine accountability (Q. 2:164; Q. 3:190-191). Chapter 18 moves further into applied methodology, proposing a Qur'an-based framework for contemporary disciplines- from natural and social sciences to the humanities- anchored in ethical and spiritual coherence.

Finally, Chapter 19 culminates in the principle of Tawhīd as the epistemic paradigm-a comprehensive unity that harmonises all knowledge systems under the sovereignty of One Truth. The Qur'an thus transforms epistemology from a study of knowing into a theology of being, making knowledge not an end in itself but a bridge to divine proximity.

This part, therefore, aims to reconstruct the architecture of modern knowledge upon Qur'anic foundations, uniting revelation and reason, ethics and empiricism, intellect and spirit. It is a call for reawakening the Qur'anic vision of knowledge as light, trust, and responsibility.

## Chapter 16: Classical Thinkers and Qur'anic Methodology

The intellectual legacy of Islam's classical thinkers was not a departure from revelation but its unfolding through human reason (‘*aql*, عقل) and reflection (*tafakkur*, تفكر). Their engagement with philosophy, science, and metaphysics was guided by the Qur'an's epistemic imperatives-“Will they not reflect?” (*afala yatafakkarun*, Q. 30:8) and “Will they not use their intellect?” (*afala ta'qilun*, Q. 36:68). These commands established inquiry as an act of worship and discovery as an extension of faith.

The Qur'an, as the first source of knowledge in Islamic civilisation, provided not merely doctrines but a methodology-an integrated framework combining revelation (*wahy*, وحي), reasoning (‘*aql*), and empirical observation (*nazar*, نظر). The earliest Muslim scholars, ranging from philosophers to jurists, scientists to mystics, derived their principles of thought, verification, and ethics from the Qur'an's epistemic model. Their intellectual efforts represent the flowering of a Qur'anic rationality, where reason was employed to comprehend the signs (*ayat*, آيات) of both creation and revelation (Q. 41:53).

This chapter revisits the epistemological foundations laid by classical Muslim thinkers such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Al-Ghazali, and Ibn Rushd, exploring how each integrated Qur'anic principles into their methodologies. Their works demonstrate a continuous dialogue between divine revelation and rational inquiry-an epistemic harmony that challenges modern dichotomies between science and spirituality.

The chapter opens with an examination of the Qur'anic intellectual heritage, tracing the movement from revelation to reason, where the Qur'an itself establishes the principle of intellectual autonomy under divine guidance. It then examines how later thinkers systematised this model into distinct yet complementary schools of thought-philosophical, theological, and mystical-each reflecting the Qur'an's dynamic engagement with reality.

Ultimately, this exploration aims to rediscover the Qur'anic methodology as a living tradition, not a relic of the past. It seeks to show that the classical synthesis of faith and reason was not accidental but the natural expression of a revelation that views knowledge as an act of divine remembrance (*dhikr*, ذكر) and discovery as a journey toward certainty (*yaqin*, يقين).

### 16.1 The Qur'anic Intellectual Heritage: From Revelation to Reason

#### 16.1.1 Revelation as the Source of All Knowledge

The Qur'an presents knowledge (‘*ilm*, علم) as a divine attribute and gift. All forms of knowing originate in *al-Alim* (العليم)-the All-Knowing-who teaches humanity “what they did not know” (*‘allama al-insana malam ya lam*, Q. 96:5). The act of teaching here is ontological: it establishes a relationship between the Creator and the created through *wahy* (revelation), which awakens the intellect to recognise divine signs in the world.

The Qur'an thus grounds epistemology in revelation, not as a constraint but as illumination. Revelation functions as the foundational epistemic act that makes reasoning possible. “*It is He who brought you out of the wombs of your mothers not knowing anything, and He gave you hearing, sight, and hearts so that*

*you might give thanks*” (Q. 16:78). The sensory and rational faculties are divine instruments; they gain coherence only when directed toward truth (*al-ḥaqq*, الحق).

This establishes a hierarchical epistemology: revelation enlightens reason; reason interprets signs; and observation confirms truth. Classical thinkers internalised this triadic relationship as the basis for all intellectual pursuits, ensuring that the exercise of the mind remained subordinate to the moral and spiritual sovereignty of revelation.

### 16.1.2 The Qur'anic Imperative of Reason and Reflection

Unlike static revelationism, the Qur'an commands dynamic thought. Over seventy verses invite believers to ponder, question, and infer. “*Do they not look into the dominion of the heavens and the earth?*” (Q. 7:185). Reason is thus not autonomous, but teleological—it serves the recognition of divine order.

The Qur'an employs several cognitive verbs—*‘aqala* (to reason), *tafakkara* (to reflect), *tadhakkara* (to remember)—each implying movement from perception to comprehension to remembrance. These terms outline a processual epistemology in which the intellect evolves through moral awareness. As Rahman (1980) noted, the Qur'an's rationalism is “existential,” demanding inner transformation alongside external inquiry.

Therefore, the earliest Muslim intellectuals, including Al-Kindī and Al-Farabi, did not see a contradiction between revelation and rational philosophy. To them, reasoning was an act of obedience to God's call for reflection upon His *ayat*, both in scripture and in creation (Q. 3:190).

### 16.1.3 From Revelation to Philosophy: The Rise of Qur'anic Rationality

The transmission of Greek philosophy into the Islamic world during the 8th-10th centuries coincided with a mature Qur'anic intellectual culture. Muslim philosophers did not simply translate Greek thought; they Islamized it by subordinating reason to revelation. Al-Farabi, in his *Kitab al-‘Aql*, emphasised that human reason is perfected when harmonised with the prophetic intellect, which operates under divine illumination. This synthesis reflected the Qur'anic vision that “*above every possessor of knowledge is one more knowing*” (*fawqa kulli dhi ‘ilmin Alim*, Q. 12:76).

Ibn Sina expanded this integration, proposing a metaphysical hierarchy where the *Active Intellect* serves as a medium between the divine source and human understanding. Although his metaphysics employed Aristotelian terminology, the epistemological essence remained Qur'anic: all knowledge flows from the Necessary Being (*wajib al-wujud*), echoing the Qur'anic affirmation that “*Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth*” (Q. 24:35).

These intellectual efforts established an enduring principle: the Qur'an is not anti-rational but trans-rational. It does not negate reason but situates it within the wider horizon of divine meaning.

### 16.1.4 The Ethical Foundation of Knowledge

Every epistemology carries an ethic. The Qur'an binds knowing to moral responsibility: "*Do not pursue that of which you do not know; indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart—all of these will be questioned*" (Q. 17:36). Knowledge divorced from ethics becomes corruption (*fasad*, فساد).

Classical thinkers thus treated knowledge as *amanah* (أمانة), a trust. Al-Ghazali later formalised this Qur'anic view in his theory of *'ilm al-mukashafah* (unveiled knowledge), emphasising that intellectual certainty (*yaqin*) must lead to moral purification. The seed of this idea is Qur'anic: true understanding transforms behaviour, turning the knower into a servant (*'abd*) of truth.

### 16.1.5 Continuity from Revelation to Reason

In tracing the intellectual history from the Qur'an to the classical era, one finds not a rupture but a continuity. Revelation inaugurated inquiry, reason extended it, and philosophy systematised it. Each stage remained faithful to the divine origin of knowledge.

Thus, the Qur'anic intellectual heritage is a movement, not from faith to scepticism, but from understanding faith, from revelation to rationality, and finally, from knowing to being. It is a heritage that continues to challenge the epistemic fragmentation of the modern age.

The Qur'an's call to reason is not a secular invitation but a sacred command. The classical thinkers of Islam fulfilled this command through their creative synthesis of revelation and intellect, forming a civilizational model of epistemic unity. Their legacy stands as testimony that knowledge, when guided by divine revelation, becomes both light (*mur*) and guidance (*huda*), integrating the heart, mind, and cosmos in a single act of knowing.

## 16.2 Al-Farabi and the Harmonisation of Logic and Revelation

Abu Naṣr al-Farabi (872-950 CE), known in both Islamic and Western intellectual traditions as *al-Mu'allim al-Thani* ("the Second Teacher," after Aristotle), occupies a distinctive position in the evolution of Qur'anic epistemology. His intellectual enterprise was not the imitation of Greek philosophy, but rather a disciplined effort to reconcile rational inquiry (*'aql*) with divine revelation (*wahy*), forming a coherent vision of knowledge grounded in the Qur'an's epistemic principles. Al-Farabi's works, such as *Al-Madinah al-Faḍilah* (The Virtuous City) and *Kitab al-'Ilm*, illustrate an epistemological synthesis that aligns the metaphysical truths of revelation with the logical processes of human reason. The Qur'an, which repeatedly calls humanity to *tadabbur* (deep contemplation) and *ta'aqqul* (rational discernment), forms the basis of his intellectual system (Q. 3:191; 8:22; 39:9).

For al-Farabi, the Qur'anic invitation to think- "*Do they not contemplate within themselves?*" (Q. 30:8)- is not a secular rationalism but a sacred obligation to integrate divine knowledge with human intellectual faculties. His harmonisation of logic and revelation reflects a uniquely Qur'anic methodology in which reasoning becomes a path to recognising divine unity (*tawḥid*).

### 16.2.1 Logic (*Mantiq*) as a Qur'anic Discipline of Thinking

Al-Farabi's conception of *mantiq* (logic) was fundamentally ethical and theological. Logic, in his view, is the "instrument" (*alah*) that disciplines thought to align with truth—an orientation consistent with the Qur'anic exhortation to verify claims and to use reason responsibly (Q. 17:36; 49:6). The Qur'an rejects conjecture (*ẓann*) and demands epistemic certainty (*yaqin*), framing logic as a necessary tool for discerning valid knowledge from illusion.

In *Kitab al-Huruf*, al-Farabi describes logic as analogous to grammar for the intellect: just as grammar orders linguistic expression, logic orders reasoning toward truth. The Qur'an similarly emphasizes the structured use of intellect (*'aql*) in approaching divine signs (*ayat*): "*We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth*" (Q. 41:53). This logical order mirrors the Qur'anic sequence of knowledge-observation (*'ilm*), comprehension (*fahm*), and certainty (*yaqin*).

Al-Farabi's logic thus does not replace revelation; rather, it safeguards it from misinterpretation. The Qur'an's repeated warning against "*following without knowledge*" (Q. 17:36) becomes for him the foundation of an ethical rationality; logic is an act of *amanah* (trust) to think rightly about divine truth.

### 16.2.2 Revelation (*Wahy*) as the Source of Ultimate Knowledge

For al-Farabi, revelation represents the highest form of knowledge—*'ilm al-yaqin*—emanating directly from the Divine Source of Being (*al-Haqq*). In this sense, *wahy* functions as the completion of rational inquiry rather than its negation. The Qur'an positions revelation as *mur* (light) that guides human intellect: "*A light and a clear Book have come to you from Allah*" (Q. 5:15).

Al-Farabi interprets this as indicating a dual epistemic axis: revelation illuminates what reason seeks, while reason interprets what revelation reveals. The prophet, in al-Farabi's system, represents the perfection of this harmony—the one in whom divine knowledge and rational comprehension coincide. This vision is firmly rooted in Qur'anic anthropology, where the human intellect (*al-Fu'ad*) is created to comprehend divine signs (Q. 16:78).

Revelation thus sets the ontological boundary for rational knowledge. It defines the parameters of truth that logic can articulate but never generate independently. In Qur'anic epistemology, reason operates *within* revelation, not *outside* it. Al-Farabi's metaphysical realism thereby preserves the divine origin of knowledge while affirming the legitimacy of rational discovery.

### 16.2.3 Harmony Between *'Aql* and *Wahy* in the Qur'anic Framework

The Qur'an does not dichotomise intellect and revelation; rather, it situates them in a dynamic relationship of correspondence. Al-Farabi's epistemology reflects this symmetry. He writes that the perfection of human intellect is achieved when it becomes "aligned with the Active Intellect," a concept he used to describe the illumination of the mind by divine truth. This concept finds Qur'anic resonance in verses that describe knowledge as *mur* bestowed by Allah upon those who seek it sincerely (Q. 24:35; 39:22).

In this structure, revelation becomes the universal constant, while reason serves as the variable human means of interpreting it. The Qur'an's description of the *'aql* as both a faculty of discernment and a moral compass aligns with al-Farabi's vision of an "intellectual virtue." Reasoning becomes an act of servitude (*'ibadah*) when it seeks divine coherence rather than human dominance.

Al-Farabi's harmonisation thus presents a Qur'anic epistemology of equilibrium: revelation initiates knowledge, reason interprets it, and ethics ensures its right use. This triadic harmony-*wahy*, *'aql*, and *akhlaq*-becomes the essence of the virtuous civilisation (*al-Madinah al-Faḍilah*).

#### 16.2.4 The Virtuous City: Knowledge as Collective Illumination

In *Al-Madinah al-Faḍilah*, al-Farabi envisioned society as a reflection of the cosmic order governed by divine wisdom. The virtuous city is founded upon *'ilm al-ḥaqq* (knowledge of truth) and guided by the intellect perfected through revelation. The Qur'an frames this societal model in its command for *ta'awun 'ala al-birr wa al-taqwa* (cooperation in righteousness and piety) (Q. 5:2).

Al-Farabi interprets the ideal ruler as one who embodies both prophetic insight and rational wisdom, mirroring the Qur'anic archetype of *ulu al-albab* (those endowed with intellect) who lead by truth and justice (Q. 3:190-195). The virtuous city thus represents the collective form of Qur'anic epistemology, where truth is both known and lived.

The diffusion of knowledge within this community echoes the Qur'an's command to "*convey with wisdom and good instruction*" (Q. 16:125). Knowledge here is not a possession but a trust (*amanah*), an ethical obligation toward both Creator and creation.

#### 16.2.5 Ethical Dimensions of Al-Farabi's Epistemology

Al-Farabi's epistemology is deeply ethical, paralleling the Qur'an's linkage between knowledge and righteousness. The Qur'an asserts: "*Only those who know fear Allah*" (Q. 35:28), making epistemic awareness inseparable from moral consciousness. For him, *'ilm* without *taqwa* (God-consciousness) degenerates into sophistry; thus, the purpose of knowledge is the perfection of character (*faḍilah*).

The disciplined use of logic becomes a spiritual discipline, guarding thought from arrogance and error. The Qur'an's warning against following vain desires in matters of knowledge (Q. 45:23) underpins his insistence that intellect must remain oriented toward truth, not self-interest. Hence, ethics is not an adjunct but the foundation of intellectual integrity.

#### 16.2.6 The Qur'anic Metaphysics of Truth in Al-Farabi's Thought

At the heart of al-Farabi's system lies the Qur'anic concept of *al-Ḥaqq* (the Truth) as both ontological source and epistemic end. The Qur'an declares: "*That is because Allah is the Truth, and what they call upon besides Him is falsehood*" (Q. 22:62). This metaphysical polarity establishes a dual function of human knowing-to discern *al-ḥaqq* from *al-baṭil* (falsehood).

For al-Farabi, the movement of thought mirrors the divine order: from multiplicity to unity, from confusion to clarity, from opinion to certainty. This ascent corresponds to the Qur'anic hierarchy of knowledge- *'ilm*



*al-yaqin*, *'ayn al-yaqin*, and *ḥaqq al-yaqin* (Q. 102:5-7). Logical reasoning (*burhan*) facilitates the first level of certainty, while revelation completes the final synthesis where knowing becomes being. Thus, his epistemology is a spiritual ascent—a rational pilgrimage toward divine unity (*tawḥid al-ma'rifah*).

### 16.2.7 Relevance for the Reconstruction of Islamic Epistemology

In the context of contemporary epistemological debates, al-Farabi's synthesis offers a model for reintegrating faith and reason under the banner of Qur'anic logic. Modern scientific rationalism often divorces cognition from value and fact from meaning. Al-Farabi's method reaffirms that knowledge without moral or metaphysical orientation is incomplete.

By grounding reason in revelation, he anticipates the Qur'anic view of knowledge as both cognitive and transformative. The integration of *'aql* and *wahy* ensures that knowledge leads to wisdom, not nihilism. His thought thus serves as a precursor for reconstructing Islamic epistemology as a living, ethical, and rational system rooted in divine truth.

Al-Farabi's harmonisation of logic and revelation represents one of the most coherent expressions of Qur'anic epistemology in classical thought. His vision transcends the dichotomy of rationalism and traditionalism by asserting that reason, when purified of ego, becomes an instrument of divine light. The Qur'an remains both the origin and criterion of this knowledge, its source, structure, and end.

In this synthesis, logic becomes the servant of revelation, revelation the illumination of logic, and both converge in the realisation of *al-ḥaqq*. Al-Farabi thereby transforms philosophy into a Qur'anic act of worship—thinking as *dhikr*, reasoning as *'ibadah*, and knowledge as a form of nearness to Allah.

## 16.3 Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and the Metaphysics of Intellect in Qur'anic Light

Among the classical Islamic philosophers, Ibn Sina (980-1037 CE) stands as one of the most profound interpreters of the relationship between intellect (*'aql*), being (*wujud*), and knowledge (*'ilm*). Often regarded as *al-Shaykh al-Ra'is* (the “Master Philosopher”), his epistemological framework is not a mere continuation of Greek rationalism but a deeply reflective transformation of it through the lens of Qur'anic revelation. While Aristotelian and Neoplatonic influences shaped his terminology, Ibn Sina's underlying metaphysical orientation remained distinctly Qur'anic—anchored in the idea that knowledge originates from *al-Ḥaqq* (The Truth) and returns to Him as its ultimate telos.

In Qur'anic discourse, intellect (*'aql*) is not merely a cognitive faculty but an instrument of discernment, guiding human consciousness toward divine realisation (Q. 2:164; 3:191; 51:20-21). Ibn Sina's metaphysics of intellect mirrors this vision: knowledge is an act of being, an illumination (*ishraq*) of the soul by divine light (*mur*). His epistemology—rooted in ontological ascent—finds resonance in the Qur'anic hierarchy of certainty: *'ilm al-yaqin*, *'ayn al-yaqin*, and *ḥaqq al-yaqin* (Q. 102:5-7).

Thus, the Avicennian theory of intellect, when read through the Qur'an, becomes a structured ascent of consciousness from sensory perception to divine unity (*tawḥid al-ma'rifah*).



### 16.3.1 The Ontological Basis of Knowledge: From Existence to Intellect

In Ibn Sina's metaphysical system, *wujud* (existence) precedes and grounds all forms of knowledge. This principle parallels the Qur'anic affirmation: "*Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is, over all things, Disposer of affairs*" (Q. 39:62). Knowledge, therefore, is not a human construct but a participation in the divine act of creation. Every existent thing (*mawjud*) reflects a degree of divine knowledge, as implied by the verse: "*He taught Adam the names of all things*" (Q. 2:31)-an archetype of knowledge as divine disclosure.

For Ibn Sina, to know is to actualise being within the intellect. The *'aql* mirrors existence by receiving the intelligible form (*ṣirah ma 'qulah*) without its material conditions. The Qur'an hints at this cognitive purity in its description of divine creation as *kun fa-yakun* ("*Be, and it is*") (Q. 36:82), where divine knowledge directly manifests as being. Hence, human intellect, in its purest state, imitates divine creativity-it transforms potential understanding into actual insight.

This ontological structure frames epistemology as a journey from multiplicity toward unity, from the dispersion of phenomena to the contemplation of the One. The Qur'an repeatedly draws attention to this unity-in-diversity principle: "*If there had been in them other gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined*" (Q. 21:22). Knowledge, in this metaphysical sense, is the recognition of unity underlying all existence.

### 16.3.2 The Fourfold Structure of Intellect in Qur'anic Perspective

Ibn Sina famously divides the intellect (*'aql*) into four stages: the potential intellect (*'aql bi'l-quwwah*), actual intellect (*'aql bi'l-fi'l*), acquired intellect (*'aql mustafad*), and the Active Intellect (*'aql fa 'al*). Each stage corresponds to a different degree of participation in divine illumination. When interpreted through the Qur'an, these stages form a continuum of epistemic and spiritual elevation.

- Potential Intellect - corresponds to the Qur'anic state of initial ignorance and the call to observation: "*And Allah brought you out of your mothers' wombs knowing nothing, and He made for you hearing and vision and hearts that you might give thanks*" (Q. 16:78). This is the *fitrah* state, where human intellect awaits activation through divine signs (*ayat*).
- Actual Intellect - emerges when reflection upon divine signs begins: "*Do they not look into the dominion of the heavens and the earth?*" (Q. 7:185). Reason becomes operative, interpreting revelation and creation as coherent manifestations of *al-Ḥaqq*.
- Acquired Intellect - represents a higher integration where intellect internalises universal truths, aligning human understanding with divine order. The Qur'an evokes this stage through its praise of *ulu al-albab* (those of sound intellect): "*Those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and reflect upon the creation of the heavens and the earth*" (Q. 3:191).
- Active Intellect - symbolises the illumination of human consciousness by divine light, the moment of *ḥaqq al-yaqin*. This is captured in the verse: "*Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth*" (Q. 24:35). The purified intellect becomes a mirror of divine wisdom, no longer limited by sense or abstraction.

Thus, Ibn Sina's fourfold schema corresponds directly to the Qur'anic stages of knowledge and certainty. It redefines intellect as a dynamic, God-centered process of becoming rather than a static faculty of cognition.

### 16.3.3 Knowledge as Illumination (*Ishraq*) and the Qur'anic Light Metaphor

Central to Ibn Sina's epistemology is the idea that knowledge is not merely representational but illuminative. The human mind, when purified of sensory and egoic obstructions, becomes receptive to divine illumination. The Qur'an's *Ayat al-Mur* ("Verse of Light") forms the metaphysical foundation of this doctrine: "*Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is like a niche within which is a lamp...*" (Q. 24:35).

In this verse, the niche symbolises the human heart (*qalb*), the lamp represents intellect (*'aql*), and the light is divine guidance (*huda*). Ibn Sina's metaphysics of intellect can thus be seen as an exegetical unfolding of this verse. The intellect is not self-sufficient; its luminosity depends entirely on the divine source of truth.

This illumination is both epistemic and ontological-it transforms the knower. As the Qur'an asserts, "*Is one whose heart Allah has opened to Islam, so that he is upon a light from his Lord, like one whose heart is hardened?*" (Q. 39:22). For Ibn Sina, this verse captures the very essence of intellectual purification: true knowledge enlightens being, whereas falsehood darkens it.

### 16.3.4 The Soul and the Ascent of Knowing

Ibn Sina's psychology of knowledge aligns closely with the Qur'anic portrayal of the soul (*nafs*) as a dynamic and ascending reality. The soul moves from the sensory to the intelligible realm through stages of purification. The Qur'an defines these stages as the *nafs ammarah* (commanding soul), *nafs lawwamah* (self-reproaching soul), and *nafs mutma'innah* (tranquil soul) (Q. 12:53; 75:2; 89:27). Though Ibn Sina formulates his theory in philosophical language, the epistemic principle remains the same: knowledge is the ascent of the soul toward its divine origin.

For him, intellectual perfection (*kamal al-'aql*) is identical to spiritual perfection (*kamal al-nafs*). The human soul attains felicity (*sa'adah*) not through the accumulation of data but through contemplative union with truth. This process finds direct Qur'anic validation in the command to "*Read in the name of your Lord who created*" (Q. 96:1). Reading (*iqra'*) here is not mechanical recitation but an epistemic awakening-an unveiling of creation as a text of divine meaning.

Hence, Ibn Sina's metaphysics of intellect transforms knowledge into a sacred journey, an act of returning the intellect to its luminous origin.

### 16.3.5 The Qur'anic Logic of Causality and the Necessary Being

Ibn Sina's proof of the Necessary Existent (*wajib al-wujud*)-often considered the cornerstone of his metaphysics- finds profound harmony with Qur'anic cosmology. The Qur'an affirms: "*Allah is the Creator of everything, and He is, over all things, Disposer*" (Q. 39:62). In this declaration lies the ultimate

causal principle: all contingent beings derive their existence from a necessary source whose being is absolute.

Ibn Sina's argument moves from contingent existence (*mumkin al-wujud*) to the necessary (*wajib al-wujud*), concluding that the latter must be one, indivisible, and self-subsistent. The Qur'an articulates this ontological monotheism in its most concise form: "*Say, He is Allah, One; Allah, the Eternal Refuge*" (Q. 112:1-2).

In Qur'anic epistemology, recognising the Necessary Being is both a rational and moral act-it transforms cognition into submission. The intellect, by realising its dependency upon the Divine, fulfils its purpose as the mirror of *tawhid*.

### 16.3.6 Ethical and Epistemic Responsibility

The Qur'an unites knowledge and moral accountability: "*And do not pursue that of which you do not know. Indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart-about all those [one] will be questioned*" (Q. 17:36). Ibn Sina's epistemology mirrors this ethical structure. For him, knowledge is never neutral; it carries the weight of moral orientation. Intellectual illumination without virtue leads to distortion rather than truth.

Hence, in both his philosophical and medical writings, Ibn Sina emphasises moderation, discipline, and purity of intent. These virtues correspond to the Qur'anic injunctions of sincerity (*ikhlas*) and balance (*mizan*) (Q. 55:7-9). The intellect's ethical discipline ensures that knowledge remains an act of trust (*amanah*) rather than arrogance.

True knowing, therefore, is inseparable from being just and humble. The Qur'an declares, "*Those who have been given knowledge see that what has been revealed to you from your Lord is the truth*" (Q. 34:6). Knowledge in this Qur'anic-Avicennian sense is transformative-shaping both thought and character.

### 16.3.7 The Integration of Rational Inquiry and Revelation

Ibn Sina's synthesis of rational inquiry with revelation does not subordinate one to the other but situates both within a unified hierarchy of truth. Reason (*'aql*) is the tool by which revelation (*wahy*) is understood, and revelation is the light by which reason is guided. The Qur'an's repeated appeal to reason- "*Do they not reflect?*" (Q. 59:21)-establishes a divine mandate for intellectual investigation.

For Ibn Sina, philosophical reflection is itself an act of *dhikr* (remembrance), for it leads the mind to contemplate divine order. His epistemology thus transforms philosophy into a spiritual exercise-a rational *tafsir* of divine creation.

This synthesis anticipates the Qur'anic integration of intellect, faith, and action: "*Those who believe and do righteous deeds-He will guide them by their faith*" (Q. 10:9). Knowledge, in this sense, becomes guidance (*hidayah*), and the intellect becomes a path toward moral and existential illumination.

### 16.3.8 Relevance for Contemporary Reconstruction of Islamic Epistemology

Ibn Sina's metaphysics of intellect, when reclaimed within the Qur'anic framework, provides a timeless model for reconstructing Islamic epistemology. His thought demonstrates that faith and reason are not

rivals but partners in the quest for truth. The Qur'an itself invites humanity to engage in critical reflection while grounding all inquiry in divine purpose (Q. 3:190-191).

In an age where scientific materialism often isolates knowledge from meaning, Ibn Sina's vision restores the sacred unity of knowing and being. Knowledge is neither mere data nor subjective belief-it is participation in divine light. The Qur'an defines this unity succinctly: *"It is only those who know His servants who fear Allah"* (Q. 35:28).

Thus, the Avicennian synthesis, read through the Qur'an, offers a comprehensive epistemology that integrates ontology, ethics, and spirituality-an enduring model for both scholars and seekers.

Ibn Sina's metaphysics of intellect, interpreted through the Qur'an, presents knowledge as a divine illumination that transforms human existence. His framework unites the rational, the ethical, and the spiritual into one coherent act of consciousness. The intellect is not a detached analyser of phenomena but a mirror of divine truth.

Within this Qur'anic horizon, knowledge becomes worship, reason becomes remembrance, and truth becomes being. Ibn Sina's legacy thus exemplifies the Qur'anic command to *"reflect upon the signs of Allah"* (Q. 3:191), where thinking itself is an act of faith, and illumination is the fulfilment of knowing.

## 16.4 Al-Ghazali and the Renewal of Qur'anic Reason

### 16.4.1 The Crisis of Knowledge and the Quest for Certainty

In the long arc of Islamic intellectual history, Abu Ḥamid al-Ghazali (1058-1111 CE) stands as the central figure who sought to reconcile faith and reason under the guidance of revelation. He lived during an era when Greek philosophy, transmitted through translations and commentaries, dominated the intellectual scene of the Muslim world. Thinkers such as al-Farabi and Ibn Sina had attempted to harmonise reason with revelation, but in the process, philosophical rationalism had become detached from the Qur'anic worldview. Al-Ghazali recognised a growing epistemic crisis: while philosophers claimed demonstrative certainty, their system often undermined the immediacy of divine knowledge revealed in the Qur'an. His intellectual mission, therefore, was not merely a rejection of philosophy but a renewal (tajdid) of reason within the boundaries of Qur'anic epistemology.

The Qur'an does not reject rational inquiry; rather, it directs human reason toward recognising divine truth. The repeated injunctions to "reflect" (*yatafakkarun*), "ponder" (*yatadabbarun*), and "understand" (*ya'qilun*) form the epistemic backbone of revelation. Al-Ghazali's project of *iḥyā' al-'aql al-Qur'anic* (renewal of Qur'anic reason) sought to revive this integrated function of intellect (*'aql*) as a spiritual and cognitive faculty. His epistemology was not a negation of philosophy, but its reorientation toward divine-centred knowledge, where certainty (*yaqin*) arises from the illumination (*mur*) bestowed by God, not merely through syllogistic reasoning (Q. 24:35).

### 16.4.2 The Qur'anic Ground of Ghazali's Epistemology

Al-Ghazali's intellectual transformation, from scepticism to certainty, mirrors the Qur'anic epistemic journey itself. He began by doubting sensory and rational knowledge, recognising their fallibility, and ultimately arrived at *yaqin* through divine light (*mur ilahi*). This movement echoes the Qur'anic articulation of knowledge's hierarchy- *'ilm al-yaqin*, *'ayn al-yaqin*, and *ḥaqq al-yaqin* (Q. 102:5-7)-where the culmination of knowing is not discursive but experiential truth.

Al-Ghazali interpreted the Qur'anic verse, “*Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth*” (Q. 24:35), as a metaphor for epistemic illumination. Reason (*'aql*) is a lamp, but revelation (*wahy*) is the light that allows the lamp to illuminate reality. Without revelation, reason remains a tool without direction. He drew from verses such as “*Say: Are those who know equal to those who do not know?*” (Q. 39:9) and “*They have hearts with which they do not understand*” (Q. 7:179) to emphasise that the true seat of knowledge is the purified heart (*qalb*), not intellect alone. This Qur'anic anthropology grounds his epistemology in three faculties:

- The *'aql* (intellect) is the faculty of rational comprehension.
- The *qalb* (heart) is the locus of spiritual insight.
- The *ruh* (spirit) is the source of divine illumination.

In this synthesis, knowledge (*'ilm*) is the unfolding of divine truth within the human microcosm, not merely a product of human cognition. Al-Ghazali's renewal of Qur'anic reason thus affirmed that knowledge must be both rationally verified and spiritually illuminated -an insight rooted deeply in verses such as Qur'an 8:29, “*If you fear Allah, He will grant you a criterion (furqan)*”, meaning the discernment that integrates intellect with divine guidance.

### 16.4.3 Reason as Servant of Revelation

Contrary to later misunderstandings, Al-Ghazali did not oppose reason; he sought to restore its servanthood to revelation. The Qur'an itself recognises the *'aql* as a divine gift (Q. 2:73, Q. 3:190-191). However, when reason becomes autonomous and detached from revelation, it turns into a tool of arrogance rather than illumination (Q. 45:23).

In *Tahafut al-Falasifah* (“The Incoherence of the Philosophers”), Al-Ghazali critiqued philosophers like Ibn Sina not for reasoning, but for misusing reasoning beyond its divine boundaries. He challenged twenty philosophical propositions, declaring three as heretical: the eternity of the world, denial of divine knowledge of particulars, and rejection of bodily resurrection-all of which contradicted the Qur'an (Q. 7:54; Q. 6:59; Q. 23:15-16).

For Al-Ghazali, rational inquiry must remain within the ontological structure set by revelation. He was guided by verses such as “*And do not pursue that of which you do not know*” (Q. 17:36) and “*They do not know of it; they only follow conjecture*” (Q. 4:157). Knowledge without divine grounding leads to conjecture (*ẓann*), whereas true knowledge (*'ilm*) leads to certainty (*yaqin*).

This position redefines rationalism as Qur'anic rationality-reason disciplined by revelation and directed toward the remembrance of God (*dhikr Allah*). In this sense, Al-Ghazali reinterpreted logic (*manṭiq*) not as a foreign discipline but as a neutral tool that must operate within the parameters of revealed truth. The intellect, like the eye, needs both inner capacity and external light to see. Revelation provides that light.

#### 16.4.4 The Journey from Doubt to Certainty

In his autobiographical work *al-Munqidh min al-Dalal* ("Deliverance from Error"), Al-Ghazali recounts his intellectual struggle-a Qur'anic narrative of epistemic awakening. His journey parallels the Qur'anic story of Abraham (Ibrahim), who sought certainty through observation and reflection (Q. 6:75-79). Like Abraham, Al-Ghazali questioned the reliability of senses and intellect until divine illumination restored him to certainty.

He concluded that sensory knowledge is limited to appearances, rational knowledge to abstractions, but divine knowledge transcends both. The Qur'an affirms: "*He taught you that which you knew not*" (Q. 4:113). True knowledge, therefore, is bestowed (*'ilm ladunni*), not manufactured.

This realisation transformed his epistemology: *'aql* without *mur* remains speculative; *mur* without *'aql* becomes unstructured mysticism. Certainty (*yaqin*) emerges when divine illumination fuses with rational comprehension-a state the Qur'an calls *ḥaqq al-yaqin* (Q. 56:95).

Thus, Al-Ghazali's renewal of reason was a theocentric epistemology that mirrored the Qur'an's internal hierarchy of knowledge. He demonstrated that the perfection of reason lies not in rejecting revelation but in realising that reason itself is a divine trust (*amanah*, Q. 33:72).

#### 16.4.5 Knowledge and the Purification of the Heart

Al-Ghazali's epistemic structure culminates in the purification of the heart (*tazkiyat al-qalb*), echoing Qur'anic anthropology. The Qur'an warns, "*Truly, it is not the eyes that are blind, but the hearts within the breasts that are blind*" (Q. 22:46). Knowledge divorced from moral and spiritual purification leads to arrogance (*istikbar*, Q. 2:34).

He identified the heart as the mirror of divine truth. When clouded by desires (*hawa*) and heedlessness (*ghaflah*), it distorts perception. But when polished through remembrance (*dhikr*) and reflection (*tafakkur*), it reflects divine light. This resonates with the verse, "*Whomever Allah wills to guide, He expands his breast to Islam*" (Q. 6:125).

In *Iḥyā' 'Ulum al-Din*, Al-Ghazali reorganised human knowledge according to Qur'anic values: knowledge that draws one nearer to God is sacred (*'ilm nafi*), while that which inflates the ego is sterile (*'ilm ghayr nafi*). This distinction is not mystical subjectivity; it represents the Qur'an's ethical epistemology, where truth must translate into moral action (*'amal ṣaliḥ*, Q. 103:3).



### 16.4.6 The Renewal (Tajdid) of Qur'anic Reason

The renewal Al-Ghazali envisioned was not a rejection of intellectual sciences but their reintegration into the Qur'anic framework. He argued that philosophy (*falsafah*), theology (*kalam*), and law (*fiqh*) must all serve the ultimate goal of *ma'rifah Allah*, knowledge of God. The Qur'an proclaims: “*And they will not encompass anything of His knowledge except what He wills*” (Q. 2:255). This defines the boundary of all human inquiry.

By grounding epistemology in divine sovereignty, Al-Ghazali established an ethics of knowledge: knowing is worship when oriented toward divine pleasure, and transgression when driven by pride. He saw this as the heart of Qur'anic reason—an integration of intellect, revelation, and humility.

His legacy thus represents not the end of Islamic philosophy but its reformation in light of revelation. Later thinkers, including Fakhr al-Din al-Razi and Mulla Şadra, inherited this synthesis, developing it into a holistic framework where logic, metaphysics, and spirituality converge around the Qur'anic concept of *tawhīd*—the unity of all knowledge under divine truth.

### 16.4.7 Conclusion: Ghazali's Lasting Epistemic Vision

Al-Ghazali's contribution to Qur'anic epistemology lies in restoring balance: between reason and revelation, intellect and heart, inquiry and humility. He demonstrated that reason reaches perfection only when illuminated by divine guidance, and revelation manifests fully only when understood by a purified intellect. His epistemology thus remains profoundly Qur'anic:

- Knowledge ( *ilm*) is both a gift and a responsibility.
- Reason ( *aql*) must be disciplined by revelation (*wahy*).
- Certainty (*yaqin*) is the culmination of both rational reflection and divine illumination.

In this sense, Al-Ghazali's renewal of Qur'anic reason reasserted the unity of faith and knowledge as a living epistemic process. The Qur'an's command, “*Say: My Lord, increase me in knowledge*” (Q. 20:114), embodies his lifelong pursuit—a continuous ascent from knowing to being, from intellect to light.

## 16.5 Ibn Rushd (Averroes) and the Rational Defence of Revelation

### 16.5.1 Restoring Balance Between Faith and Philosophy

In the intellectual history of Islam, Ibn Rushd (Averroes, 1126-1198 CE) represents the final classical attempt to reconcile reason ( *aql*) and revelation (*wahy*) within a coherent epistemological structure. While his predecessors—al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and al-Ghazali—had explored the boundaries of philosophy and faith, Ibn Rushd's mission was to restore equilibrium. He sought neither to subjugate revelation to philosophy nor to abandon rational inquiry to fideism. Rather, he aimed to demonstrate that authentic reasoning and true revelation are ultimately harmonious, both originating from the same divine source.

The Qur'an itself provides the foundation for this epistemic harmony. It repeatedly calls believers to reflect on the signs (*ayat*) of God in creation: “*We will show them Our signs in the horizons and in themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the Truth*” (Q. 41:53).



For Ibn Rushd, this verse signified that empirical investigation and rational contemplation are not opposites of revelation but means of actualising it. Revelation invites rational understanding, and reason, when purified, leads back to revelation. His intellectual project-most clearly articulated in *Faṣl al-Maqal* (The Decisive Treatise)-was thus a rational defence of revelation, grounded in the epistemic unity of truth (*tawḥid al-ḥaqq*).

### 16.5.2 The Qur'anic Mandate for Rational Inquiry

Ibn Rushd began his epistemological inquiry by asserting that reason is a divine obligation for those capable of its use. He based this on verses commanding reflection (*tafakkur*), comprehension (*ta'aqqul*), and verification (*tabayyun*): “Do they not reflect upon themselves?” (Q. 30:8); “Do they not consider the creation of the heavens and the earth?” (Q. 3:191); “Do they not then ponder on the Qur'an?” (Q. 4:82).

For Ibn Rushd, these verses established the Qur'anic principle that rational investigation is not merely permissible but mandatory (*fard kifayah*) for those qualified. He argued that if the Qur'an commands reflection upon creation, then engaging in demonstrative reasoning (*burhan*) is a form of obedience to divine revelation, not rebellion against it (Ibn Rushd, 1998).

He wrote: “Since the Law (Shari'ah) calls upon man to reflect upon beings, and reflection leads to knowledge of their Creator, it is clear that the study of beings by demonstration is obligatory.” This reasoning corresponds with the Qur'an's structure of knowledge-linking *'ilm* (knowledge), *yaqin* (certainty), and *iman* (faith). Thus, *'aql* is not an external instrument but a Qur'anic imperative, designed to uncover divine wisdom within creation (Q. 67:3-4).

### 16.5.3 Revelation and Reason as Complementary Pathways

At the heart of Ibn Rushd's epistemology lies his conviction that revelation and reason, when properly understood, cannot contradict each other. He grounded this principle in the verse: “If it had been from other than Allah, they would have found within it much contradiction” (Q. 4:82).

Since the Qur'an invites reasoning, and both revelation and intellect originate from the same Creator, any perceived contradiction must arise from human misinterpretation, not from the sources themselves. Ibn Rushd categorised people into three epistemic groups, echoing Qur'anic psychological diversity (Q. 2:2-3; Q. 9:124):

- The Demonstrative (al-burhaniyyun): those capable of rational proof.
- The Dialectical (al-jadaliyyun): those who reason through persuasion.
- The Rhetorical (al-khaṭabiyyun): those who are guided through imagery and moral exhortation.

Each group accesses truth according to its cognitive capacity, just as the Qur'an communicates on multiple levels, universal yet graded. Revelation provides truth for all, while reason refines its comprehension. Ibn Rushd therefore interpreted Qur'anic knowledge as multi-layered but unified, ensuring that no level of understanding invalidates another (Q. 39:9).

### 16.5.4 The Qur'anic Structure of Demonstration (Burhan)

In *Faṣl al-Maqal* and *Tahafut al-Tahafut* ("The Incoherence of the Incoherence"), Ibn Rushd reformulated Aristotelian logic in light of Qur'anic epistemology. He maintained that demonstrative reasoning (*burhan*)-reasoning from evident premises to necessary conclusions-reflects the Qur'anic method of verification (*taḥqiq*).

The Qur'an often appeals to evidence from nature and history: "*Have they not travelled through the earth and observed how was the end of those before them?*" (Q. 30:9); "*Do they not look at the camels, how they are created?*" (Q. 88:17).

For Ibn Rushd, these verses represent empirical and rational commands. Demonstration is not a foreign Greek import but the systematic expression of Qur'anic reasoning. Revelation appeals to observation, reflection, and inference-the same principles that structure scientific and philosophical reasoning.

He warned, however, that demonstrative reasoning must remain subordinate to the truth of revelation. When reasoning appears to contradict scripture, he advised reinterpretation (*ta'wil*) of the text in a manner consistent with both logic and faith, echoing Qur'an 3:7: "*He it is who has sent down to you the Book, some of its verses are clear (muḥkamat)... and others are allegorical (mutashabihat).*"

Thus, Ibn Rushd defended a Qur'anic hermeneutic rationalism, where reason clarifies revelation's meanings without diminishing its divine origin.

### 16.5.5 Knowledge, Science, and Divine Purpose

Ibn Rushd's rationalism was not secular but teleologically anchored in divine purpose. He interpreted the study of nature as a form of worship, since understanding creation leads to greater awe of the Creator (Q. 35:28): "*Indeed, only those fear Allah, among His servants, who know.*"

This verse, for Ibn Rushd, implies that scientific knowledge (*ilm al-kawn*) and divine knowledge (*ilm al-wahy*) share the same end: recognising God's unity (*tawḥid*). Hence, empirical inquiry is not opposed to revelation but completes it.

He argued that neglecting reason would mean failing to respond to the Qur'an's repeated call to investigate reality. Revelation, he asserted, provides ultimate meanings, while science provides proximate causes. The Qur'an's invitation to explore creation-"*Travel through the earth and see how He began creation*" (Q. 29:20)-demands a rational engagement with the world as a mirror of divine wisdom.

Ibn Rushd's epistemology thus offered a cosmic Qur'anic rationality, where all existence participates in the act of divine self-disclosure (*tajalli*). This framework anticipates later philosophical notions of unity of being (*wahdat al-wujud*), but in Ibn Rushd's case, it remains rationally structured and theologically grounded.

### 16.5.6 Refutation of Epistemic Dualism

In his critique of al-Ghazali, Ibn Rushd's goal was not antagonistic but corrective. He accused theologians of fostering epistemic dualism, dividing truth into separate domains of reason and revelation. For him,

this separation violates the Qur'anic concept of unity (*tawhīd*). The Qur'an declares: "*He created everything and determined it with due proportion*" (Q. 25:2).

This verse, Ibn Rushd argued, implies the rational intelligibility of all creation. If creation reflects divine order, then rational comprehension of that order is a form of piety. Thus, he regarded philosophical reasoning as an extension of Qur'anic reflection, not a deviation from it.

His debate with al-Ghazali on the eternity of the world, divine knowledge, and resurrection should therefore be read not as a denial of revelation but as an attempt to defend revelation through rational coherence. Where al-Ghazali feared rational overreach, Ibn Rushd feared irrational retreat. Both sought certainty, but through different epistemic pathways -each ultimately Qur'an-oriented.

### 16.5.7 Ethics of Knowledge and Intellectual Responsibility

Ibn Rushd also articulated an ethics of knowledge, closely tied to the Qur'an's moral framework. He emphasised that rational inquiry must serve the public good (*maṣlaḥah*) and uphold divine justice (*ʿadl*). The Qur'an condemns those who "*argue about Allah without knowledge*" (Q. 22:8) but praises those who "*speak truth and act righteously*" (Q. 33:70).

For Ibn Rushd, knowledge divorced from ethical purpose becomes sterile. The rational pursuit of truth is a moral act when directed toward human flourishing and recognition of divine unity. His intellectual humility before revelation reflects Q. 17:36: "*Do not pursue that of which you do not know.*"

This ethical rationalism grounds his idea that the philosopher and the believer are not adversaries but partners in unveiling divine wisdom. Philosophy, purified by revelation, becomes the handmaiden of faith, guiding humanity toward balance and justice in thought and action.

### 16.5.8 Qur'anic Rationalism and Contemporary Resonance

Ibn Rushd's rational defence of revelation remains profoundly relevant today. His epistemology offers a model for reconciling modern science with divine revelation without succumbing to reductionism or scepticism. By affirming that both reason and revelation originate from one divine source, he provides a unified epistemic paradigm capable of integrating empirical knowledge, ethical awareness, and metaphysical insight.

In modern terms, Ibn Rushd's approach anticipates a Qur'anic philosophy of science, where empirical investigation is not secular autonomy but an act of worshipful reflection (*tafakkur*). His insistence on demonstration, verification, and ethical application mirrors the Qur'an's call to combine *ʿilm* (knowledge), *ʿaql* (reason), and *iman* (faith) as inseparable dimensions of truth.

The Qur'anic vision he defended transcends both theological dogmatism and philosophical arrogance, asserting that truth (*ḥaqq*) is one, though its paths are many. The divine unity of truth guarantees that all genuine knowledge, whether derived from revelation or reflection, ultimately converges in the recognition of God's wisdom.

### 16.5.9 Conclusion: Ibn Rushd's Legacy in Qur'anic Epistemology

Ibn Rushd's intellectual mission was not to Hellenize Islam but to Islamize rationality-to show that reason itself is a divine trust and that revelation invites its fullest exercise. His *Faṣl al-Maqal* is, in essence, a manifesto of Qur'anic rationalism: a call to recover the intellect's sacred role within divine order.

He restored to Islamic epistemology the principle that *ʿaql* and *wahy* are cooperating lights, not competing authorities. This harmony reflects the Qur'anic unity of *ʿilm*, *iman*, and *ʿamal*, integrating knowledge, faith, and action into a single continuum of meaning.

In defending revelation through rational demonstration, Ibn Rushd reaffirmed the Qur'anic axiom that truth cannot contradict truth (Q. 4:82). His legacy endures as a luminous reminder that the highest function of reason is not to replace revelation but to recognise its truth, affirm its wisdom, and unfold its meanings for humanity.

Thus, Ibn Rushd stands as the final classical exemplar of the Qur'anic philosopher -one who thinks with reason, sees with revelation, and lives with certainty.

## 16.6 The Qur'anic Legacy of Classical Epistemology

The classical Islamic intellectual tradition, while characterised by remarkable philosophical diversity, ultimately converges upon one unified epistemological foundation-the Qur'an. Despite differences in metaphysical emphasis, methodological strategy, or rational scope, thinkers such as al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, al-Ghazali, and Ibn Rushd represent diverse yet complementary articulations of a single truth: that all authentic knowledge (*ʿilm*) must be rooted in the divine origin of truth (*al-Haqq*). This chapter synthesises their intellectual contributions into a Qur'an-based epistemic legacy, demonstrating how the harmony between reason (*ʿaql*), intuition (*wijdan*), and revelation (*wahy*) establishes a unified model of knowledge.

In the Qur'an, truth (*haqq*) is not a philosophical abstraction but a living reality- "*We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the Truth*" (Q. 41:53). Each of these classical scholars, in his own way, sought to interpret and rationalise this divine principle. Their collective work thus embodies a living continuity of Qur'anic thought, where philosophy becomes *tafakkur* (reflection), metaphysics becomes *taʿaqqul* (intellectual discernment), and theology becomes *tadhakkur* (remembrance).

### 16.6.1 From Revelation to Reason: The Continuum of Knowledge

The synthesis begins with al-Farabi, who established the foundational link between logic and revelation by grounding rational inquiry in the cosmological order expressed in divine speech. For al-Farabi, the intellect (*ʿaql*) is not autonomous but reflective of the universal Reason (*ʿaql al-faʿʿal*)-an idea that echoes the Qur'anic statement: "*He taught man that which he did not know*" (Q. 96:5). Thus, knowledge originates in divine instruction, not sensory perception alone.

In contrast to continuity, Ibn Sina deepened this framework by integrating metaphysical vision into the process of knowing. For him, intellectual ascent from potentiality to actuality mirrors the Qur'anic

paradigm of light- “*Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth*” (Q. 24:35). Knowledge, therefore, is not merely rational deduction but illumination of the intellect through divine light.

Al-Ghazali reconstructed this rationalist trajectory by returning reason to its spiritual telos. His reorientation of intellect (‘*aql*) within the context of revelation aligns with “*Those who remember Allah standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth...*” (Q. 3:191). Here, reflection (*tafakkur*) is the bridge between cognition and devotion, between epistemology and worship.

Finally, Ibn Rushd brought balance to this intellectual tradition by demonstrating that rational inquiry itself is a divine act of worship when properly guided by revelation. His interpretation of “*Do they not reflect upon the Qur'an?*” (Q. 4:82) encapsulates the harmony between revelation and philosophy-their unity is epistemic, not oppositional.

Together, these thinkers form a Qur'anic continuum: revelation initiates knowledge, reason unfolds it, intuition completes it, and ethical consciousness anchors it.

### 16.6.2 The Qur'anic Paradigm of Integration: ‘Aql, ‘Ilm, and Iman

At the core of their collective thought is the Qur'anic triad of ‘*aql* (reason), ‘*ilm* (knowledge), and *iman* (faith). This triad represents the holistic structure of knowing in the Qur'an. For al-Farabi, logic provides the grammar of thought; for Ibn Sina, intellect represents the inner capacity to transcend empirical limits; for al-Ghazali, reason serves the heart (*qalb*) in its quest for divine proximity; and for Ibn Rushd, rational analysis fulfils the Qur'anic command to reflect.

The Qur'an integrates these faculties in one epistemic ecosystem: “*And He gave you hearing, sight, and hearts that you might give thanks*” (Q. 16:78).

Each faculty-hearing, sight, and heart- corresponds to stages of epistemic perception: empirical observation, rational reflection, and spiritual discernment. Classical thinkers, despite divergent methods, all internalised this Qur'anic architecture. They demonstrated that the perfection of knowledge lies not in multiplicity but in *tawhīd*, the unification of all modes of knowing under the sovereignty of divine truth.

### 16.6.3 From Rationalism to Illumination: A Qur'anic Metaphysics of Knowing

Within the classical legacy, the movement from discursive rationality to intuitive illumination reflects the Qur'anic ascent from ‘*ilm al-yaqin* (knowledge of certainty) to *ḥaqq al-yaqin* (truth of certainty) (Q. 102:5-7). Al-Farabi's logical harmonisation corresponds to ‘*ilm al-yaqin*, where knowledge arises through structured reasoning. Ibn Sina's metaphysical insight resonates with ‘*ayn al-yaqin* -the vision of certainty-where intellectual perception transforms into intuitive realisation. Al-Ghazali's synthesis of intellect and spirituality represents *ḥaqq al-yaqin*, the stage where truth becomes an existential reality, and Ibn Rushd's rational defence of revelation ensures that this certainty remains grounded in divine unity.

This progression forms a Qur'anic model of intellectual ascension, integrating reasoning (*nazar*), contemplation (*fikr*), and witnessing (*shuhud*). The intellect (*'aql*) is not merely analytical, but participatory-it participates in divine self-disclosure (*tajalli*). Thus, every authentic act of knowing becomes an act of witnessing truth, a reflection of the verse: “*And do not follow that of which you do not know; indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart-about all those [one] will be questioned*” (Q. 17:36).

#### 16.6.4 The Unity of Method: Qur'anic Rationality and Philosophical Inquiry

The classical philosophers established that Qur'anic rationality is not opposed to philosophy but transforms it. In the Qur'an, reason (*'aql*) functions as a means of verifying truth, not inventing it: “*Will they not then use reason?*” (Q. 36:62). Al-Farabi's logical structures, Ibn Sina's metaphysical system, al-Ghazali's spiritual epistemology, and Ibn Rushd's rational hermeneutics all unfold this command within distinct intellectual languages.

Their methodologies differ, but their purpose converges: to reconstruct the world of meaning within the limits of revelation. In this synthesis, philosophy becomes the *methodological language* of the Qur'an, while revelation provides the *semantic horizon* within which all reason operates. The Qur'an commands rational analysis not as an end in itself but as a path to moral and spiritual transformation. Therefore, “*Only those fear Allah among His servants who know*” (Q. 35:28) underscores the ethical dimension of epistemology: knowledge entails responsibility.

#### 16.6.5 Ethical and Ontological Implications of the Classical Legacy

In the classical synthesis, epistemology and ethics are inseparable. The purpose of knowing is not to dominate but to serve, not to control but to comprehend. Knowledge (*'ilm*) leads to humility, as the Qur'an declares: “*Above every possessor of knowledge is one more knowing*” (Q. 12:76).

Al-Farabi envisioned the virtuous city (*al-Madinah al-Fadilah*) as the epistemic manifestation of collective harmony between intellect and revelation. Ibn Sina internalised this in the soul's ascent toward the Active Intellect. Al-Ghazali extended it into spiritual purification (*tazkiyah*), while Ibn Rushd transformed it into intellectual integrity (*'adalah al-'aql*). All four paths converge upon a Qur'anic anthropology of knowledge-human beings as stewards of divine meaning: “*He taught Adam the names-all of them*” (Q. 2:31).

Thus, the ultimate purpose of knowledge in the Qur'anic vision-and in its classical articulation-is the realisation of truth through ethical transformation. The scholar, philosopher, or scientist becomes a mirror of divine wisdom, not its owner.

#### 16.6.6 The Qur'anic Legacy: A Living Epistemology

The intellectual synthesis of these classical thinkers transcends history. It provides a framework for contemporary epistemology in which rational inquiry, metaphysical depth, and moral awareness coexist under divine unity. The Qur'an offers not only the principles of truth but also the ethics of its pursuit: “*Say: My Lord has commanded justice; and that you set your faces upright in every place of worship and call upon Him, making your religion pure for Him*” (Q. 7:29).



This verse, as a meta-epistemic declaration, affirms that knowing (*ma 'rifah*) is inseparable from worship (*'ibadah*), reflection from devotion, and truth from justice.

The Qur'anic legacy of classical epistemology thus establishes a living dialogue between past and present, between the rational architecture of philosophy and the divine horizon of revelation. It reminds modern scholarship that intellectual autonomy without divine orientation degenerates into epistemic arrogance, while faith without reflection collapses into dogmatism. The Qur'an resolves this dichotomy by establishing knowledge as a divine trust (*amanah*)-to know is to bear responsibility.

### 16.6.7 The Unity of the Classical and the Qur'anic Mind

The synthesis of al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, al-Ghazali, and Ibn Rushd within a Qur'anic framework reveals an epistemic unity that transcends disciplinary boundaries. Their thought, though historically situated, constitutes a continuous Qur'anic dialogue on the nature of knowledge, certainty, and truth.

This synthesis reaffirms that the Qur'an is both the origin and horizon of all valid epistemology. It establishes a model of knowing that is integrative, linking reflection (*tafakkur*), verification (*tahqiq*), and moral transformation (*tazkiyah*). In this holistic vision, revelation illuminates reason, reason refines understanding, and understanding culminates in worship.

Therefore, the legacy of classical epistemology is not merely historical-it is eschatological, pointing toward the ultimate realization of truth: “*That is the true certainty (ḥaqq al-yaqin)*” (Q. 69:51). In this final synthesis, Qur'anic epistemology emerges not as a philosophy among philosophies, but as a theomorphic science of being, uniting thought, faith, and existence under the eternal principle of *tawḥid*.



## Chapter 17: Qur'anic vs. Modern Scientific Method

The encounter between Qur'anic epistemology and modern scientific methodology is not a confrontation between faith and reason but a dialogue between two modes of knowing, one rooted in divine revelation, the other in empirical observation. The Qur'an presents knowledge (*'ilm*) as an integrated act of consciousness that unites intellect (*'aql*), intuition (*wijdan*), and revelation (*wahy*), whereas modern science, emerging from post-Enlightenment rationalism, confines knowledge largely to measurable, quantifiable, and falsifiable phenomena (Nasr, 2007).

Yet, the Qur'an does not reject empirical observation; it commands it: "*Do they not look into the dominion of the heavens and the earth?*" (Q. 7:185). What it rejects is epistemic reductionism-the assumption that only the visible is real or that truth can be derived solely from human perception. In the Qur'anic worldview, the universe (*al-'alam*) is a set of signs (*ayat*) pointing to an unseen order (*al-ghayb*) that is ontologically prior and epistemically foundational (Q. 2:3, 41:53).

Thus, while the modern scientific method begins with doubt and seeks certainty through verification, the Qur'anic method begins with divine certainty (*yaqin*) and seeks deeper understanding through reflection (*tafakkur*). The difference is not anti-scientific-it is ontological and teleological. This chapter reconstructs that difference to demonstrate that Qur'anic epistemology provides a more holistic, ethically grounded, and purpose-oriented vision of scientific inquiry.

### 17.1 The Ontological Foundations of Knowledge

#### 17.1.1 Reframing Ontology in Qur'anic Epistemology

The ontological question of knowledge: *what is the nature of knowing and what is its being?* - stands at the heart of all epistemological inquiry. In the Qur'an, knowledge (*'ilm*) is not treated as a mere cognitive possession or abstract category; rather, it is an existential reality that binds the human being (*insan*) to divine truth (*al-haqq*). The Qur'an consistently portrays knowledge as a form of ontological illumination, where knowing is an act of being - the realization of the human soul's alignment with divine order (Q. 24:35). This is distinct from the dominant modern scientific ontology, which situates knowledge within a material and empirical framework, perceiving reality as measurable, testable, and detached from metaphysical significance (Nasr, 1989).

In the Qur'anic worldview, ontology and epistemology are inseparable: to know is to exist correctly, and to exist correctly is to perceive truth in its divine correspondence. The Qur'an situates *'ilm* within an ontological hierarchy - from sensory apprehension (*sam', basar*), to intellectual reflection (*'aql*), to spiritual realisation (*qalb*). This multi-layered ontology of knowing contrasts with the reductionist structure of modern empiricism, where the knower is defined primarily as a rational observer of the material world rather than a moral and spiritual participant in divine creation (Chittick, 2007).

Hence, the ontological foundation of Qur'anic knowledge rests on three pillars: divine reality as the ultimate source of truth, the human being as the conscious receiver and interpreter, and the cosmos as the

revelatory field of signs (*ayat*). Together, these pillars establish an integrated epistemic structure that unites being, knowing, and meaning - a structure that modern science often fragments by separating the metaphysical from the empirical.

### 17.1.2 Divine Reality as the Ontological Source of Knowledge

In the Qur'an, all knowledge originates from God (*Allah*) as the Absolute Knower (*Alim*). The ontological foundation of *'ilm* thus rests upon divine omniscience: "*He taught man what he did not know*" (Q. 96:5).

This verse establishes a direct metaphysical relation between divine revelation (*talim*) and human cognition. The act of knowing, according to the Qur'an, is not autonomous; it is an unfolding of divine generosity and creative energy within human consciousness. The ontological structure of reality itself is sustained by divine knowledge: "*With Him are the keys of the unseen; none knows them except Him*" (Q. 6:59).

This divine exclusivity of absolute knowledge implies that all human inquiry is participatory - derivative rather than original. The Qur'an emphasises that the cosmos is constructed as an intelligible system of signs that reflect divine intentionality: "*We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the Truth*" (Q. 41:53).

Thus, knowledge is not merely *about* reality but *of* reality as a revelation of divine truth. The human act of knowing becomes a process of uncovering divine meaning through engagement with the *ayat*, both cosmic and scriptural.

In contrast, modern scientific ontology reduces reality to physical processes devoid of inherent purpose. It operates on the principle of material causation rather than divine intentionality. The Qur'an, however, unites cause and meaning: every phenomenon is both a physical event and a metaphysical disclosure. Therefore, ontology in the Qur'anic sense is simultaneously cosmological, epistemological, and theological. To know reality correctly is to perceive it as divinely sustained and purposefully ordered.

### 17.1.3 The Human Being as Ontological Knower

The Qur'an describes the human being as the most honoured creation because of his cognitive and moral faculties: "*And He taught Adam the names of all things*" (Q. 2:31).

This verse encapsulates the ontological dignity of human knowledge. The act of naming - representing and categorising - symbolises the human capacity to understand and interpret the divine order. In Qur'anic ontology, this capacity is both a gift and a responsibility; knowledge is an amanah (trust), and misusing it leads to ontological corruption (Q. 33:72).

Unlike the Cartesian dualism that separates mind and matter, the Qur'an presents a holistic anthropology: the *nafs* (self), *'aql* (reason), *qalb* (heart), *sam'* (hearing), and *basar* (sight) form an integrated system of knowing. These faculties operate not in isolation but in harmony, grounded in moral accountability (Q.

17:36). Knowledge, therefore, is not an act of disembodied intellect but an existential engagement with divine order through the totality of the self.

The human knower in the Qur'an is simultaneously rational, ethical, and spiritual. Rational inquiry (*ta'aqqul*) must lead to remembrance (*dhikr*), and remembrance must yield moral transformation (*'amal ṣalīh*). The purpose of knowledge is not domination or exploitation of nature but recognition of divine signs and fulfilment of the covenant of stewardship (*khilafah*). Ontologically, then, the knower is not external to reality but embedded within it as an interpreter of divine meaning.

This stands in sharp contrast to the modern scientific model, in which the knower is detached from the known. Objectivity, in the modern sense, implies emotional and moral disengagement. The Qur'an, however, envisions *objectivity* as alignment with divine truth rather than detachment from it. The true knower is not neutral but truthful - oriented toward *al-ḥaqq* (the Real). Hence, Qur'anic ontology replaces the subject-object dualism of modern science with a theocentric unity of knowing.

#### 17.1.4 The Cosmos as Ontological Revelation

The Qur'an portrays the universe as a living, communicative reality - a field of divine disclosure. The repeated use of the term *ayat* (signs) for both natural and scriptural phenomena (Q. 3:190-191; 51:20-21) dissolves the modern boundary between revelation and nature. Every natural order - the alternation of night and day, the growth of plants, the motion of stars - serves as a locus of epistemic encounter. "*Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day are signs for those who possess understanding*" (Q. 3:190).

This verse establishes a cosmological epistemology grounded in contemplation (*tafakkur*) rather than experimentation alone. The Qur'an invites human beings to read the cosmos as a divine text - to interpret its structure and motion as metaphysical language. Hence, the world is not a silent mechanism but a meaningful discourse.

In this sense, the ontology of the cosmos in the Qur'an is *semiotic* rather than purely mechanical. The physical order is simultaneously symbolic, pointing beyond itself to the Creator. The act of discovery is therefore not a confrontation with matter but a dialogue with meaning. Every act of scientific observation, when properly oriented, becomes an act of worship, because it deciphers divine signs.

Modern science, however, approaches the cosmos as an object of manipulation. The ontological distinction lies here: for the Qur'an, knowledge of nature reveals divine wisdom; for modern science, knowledge of nature confers technological power. This divergence transforms epistemology into ethics - because for the Qur'an, knowing carries the responsibility of gratitude and humility (Q. 14:7), whereas modern science often celebrates autonomy and control.

Thus, the cosmos in Qur'anic ontology is a revelation-in-motion, continuously unfolding divine meaning to the reflective mind and receptive heart.

### 17.1.5 The Unity of Ontology and Epistemology

The Qur'an never treats being (*wujud*) and knowledge (*'ilm*) as distinct categories. Rather, they are two aspects of a single divine order. God's self-description as *al-Haqq* (the Real) and *al-Alim* (the All-Knowing) indicates that truth and knowledge share the same ontological root (Q. 22:6). Human beings participate in this unity by perceiving truth through the faculties bestowed upon them.

This integration dissolves the epistemic fragmentation that defines modern intellectual life - the split between metaphysics and physics, between knowing and being. In the Qur'an, epistemology is ontological because truth is existential; it transforms the knower. To know the truth is to become aligned with it - an ontological metamorphosis rather than a mere cognitive acquisition.

Hence, the Qur'an's ontology of knowledge is dynamic and participatory: *"Those who strive in Our cause, We will surely guide them to Our ways"* (Q. 29:69).

Guidance (*huda*) in this verse represents epistemic transformation grounded in moral striving. Knowledge becomes a mode of being, a way of existing truthfully within divine order. This transforms the human being into a locus of divine manifestation - a microcosm reflecting the macrocosmic truth.

By contrast, the modern scientific ontology separates knowing from transformation; it defines knowledge as cumulative data, not as existential realisation. The Qur'an, however, insists that true knowledge (*'ilm al-haqq*) must lead to awareness (*taqwa*) and gratitude (*shukr*). Thus, the ontological foundation of knowledge in the Qur'an is simultaneously metaphysical, ethical, and spiritual.

### 17.1.6 Ontological Error: Misalignment and the Loss of Truth

The Qur'an also identifies the ontological failure of knowledge when cognition is divorced from divine guidance. Such misalignment is described as blindness (*'ama*), deafness (*ṣumm*), and heedlessness (*ghaflah*). *"They have hearts with which they do not understand, eyes with which they do not see, and ears with which they do not hear"* (Q. 7:179).

This verse reveals that ignorance in the Qur'an is not the absence of information but the distortion of ontological orientation. When knowledge is detached from the remembrance of God (*dhikr Allah*), it degenerates into illusion. The modern world's epistemic crisis - knowledge without meaning, power without ethics - exemplifies this ontological loss.

Thus, the Qur'an's ontology of knowledge is not neutral; it is moral. The correctness of knowing depends on the purity of being. When the *qalb* (heart) is corrupted by arrogance or material obsession, knowledge becomes self-destructive (Q. 45:23). The Qur'anic antidote to ontological error is humility before truth - the recognition that all knowledge belongs to God and must be used in service of the divine order.

### 17.1.7 Reclaiming Ontological Wholeness

The ontological foundations of knowledge in the Qur'an establish an integral relationship between the divine, the human, and the cosmic. Reality is not an inert mechanism but a living revelation; knowledge

is not a tool of control but a mode of participation in divine wisdom. The Qur'an restores the unity of knowing and being by grounding epistemology in ontology - by teaching that to know truthfully is to exist truthfully.

In contrast, the modern scientific worldview, while powerful in its empirical achievements, remains ontologically fragmented. It isolates the act of knowing from its metaphysical ground and moral purpose. The Qur'an challenges this fragmentation by calling for a holistic epistemology rooted in divine unity (*tawhid*). Therefore, the ontological foundation of Qur'anic knowledge may be summarised as follows:

- Divine Source: All knowledge emanates from God as the ultimate reality and truth.
- Human Participation: The human being is an interpreter and trustee of this knowledge through integrated faculties.
- Cosmic Revelation: The universe itself is a meaningful field of divine signs.
- Ethical Purpose: Knowledge entails responsibility and transformation.

This ontological unity, when reawakened, offers a paradigm through which modern scientific inquiry can recover its lost metaphysical centre and ethical direction.

## 17.2 Epistemic Structures of Inquiry in the Qur'an

### 17.2.1 From Ontology to Method

Following the ontological foundations of knowledge outlined previously, the Qur'an advances a distinctive *epistemic architecture* that unites the processes of reasoning (*'aql*), reflection (*tafakkur*), verification (*tahqiq*), and witnessing (*shuhud*). Unlike modern scientific epistemology, which privileges empirical observation and falsifiable hypotheses, the Qur'anic method fuses cognition with ethical responsibility, revelation with reflection, and discovery with remembrance.

The Qur'an positions inquiry as a sacred act - not a secular curiosity detached from morality, but a disciplined engagement with divine signs (*ayat*) in the horizons and within the self (Q. 41:53). Knowledge, in this structure, is a journey toward truth that must pass through multiple stages of awareness: perception, reflection, verification, and internalisation.

In the Qur'anic framework, epistemic structures are not merely procedural but existential. To inquire is to purify the self, to align perception with divine purpose. The *'aql* (intellect) functions not as an autonomous faculty but as an instrument of discernment within a divinely ordered reality (Q. 2:164). The Qur'an thus constructs a model of inquiry that is at once rational, contemplative, and revelatory - what might be called a "sacred empiricism."

### 17.2.2 The Qur'anic Imperative to Reflect (Tafakkur, Tadabbur, and Tadhakkur)

The Qur'an repeatedly commands the human being to engage in acts of deep reflection and critical observation. Three interrelated verbs - *tafakkur* (to reflect), *tadabbur* (to contemplate outcomes), and *tadhakkur* (to recall meaning) - constitute the primary epistemic mechanisms by which human beings move from mere perception to understanding.

“Do they not reflect upon the Qur'an, or are there locks upon their hearts?” (Q. 47:24). “Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day are signs for those who reflect” (Q. 3:190).

These verses affirm that inquiry begins not with scepticism but with *remembrance* - a conscious effort to situate oneself within the divine order of meaning. Reflection (*tafakkur*) activates the intellect to perceive patterns, while contemplation (*tadabbur*) projects these insights toward their ultimate purpose. Together, they constitute the Qur'anic equivalent of both analytical and synthetic reasoning.

The modern scientific method values observation and experimentation; the Qur'an, however, embeds these acts within moral and metaphysical awareness. Observation without remembrance risks becoming mere data collection, whereas reflection within remembrance transforms observation into wisdom (*hikmah*).

The Qur'an thus teaches that knowledge acquisition requires two forms of *seeing*: the external perception of phenomena (*baṣar*) and the internal vision of meaning (*baṣirah*). As Qur'an 12:108 declares, “Say, ‘This is my way; I invite to Allah with clear insight (*baṣirah*), I and those who follow me.’”

Here, epistemic vision is equated with *insightful calling* - an intellectual and ethical act simultaneously. The Qur'anic structure of inquiry, therefore, is both empirical and transcendental, grounded in perception but oriented toward revelation.

### 17.2.3 The Role of Reason (‘Aql) in Qur'anic Inquiry

The intellect (‘*aql*) occupies a central place in the Qur'anic epistemic framework. It is through ‘*aql* that human beings discern order, proportion, and causality in the cosmos - all of which are considered *signs* of divine wisdom (Q. 13:3-4). The Qur'an repeatedly censures those who “do not reason” (*la ya‘qilun*), indicating that rational reflection is an act of worship, not rebellion. “Thus do We explain the signs for a people who use reason” (Q. 30:28).

In contrast to the post-Enlightenment view of reason as a self-sufficient source of knowledge, the Qur'an presents ‘*aql* as a divinely embedded faculty designed to recognise truth, not to fabricate it. Reason, therefore, is *teleological*: its purpose is to lead the knower toward acknowledgement of the Creator (*Rabb al-‘alamin*).

Epistemically, ‘*aql* functions within boundaries set by revelation. The Qur'an warns that unanchored reasoning - reasoning detached from divine guidance - leads to conjecture (*ẓann*), illusion, and arrogance (Q. 45:23; 53:28). Thus, reason's legitimacy depends on its alignment with the ontological reality of divine truth.

In the modern scientific paradigm, reason operates within an immanent framework - bound by empirical verification. The Qur'an, while affirming empirical investigation, situates it within a transcendent horizon. True reasoning is therefore theocentric, not anthropocentric. It begins with *observation* but culminates in *recognition* (*ma‘rifah*). Hence, the Qur'anic structure of reason integrates three dimensions:



- Analytical - discerning order in creation ( *'aql al-tajribi*).
- Moral - ensuring reasoning remains within ethical limits ( *'aql al-akhlaqi*).
- Spiritual - linking reason to the remembrance of God ( *'aql al-murani*).

Together, they prevent the fragmentation of reason that characterises modern thought - where intelligence may be brilliant yet morally blind.

#### 17.2.4 Verification (Taḥqiq) and Certainty (Yaqin)

A distinctive feature of the Qur'anic epistemic structure is its insistence on verification (*taḥqiq*) and certainty (*yaqin*). The Qur'an rejects both blind imitation (*taqlid*) and speculative doubt (*shakk*), affirming a balanced method of confirmatory reasoning. *“And do not pursue that of which you do not know; indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart - about all those one will be questioned”* (Q. 17:36).

This verse establishes the moral responsibility of epistemic verification. The sensory faculties (*samʿ*, *baṣar*) provide data, but the heart (*qalb*) serves as the integrative organ of meaning. Verification, therefore, requires both empirical examination and inner discernment.

In Qur'anic logic, certainty is achieved when perception, reasoning, and revelation converge. The three stages of *yaqin*- *ʿilm al-yaqin*, *ʿayn al-yaqin*, and *ḥaqq al-yaqin* - constitute not merely spiritual stations but epistemic milestones. Inquiry progresses from intellectual comprehension to experiential realisation and finally to existential embodiment of truth.

Modern science's reliance on probabilistic certainty contrasts sharply with the Qur'an's ontological certainty. Scientific conclusions remain tentative, subject to revision; Qur'anic knowledge, grounded in revelation, claims ultimate finality at the level of *ḥaqq al-yaqin* - the truth of certainty (Q. 56:95). Yet this finality does not negate investigation; rather, it guarantees that inquiry has a moral and teleological destination.

Hence, *taḥqiq* (verification) in the Qur'an is not a narrow empirical process but a comprehensive validation of meaning across all levels of existence - sensory, rational, and spiritual.

#### 17.2.5 Questioning, Observation, and Argumentation

The Qur'an repeatedly encourages questioning as a legitimate form of epistemic exploration. The verb *saʾala* (to ask) appears throughout the Qur'an, often in contexts that guide the reader to think critically about existence, ethics, and divine justice. For example: *“They ask you about the mountains. Say, ‘My Lord will blow them away with a blast’”* (Q. 20:105). *“And they ask you about the soul. Say, ‘The soul is of the affair of my Lord’”* (Q. 17:85).

These verses illustrate the Qur'an's dual approach to inquiry: it welcomes questioning but situates it within epistemic humility. Some realities are accessible to human reasoning, while others transcend its scope. This balance between curiosity and reverence defines the Qur'anic method.

Furthermore, the Qur'an uses dialectical reasoning - *jadāl bi-al-ḥaqq* (argumentation through truth) - as a mode of intellectual clarification: *“And argue with them in the best manner”* (Q. 16:125).



Dialectic in the Qur'anic sense is not polemic but illumination. It exposes false assumptions and refines the intellect through engagement. The Qur'an itself models this method, presenting counterarguments, posing rhetorical questions, and leading the reader toward self-discovery (Q. 52:35-36).

Observation (*nazar*) is another crucial epistemic element. The Qur'an uses *unzuru* ("observe") as a command form repeatedly, urging empirical attention to the natural world: "*Have they not observed the sky above them, how We have constructed it?*" (Q. 50:6).

This emphasis on observation affirms that empirical study is not foreign to revelation; rather, it is its natural extension. The Qur'an's epistemic structure thus integrates sensory observation, rational reflection, and moral discernment into one continuous process of verification.

### 17.2.6 Memory, Remembrance, and the Cognitive Continuum

The Qur'anic act of knowing is inseparable from remembrance (*dhikr*). Memory serves not merely as a storage of information but as an active, dynamic faculty that binds the present act of knowing to the eternal truth of revelation. The Qur'an, in fact, identifies itself as *dhikr* - the act and object of remembrance (Q. 15:9).

In cognitive terms, *dhikr* functions as the connective tissue between knowledge and meaning. Modern science often divorces cognition from morality, but the Qur'an unites them through remembrance. Forgetfulness (*nisyan*) is treated as the archetype of epistemic failure - a lapse in awareness that leads to moral disorientation (Q. 20:115).

Through *dhikr*, the human intellect remains oriented toward its ontological source. Knowledge thus becomes an act of continuous recollection - the reawakening of what the soul already recognises in its primordial covenant (Q. 7:172). Epistemic integrity, therefore, requires not only observation and reasoning but spiritual memory.

This concept introduces a metaphysical depth to cognition absent from the modern scientific method. While empirical knowledge expands horizontally - across phenomena - Qur'anic knowledge deepens vertically, reconnecting the knower to the divine origin of meaning.

### 17.2.7 Integration: The Qur'anic Method as a Triadic System

The epistemic structures of the Qur'an may be summarised as a triadic system comprising:

- Empirical Observation (*nazar*, *samʿ*, *baṣar*) - engagement with the natural world as divine signs.
- Rational Reflection (*ʿaql*, *tafakkur*, *tadabbur*) - analytical discernment of order and purpose.
- Spiritual Verification (*qalb*, *dhikr*, *yaqin*) - integration of knowledge into moral and existential truth.

This triad forms a unified epistemic process where each level perfects the previous one. Observation without reflection leads to superficial empiricism; reflection without remembrance leads to sterile

rationalism; remembrance without knowledge risks sentimentalism. The Qur'an harmonises all three, ensuring that knowledge remains both accurate and transformative.

In contrast, the modern scientific method tends to isolate these levels. It excels at observation but neglects metaphysical interpretation. It values analysis but overlooks ethical and spiritual integration. The result is an abundance of information but a poverty of wisdom. The Qur'anic model, by contrast, restores wholeness to inquiry - transforming science from an instrumental pursuit into an act of existential meaning.

### 17.2.8 Conclusion: Toward a Qur'anic Philosophy of Inquiry

The Qur'an constructs an epistemic architecture grounded in divine purpose, moral responsibility, and ontological unity. Its method of inquiry integrates empirical observation, rational analysis, and spiritual verification into a single continuum of meaning. The *'aql*, *qalb*, and *hawās* (senses) operate not in competition but in harmony, guided by revelation as the ultimate standard of truth.

This framework offers a corrective to the reductionism of modern scientific epistemology. While modern science focuses on the *how* of phenomena, the Qur'an addresses the *why*. It teaches that inquiry without remembrance is blind, and remembrance without inquiry is inert.

Hence, the Qur'anic epistemic structure may be summarised as reflective revelation - an ongoing dialogue between the knower and the divine. To know, in the Qur'an, is to participate in the act of divine disclosure; to discover is to remember; and to verify is to become morally transformed.

By reclaiming this integrated structure of inquiry, contemporary scholarship can reorient science and philosophy toward a theocentric model of knowledge - one that restores balance between reason and revelation, method and meaning, discovery and devotion.

## 17.3 Comparative Evaluation - Qur'anic and Modern Scientific Rationalities

### 17.3.1 The Problem of Epistemic Fragmentation

In the modern age, the pursuit of knowledge has largely been confined to the material and empirical dimensions of reality. The epistemic foundation of modern science, shaped by post-Enlightenment rationalism, rests upon the assumption that reality is objective, measurable, and independent of divine purpose. This methodological reductionism, while yielding technological advancement, has simultaneously fragmented the unity of knowledge (Ziauddin Sardar, 1989). In contrast, the Qur'anic framework situates all inquiry within the unity of *tawhīd*-the ontological oneness of truth that integrates the physical, metaphysical, moral, and spiritual dimensions of existence. The Qur'an asserts that authentic knowing (*ilm*) must lead to awareness of divine purpose and moral accountability: "*He taught Adam the names-all of them...*" (Q. 2:31), "*...and of knowledge you have been given only a little*" (Q. 17:85).

This comparative section aims to evaluate the relationship and divergence between the Qur'anic epistemology and the modern scientific method, particularly regarding their ontological assumptions, epistemic structures, and methods of verification. It argues that while modern science emphasises

*objectivity through detachment*, the Qur'an emphasises *objectivity through alignment with divine truth*-a harmony between reason (‘*aql*), revelation (*wahy*), and moral consciousness (*taqwa*).

### 17.3.2 Ontological Contrasts: Closed Materialism vs. Open Ontology

The modern scientific worldview is grounded in a material ontology, asserting that all phenomena can be reduced to physical causality and empirical observation (Chalmers, 2013). This ontological reductionism leaves no epistemic room for the unseen (*al-ghayb*), the moral (*al-khayr*), or the spiritual (*al-ruh*). The Qur'an, conversely, begins its epistemology with the unseen as the primary domain of faith and cognition: “*Those who believe in the unseen (alladhina yu'minūna bil-ghayb)*” (Q. 2:3).

In the Qur'anic vision, the unseen is not antithetical to knowledge but is its *epistemic horizon*. The seen (*al-shahadah*) and the unseen (*al-ghayb*) are two dimensions of a single reality that the human intellect is tasked to harmonise through reflection (*tafakkur*), remembrance (*dhikr*), and moral awareness (*taqwa*). Modern science's “closed ontology” confines itself to what is measurable, whereas the Qur'an's “open ontology” includes metaphysical realities that can be known through intellectual inference and spiritual insight (Nasr, 1993).

The modern method's rejection of metaphysical causality-what David Hume described as the unknowability of necessary connection- contrasts sharply with the Qur'an's affirmation of purposeful causality: “*You will not find any change in the law of Allah*” (Q. 33:62).

This verse signifies that natural laws are signs (*ayat*) of divine consistency, not autonomous mechanisms devoid of meaning. Thus, the Qur'an's ontology integrates divine will (*iradah*), law (*sunnat Allah*), and causality (*sababiyyah*) as interdependent realities within a meaningful cosmic order.

### 17.3.3 Epistemological Structures: Observation, Reflection, and Revelation

In modern science, the process of knowing is constructed through observation, hypothesis, experimentation, and falsification (Popper, 1959). Knowledge is valid only when verified by sensory data and logical coherence. The Qur'an, while affirming observation and reflection, extends epistemic validity beyond empirical verification to include *moral and metaphysical coherence*.

The Qur'an repeatedly calls humans to observe the heavens and the earth, yet always directs such observation toward moral realisation: “*Do they not look into the dominion of the heavens and the earth and all things that Allah has created?*” (Q. 7:185). “*Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth... are signs for those of understanding*” (Q. 3:190). Here, the Qur'an constructs a triadic epistemology:

- Empirical observation (‘*ayni nazar*) - seeing with the eye.
- Rational reflection (‘*aqli tafakkur*) - understanding with the intellect.
- Revelatory insight (*wahyi idrak*) - perceiving with the heart.

Modern science operates effectively at the first level but largely neglects the second and third, leading to what Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1993) describes as “epistemic amnesia”-the forgetting of higher modes of

knowing. In Qur'anic terms, this forgetting is a spiritual blindness: “*They have hearts with which they do not understand, eyes with which they do not see, and ears with which they do not hear*” (Q. 7:179).

Thus, while both systems value observation, the Qur'an transforms observation into *sign-reading*, a hermeneutics of creation (*ta'wil al-ayat al-kawniyyah*). Science studies the signs as isolated data; the Qur'an studies them as messages revealing divine purpose.

#### 17.3.4 Logic of Verification: Empiricism vs. Revelation-Centred Validation

The scientific method's authority rests upon empirical falsification, and reproducibility-truth must be *testable*. The Qur'an, however, extends the concept of verification (*tahqiq al-haqq*) to include the moral and existential dimensions of truth. Truth (*haqq*) is verified not only through sensory evidence but through coherence with divine revelation and the moral structure of the universe: “*And say: The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills-let him believe; and whoever wills-let him disbelieve*” (Q. 18:29). Verification, in Qur'anic logic, involves three levels:

- Empirical confirmation (*'ilm al-yaqin*),
- Direct realisation (*'ayn al-yaqin*), and
- Existential embodiment (*haqq al-yaqin*).

Modern scientific rationality terminates at the first level. Its truths are operational, not existential; they explain, but do not *transform*. The Qur'an, on the other hand, requires knowledge to manifest in being and ethics: “*And those who strive for Us-We will surely guide them to Our ways*” (Q. 29:69).

Here, knowledge is validated by moral striving (*jihad fi sabil Allah*). The modern epistemic model tests through repetition; the Qur'an tests through transformation.

#### 17.3.5 Rationality and Purpose: Instrumental vs. Teleological

Modern science operates under what Max Weber called *instrumental rationality*-reason directed toward efficiency and control, not moral or ultimate ends. The Qur'an critiques such reason when detached from divine purpose: “*They know what is apparent of the worldly life, but they are heedless of the Hereafter*” (Q. 30:7).

The Qur'anic paradigm is *teleological rationality*-reason as a means to discern purpose (*hikmah*). Rationality divorced from revelation leads to knowledge without meaning; revelation without reason risks dogmatism. Hence, the Qur'an insists on the balance of *'aql* and *wahy*: “*Do they not ponder upon the Qur'an, or are there locks upon their hearts?*” (Q. 47:24).

Whereas modern science seeks explanation through detachment, the Qur'an demands understanding through engagement, intellectual, ethical, and spiritual. The act of knowing is itself a form of worship (*'ibadah*), for it reaffirms the unity between knower, known, and the source of knowledge.

### 17.3.6 Comparative Summary: Divergent Rationalities

The comparative table above provides a concise synthesis of the major philosophical and methodological contrasts between modern scientific rationality and Qur’anic epistemology. Each dimension reflects not only a difference in method but a deeper divergence in worldview - the former grounded in material empiricism, the latter in divine-centred integration. This comparison illustrates that the Qur’an does not reject empirical reasoning; rather, it situates it within a *hierarchy of meanings*. Knowledge divorced from divine purpose is incomplete, for it fails to connect cognition with conscience.

**Table 17.1 Comparative Summary - Divergent Rationalities**

| Dimension           | Modern Scientific Method          | Qur’anic Epistemology                        |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| <b>Ontology</b>     | Material and mechanistic          | Open and theocentric                         |
| <b>Method</b>       | Observation-hypothesis-experiment | Observation-reflection-revelation            |
| <b>Purpose</b>      | Control, prediction, explanation  | Understanding, guidance, worship             |
| <b>Verification</b> | Empirical falsifiability          | Moral, existential, and revelatory coherence |
| <b>Rationality</b>  | Instrumental (means-oriented)     | Teleological (ends-oriented)                 |
| <b>Result</b>       | Technological power               | Ethical transformation                       |

**Ontology:** The foundation of modern science rests upon a material and mechanistic ontology, where reality is conceived as an autonomous system of physical causes and effects. Nature becomes an object of study, detached from divine purpose. The Qur’an, by contrast, embraces an open and theocentric ontology: all existence originates from and returns to God - “*To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth*” (Q. 2:284). This openness integrates the seen (*al-shahadah*) and unseen (*al-ghayb*), viewing them as dimensions of one unified creation. The cosmos is not a closed mechanism but a network of signs (*ayat*) through which divine wisdom is continuously manifest.

**Method:** Modern scientific inquiry progresses through observation, hypothesis, and experimentation, grounded in sensory verification and logical testing (Popper, 1959). The Qur’an also values observation but situates it within a triadic method of observation, reflection, and revelation (*nazar-tafakkur-wahy*). Observation becomes meaningful only when guided by reflection and interpreted through revelation. Hence, Qur’anic reasoning is both analytical and contemplative - empirical in its means but transcendental in its end.

**Purpose:** While modern science seeks control, prediction, and explanation, Qur’anic epistemology orients knowledge toward understanding, guidance, and worship. The Qur’an’s goal of inquiry is ethical

transformation and remembrance of God - “*So that you may know that Allah has power over all things*” (Q. 65:12). Knowledge thus serves the purpose of *taqwa* (moral consciousness), not domination.

**Verification:** Scientific validity rests on empirical falsifiability, ensuring knowledge is repeatable and testable. The Qur'an's notion of verification (*tahqiq al-haqq*) extends this to moral and existential coherence - truth must align with both reason and revelation. It is not sufficient for knowledge to “work”; it must *guide* and *purify*. True knowledge is confirmed by its ability to lead toward justice and divine remembrance (Q. 16:90).

**Rationality:** Modern rationality is instrumental, concerned with efficiency and control, whereas Qur'anic rationality is teleological, seeking meaning and ultimate purpose. In the Qur'anic view, reason (*'aql*) functions properly only when aligned with *hikmah* (wisdom). Detached reason leads to arrogance and fragmentation; reason guided by revelation leads to harmony and humility.

**Result:** Finally, the contrast in results is telling. Modern science yields technological power, but often without moral direction. The Qur'an envisions ethical transformation, knowledge that enlightens the soul and harmonises humanity with creation. In Qur'anic epistemology, the highest knowledge is not mastery over nature, but alignment with *haqq al-yaqin* -the truth that transforms being itself.

### 17.3.7 Reintegrating the Two Paradigms: Toward an Ethical Science

The Qur'an offers not a rejection but a *reconstruction* of scientific rationality. It encourages exploration (*sair fi al-ard*), but with ethical boundaries and spiritual orientation: “*Travel through the earth and see how He originated creation*” (Q. 29:20).

This imperative legitimises empirical research as a form of *ibadah al-'ilm*-worship through discovery. The Qur'an thus envisions a science that unites inquiry with humility, knowledge with gratitude, and reason with revelation. It transforms epistemology into an act of moral consciousness-an *'ilm al-mas'uliyah* (knowledge of accountability).

To reconstruct an Islamic epistemology in the modern age is therefore not to abandon scientific rigour, but to restore its metaphysical depth. In the Qur'anic view, *true science* must acknowledge both the order of creation and the intention of the Creator. This integration reclaims knowledge as *mur* (light), not merely *nifa'* (utility).

The Qur'an and modern science both seek truth, but they diverge in what they consider the *ultimate truth*. The scientific method's epistemic isolation of material reality limits its capacity to answer metaphysical and moral questions. The Qur'an, on the other hand, defines knowledge as the recognition of divine order, moral responsibility, and existential purpose. The synthesis of these two-empirical precision guided by divine orientation- constitutes the essence of a renewed epistemology that is both rational and revelatory.

In this light, the Qur'an does not stand opposed to science; it redefines its purpose. It transforms the act of inquiry from domination to contemplation, from observation to realisation, and from mere cognition to transformation. The ultimate goal of Qur'anic rationality is not to know *about* reality, but to *become* aligned with truth itself-*haqq al-yaqin*.



## 17.4 The Ethics of Knowledge - Moral Responsibility in Discovery

In the Qur'anic worldview, knowledge ( *'ilm*, علم ) is never a neutral possession; it is a sacred trust (*amanah*, أمانة ) that entails moral responsibility. The Qur'an unites epistemology and ethics into a single framework of divine accountability, where the act of knowing is inseparable from the duty to uphold truth, justice, and compassion. The ethical dimension of discovery-how knowledge is sought, applied, and transmitted-lies at the heart of Qur'anic epistemology. As the Qur'an states, *"Do not pursue that of which you do not know. Indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart-all of these will be questioned"* (Q. 17:36). This verse establishes that every cognitive act carries moral weight; perception, reason, and emotion are subject to divine evaluation.

Thus, the Qur'anic concept of knowledge transcends mere intellectual curiosity. It demands self-purification (*tazkiyah*), sincerity of intention (*niyyah*), and adherence to justice ( *'adl*, عدل ). This ethical integration transforms the process of discovery into an act of worship, aligning human cognition with divine purpose. The following analysis explores this moral dimension of knowledge, structured through Qur'anic categories of responsibility, humility, truthfulness, and balance.

### 17.4.1 Knowledge as Amanah: The Trust of Responsibility

The Qur'an declares: *"Indeed, We offered the Trust (al-amanah, الأمانة) to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they declined to bear it and feared it; but man undertook to bear it. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant"* (Q. 33:72). This profound verse captures the cosmic seriousness of human knowledge. The *amanah* is not limited to ethical behaviour but encompasses the very capacity of discernment (*fiqh*), reason ( *'aql* ), and accountability.

The bearer of knowledge, therefore, carries the obligation to use it rightly. Every scientific discovery or philosophical insight is part of this trust. To distort or misuse knowledge constitutes *zulm* (injustice) and *kibr* (arrogance), while to align it with divine purpose is to fulfil one's covenant with God. The Qur'an thus frames intellectual life as an ethical vocation: to guard knowledge from corruption, concealment, and arrogance.

Moreover, the ethical character of knowledge defines the moral identity of the knower. As the Qur'an states, *"Only those who know His servants fear Allah"* (Q. 35:28). This *khashyah*-awe before divine truth is the hallmark of authentic epistemology. It transforms knowledge from possession into reverence, from power into responsibility.

### 17.4.2 Avoiding Arrogance (Kibr) and Corruption (Fasad) in Knowledge

One of the greatest moral dangers in the pursuit of knowledge is the temptation of arrogance (*kibr*, كبر ). The Qur'an warns repeatedly against intellectual pride that distances the heart from truth: *"I will turn away from My signs those who are arrogant upon the earth without right; and if they see every sign, they will not believe in it"* (Q. 7:146). This verse exposes the epistemic blindness that arises from moral



corruption. When arrogance enters the cognitive process, observation and reasoning lose their sincerity, leading to the distortion of truth.

Modern scientific civilisation, for all its achievements, often exemplifies this danger: knowledge pursued without humility becomes a mechanism of control rather than a path of illumination. The Qur'an challenges this paradigm by linking true knowledge to humility before creation and its Creator. To discover is not to dominate, but to witness. The Qur'anic term *ayah* (آية), meaning both "sign" and "verse," signifies that the study of nature is simultaneously the reading of revelation. The ethical scientist or thinker recognises that every act of discovery unfolds within divine signs and thus carries spiritual accountability.

The Qur'an equally warns against *fasad*, *corruption*, and imbalance resulting from the misuse of knowledge. "*Do not cause corruption in the earth after it has been set in order*" (Q. 7:56). This command applies not only to ecological or social corruption but to epistemic corruption-the manipulation of truth for personal or institutional gain. When knowledge serves ego or power rather than justice and compassion, it departs from its divine function.

#### 17.4.3 Truthfulness (Ṣidq) and Integrity in Research

The Qur'anic ethic of *ṣidq* (صدق, truthfulness) establishes honesty as the cornerstone of intellectual life. The Qur'an commands: "*O you who believe! Fear Allah and be with the truthful*" (Q. 9:119). Truth in the Qur'anic sense is not merely correspondence between statement and fact, but the alignment between inner intention and outer expression. To speak or write knowledge is thus an act of moral witnessing.

In the context of modern scholarship, this Qur'anic standard demands transparency, verification, and the rejection of fabrication or plagiarism. Any concealment or distortion of truth constitutes a betrayal of *amanah*. The Qur'an warns: "*Indeed, those who conceal what We sent down of clear proofs and guidance after We made it clear for the people in the Scripture-those are cursed by Allah*" (Q. 2:159). Concealment of truth is an epistemic crime because it disrupts the moral structure of knowledge transmission.

Therefore, the Qur'anic researcher must uphold honesty not only in findings but also in methodology and motive. Research becomes a form of *ibadah* (worship) when conducted with sincerity (*ikhlas*), humility (*tawadu'*), and dedication to truth (*ḥaqq*). The Qur'an's call to "*speak the truth even against yourselves*" (Q. 4:135) remains the ethical foundation of scholarly integrity.

#### 17.4.4 The Principle of Balance (Mizan) in Discovery

The Qur'an describes the universe as founded upon *mizan* (ميزان, balance): "*And the heaven He raised and imposed the balance, that you not transgress within the balance*" (Q. 55:7-8). This balance operates as both a physical law and an ethical principle. It calls upon humanity to pursue knowledge that sustains rather than disrupts the harmony of creation.

In epistemological terms, *mizan* demands the equilibrium of reason (*'aql*), intuition (*basirah*), and revelation (*wahy*). Each faculty must operate within its proper measure. Rational inquiry without spiritual balance leads to reductionism, while mystical intuition without reason leads to speculation. The Qur'an

integrates both under divine balance, reminding us that true discovery occurs when intellect and revelation mirror each other's light.

Furthermore, *mizan* prohibits the exploitation of knowledge for destructive ends. Technological innovations, when divorced from ethical restraint, lead to an imbalance in nature and society. The Qur'an calls humanity to restore *mizan* through the just use of knowledge, ensuring that discovery promotes life, justice, and mercy, never domination or excess.

### 17.4.5 Accountability (Mas' uliyyah) and the Judgment of Knowledge

The Qur'an closes the epistemic circle with the principle of accountability (*mas' uliyyah*, مسؤولية): “*And do not pursue that of which you do not know. Indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart—all of these will be questioned*” (Q. 17:36). This verse explicitly frames human cognition as a moral trust subject to judgment. Every thought, observation, and discovery carries ethical consequences.

In contemporary research culture, where knowledge is often pursued for profit or prestige, this Qur'anic warning demands a paradigm shift. Knowledge divorced from moral accountability becomes dangerous, generating both physical and spiritual harm. The Qur'an's vision reclaims knowledge as *dhikr* (ذكر, remembrance), a constant awareness of divine presence guiding the intellect.

This accountability extends to collective structures of knowledge production: universities, laboratories, and media institutions. Qur'anic epistemology demands that such institutions function as moral ecosystems, where discovery is guided by truth and humility rather than competition and control. In this light, the moral responsibility of knowledge transcends individual conscience—it becomes a communal covenant.

### 17.4.6 Toward a Qur'anic Ethic of Discovery

The ethical architecture of Qur'anic epistemology presents discovery not as domination but as participation in divine wisdom. To know is to serve, and to discover is to remember. Each Qur'anic command to observe nature—“*Do they not look at the camels, how they are created?*” (Q. 88:17)—is simultaneously a call to gratitude and moral awareness. Discovery thus becomes an act of devotion, connecting the knower to the known through the Creator.

In this vision, science, philosophy, and theology converge as dimensions of worship. The moral goal of inquiry is *taqwa*—awareness that integrates intellectual curiosity with spiritual humility. When guided by *taqwa*, human discovery reflects divine order and fulfills its purpose: “*We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth*” (Q. 41:53). Knowledge, when ethically grounded, leads to recognition of divine unity (*tawhīd*) and restores harmony between mind, soul, and cosmos.

The Qur'an situates the ethics of knowledge at the heart of human purpose. To know is to bear trust; to discover is to act responsibly. The modern world's separation of science from morality has fragmented human consciousness, but the Qur'an restores unity by fusing discovery with devotion. The *'alim*

(knower) and the *'abid* (worshipper) are the seeker whose intellect is guided by humility and whose discovery leads to justice.

In the Qur'anic epistemological framework, ethics is not an afterthought of discovery but its essence. Knowledge devoid of responsibility is ignorance disguised as progress. True discovery must therefore lead to illumination, not exploitation; to harmony, not imbalance. The Qur'an's moral structure transforms the act of knowing into an act of becoming, where the seeker, through truth, draws closer to the Source of all knowledge, *al-Alim* (The All-Knowing).

## 17.5 Verification (Taḥqiq) vs. Experimentation: A Comparative Analysis

### 17.5.1 Two Epistemic Pathways to Truth

The human pursuit of truth unfolds through two broad epistemic orientations: taḥqiq (Qur'anic verification grounded in divine order and moral consciousness) and experimentation (modern scientific observation based on sensory validation and logical inference). Both modes aim at *disclosure of the real*, yet their ontological assumptions and ethical frameworks differ profoundly. In the Qur'an, knowledge is not merely an act of sensory discovery but a process of *moral realisation*-an uncovering of divine wisdom embedded within creation (*ayat fī al-afaq wa fī anfusikum*, Q. 41:53). Experimentation, in contrast, arises from the secular epistemic paradigm of human-centred observation and technological manipulation of phenomena (Nasr, 1993). The Qur'an transforms empirical engagement into *taḥqiq*-a verification that binds observation to remembrance, reason to revelation, and discovery to accountability.

### 17.5.2 The Qur'anic Concept of Taḥqiq (Verification)

The Arabic term taḥqiq (تحقيق) derives from the root *ḥaqq* (حق), meaning truth, right, or reality. Its semantic field encompasses *realising, confirming, authenticating, and actualising truth*. In the Qur'anic framework, *taḥqiq* is not a mechanical confirmation of data but a spiritual unveiling of what is real in its divine correspondence. The term *al-ḥaqq* (The Truth) appears as one of the attributes of God (Q. 22:6; 24:25), indicating that *truth* is not abstract but ontologically divine. Therefore, *taḥqiq* entails the human endeavour to align knowledge with divine truth-an act of witnessing (*shuhud*) rather than mere testing.

The Qur'an repeatedly calls upon humankind to “verify” (yuḥaqqiqū) through reflection, not assumption. It warns against conjecture (*ẓann*), declaring: “Conjecture avails nothing against the truth” (Q. 10:36). Verification thus involves *cognitive purification*, removing false assumptions that obscure clarity of vision. It is an epistemic discipline of moral cognition, ensuring that human understanding mirrors divine order rather than human pride. The Qur'anic *taḥqiq* proceeds through reflection on signs (*ayat*), observation of phenomena, and rational synthesis grounded in the principle of *tawḥid* (unity). The “signs” of the heavens, earth, and self are not to be experimented upon as detached objects but to be contemplated as divine communications (Q. 51:20-21). This produces knowledge that is simultaneously empirical, rational, and spiritual.

### 17.5.3 Experimentation in the Modern Scientific Paradigm

Experimentation, in its modern sense, refers to the systematic observation, manipulation, and measurement of variables to test hypotheses under controlled conditions. It emerged historically through the Enlightenment shift from metaphysical certainty to empirical verifiability (Popper, 1959). Modern science operationalises truth as *predictive accuracy* rather than metaphysical coherence. It aims to produce *functional explanations* rather than ontological meanings (Kuhn, 1962). This paradigm rests upon several assumptions:

- Epistemic Autonomy - human reason and sensory perception are sufficient for knowledge.
- Causality as Closure - phenomena are self-contained systems with no transcendent cause.
- Utility as Verification - truth is validated through technological success or social utility.

While experimentation has produced unprecedented advances in material knowledge, its framework isolates *fact* from *value* and *truth* from *meaning*. In doing so, it tends to reduce knowledge to data, wisdom to efficiency, and discovery to power (Husserl, 1970). The Qur'an, conversely, integrates these dimensions by treating every act of inquiry as an *amanah* (trust) toward God, not a conquest over nature.

### 17.5.4 The Epistemological Difference: Tahqiq as Transcendent Verification

The central epistemological divergence between *tahqiq* and experimentation lies in their teleology-the end toward which inquiry moves.

- Experimentation seeks *explanation* through cause-and-effect relations within the observable world.
- Tahqiq seeks *realisation* through correspondence between the knower, the known, and the divine order.

In experimentation, the subject investigates the object as external, detached, and measurable. In *tahqiq*, the knower encounters the signs of God as both external and internal realities (Q. 41:53). Verification here is a *communicative act* between human consciousness and divine revelation-a dialogue of reflection rather than manipulation. The Qur'an challenges humankind to "consider deeply" (*afala tatafakkarun*, Q. 30:8) and to "observe" (*afala yanzurun*, Q. 88:17-20), but always in a manner that leads to *recognition of truth* (*haqq*) rather than dominance over it.

In other words, *tahqiq* transcends *testing*; it is the manifestation of divine truth through disciplined contemplation. The observer is not a neutral agent but a moral subject accountable for what he perceives. Knowledge is not owned but entrusted; truth is not manufactured but revealed through intellectual humility.

### 17.5.5 Methodological Comparison: From Observation to Realisation

The comparative table above outlines the fundamental methodological divergence between the Qur'anic process of discovery and the modern empirical method, revealing how both begin from observation but diverge sharply in their ontological grounding, epistemic assumptions, and ultimate goals.

This comparative framework reveals that *tahqiq* and experimentation are not inherently opposed but differently oriented. Experimentation can serve *tahqiq* when subordinated to a Qur'anic cosmology of meaning. However, when experimentation becomes self-referential-an autonomous arbiter of truth-it collapses into reductionism.

**Table 17.2: Methodological Comparison: From Observation to Realisation**

| Aspect                | Qur'anic Methodology (From Observation to Realisation)                                                                                       | Modern Empirical Methodology (From Observation to Explanation)                              |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ontological Ground    | Reality ( <i>al-haqq</i> ) is unified, divine, and meaningful; existence manifests divine will and purpose.                                  | Reality is self-contained, material, and value-neutral; existence is an observable fact.    |
| Epistemic Source      | Revelation ( <i>wahy</i> ), reason ( <i>'aql</i> ), and sensory experience ( <i>sam'</i> , <i>baṣar</i> , <i>Fu'ad</i> ) operate in harmony. | Sensory perception and inductive reasoning are primary and autonomous sources of knowledge. |
| Method of Discovery   | Reflective observation of <i>ayat</i> (signs), moral reasoning, and synthesis of knowledge through <i>tawhīd</i> .                           | Observation, hypothesis formation, and experimental validation through measurable data.     |
| Logic of Verification | <i>Tahqiq</i> - verification through correspondence with divine truth, moral coherence, and ontological unity.                               | Verification through empirical testing, replication, and falsifiability.                    |
| Purpose of Inquiry    | Realisation of divine wisdom and fulfilment of moral accountability; knowing as worship ( <i>'ibadah</i> ).                                  | Acquisition of functional knowledge for prediction, control, and technological advancement. |
| Role of the Knower    | Witness ( <i>shahid</i> ) and moral agent entrusted with divine trust ( <i>amanah</i> ) in the act of knowing.                               | Detached observer, independent of moral or spiritual responsibility within inquiry.         |
| Outcome of Knowledge  | Integration of cognition, faith, and ethics; transformation of self and society toward justice.                                              | Production of usable knowledge; advancement of technology and material progress.            |

In the Qur'anic worldview, the journey of knowing proceeds *from observation to realisation*, transforming sensory engagement into spiritual awareness. The Qur'an repeatedly invites humankind to observe the natural order - "*Do they not look at the camels, how they are created?*" (Q. 88:17) - not as an end in itself but as a means to discern the unity and purpose underlying creation. Observation (*nazar*) is therefore the first step in a hermeneutic ascent leading toward *tahqiq* - the realisation of divine truth through understanding and ethical transformation.

Modern empiricism, by contrast, moves *from observation to explanation*. It aims to construct a framework of causal relations and measurable regularities that can predict or manipulate phenomena. This approach, while effective in advancing technological mastery, remains epistemically horizontal - confined within the plane of physical causation. The Qur'anic method, on the other hand, incorporates the vertical dimension of meaning: every cause and effect is an *ayat*, signs that point beyond itself to divine wisdom.

The table's first row captures this ontological distinction. The Qur'an affirms reality (*al-haqq*) as a divine manifestation - not an autonomous structure but a living, communicative cosmos filled with meaning (Q. 41:53). Modern science, however, presupposes an immanent ontology, where meaning arises only through human interpretation and empirical modelling. Thus, while both investigate the same cosmos, they inhabit different metaphysical horizons: one sacred, the other secular.

The epistemic sources in the second row reflect these ontologies. The Qur'an unites revelation, reason, and sensory experience as complementary modes of knowing (Q. 16:78), ensuring that intellectual exploration is never divorced from moral orientation. Modern methodology, however, isolates sense-data and inductive logic as autonomous instruments of verification, excluding revelation as non-scientific. This exclusion fragments the unity of knowledge and narrows the field of inquiry to the empirically testable.

The third and fourth rows-method of discovery and logic of verification- illustrate how *tahqiq* differs from experimentation. In Qur'anic inquiry, observation leads to *reflection* (*tafakkur*) and *comprehension* (*ta'aqqul*) within the unity of *tawhid*. Verification means harmonising perception with revelation and moral truth, not merely reproducing data. In contrast, modern experimentation depends on replication and falsifiability, which, while powerful within limited domains, cannot account for the metaphysical, moral, or existential dimensions of truth.

The final rows expose the ethical and teleological differences between the two systems. In Qur'anic epistemology, the purpose of inquiry is the realisation of divine wisdom and fulfilment of human trust (*amanah*). The knower is a witness (*shahid*) accountable to God, whose moral state affects the purity of perception and judgment (Q. 17:36). Knowledge thus carries an intrinsic ethical responsibility. The modern paradigm, however, regards the knower as a neutral observer, with ethics externalised into post-discovery applications rather than built into the act of inquiry itself.

Ultimately, the Qur'anic movement *from observation to realisation* seeks not only accurate description but ontological transformation -to know truth is to become aligned with it. Knowledge is not an instrument

of control but a path of remembrance (dhikr) leading to wisdom (*hikmah*). The Qur'an thereby restores the sacred balance between cognition and conscience, turning the process of knowing into a spiritual ascent from seeing the world to witnessing the divine within it.

### 17.5.6 Verification as Ethical Science: The Qur'anic Integration

The Qur'an envisions verification as a continuous process of ethical discovery. The act of knowing is always moral because it involves choices that affect creation and human purpose. The command “*and do not pursue that of which you do not know*” (Q. 17:36) integrates epistemology with accountability. Verification thus operates under the discipline of truthfulness (*ṣidq*) and trust (*amanah*). The Qur'an rejects epistemic arrogance by reminding humanity that even the most advanced knowledge is partial: “You have been given of knowledge only a little” (Q. 17:85). This humility forms the ethical foundation of Qur'anic verification-*tahqiq* as self-restraint in interpretation and self-purification in understanding.

When the scientist becomes aware that every empirical discovery is an *ayah* of God, experimentation transforms into *ibadah* (act of service). Verification becomes worship; inquiry becomes remembrance. The Qur'an does not deny sensory knowledge but refines it into a moral epistemology. Empiricism is redeemed when subordinated to *tawḥid*-the unity of meaning, existence, and truth.

### 17.5.7 Toward a Unified Epistemology of Discovery

A Qur'anic reconstruction of epistemology must not reject experimentation but reintegrate it within *tahqiq*. The Qur'an calls for the use of sensory faculties (*samʿ*, *baṣar*, *fuʿad*) to approach truth (Q. 16:78), yet it insists that these faculties operate under spiritual guidance. The scientific method, when divorced from revelation, risks becoming a tool of domination; but when guided by *tahqiq*, it becomes a means of moral illumination. The Qur'an thus envisions a *science of meaning*-a discipline where empirical observation and metaphysical realisation coexist. Verification and experimentation, properly harmonised, yield not only knowledge of the world but knowledge of the self and of God.

### 17.5.8 Verification Beyond Experiment

In conclusion, *tahqiq* and experimentation represent two distinct yet potentially complementary epistemic orientations. The Qur'an transforms the act of inquiry from a mechanical testing of objects to a sacred encounter with truth. It situates verification within the moral-spiritual cosmos of *tawḥid*, where knowledge is simultaneously revelation, realisation, and responsibility. Experimentation without *tahqiq* may produce technological power but epistemic blindness; *tahqiq* without empirical engagement may yield abstraction without embodiment. The Qur'anic synthesis restores balance: observation becomes worship, discovery becomes service, and truth becomes lived reality.

In this synthesis, verification (*tahqiq*) transcends the laboratory into the heart of human consciousness. It transforms the knower from an observer of phenomena to a participant in divine truth, completing the Qur'anic circle of knowledge: to know is to witness, to witness is to realise, and to realise is to serve.



## 17.6 The Qur'anic Reinterpretation of Empiricism and Rationalism

### 17.6.1 Reclaiming the Balance Between Sense and Intellect

The dichotomy between empiricism and rationalism, as historically developed in Western epistemology, revolves around two competing claims: that knowledge is derived primarily from sensory experience (empiricism) or from innate reasoning and logical reflection (rationalism). Thinkers such as John Locke and David Hume grounded epistemic certainty in sensory impressions, while Descartes and Leibniz emphasised reason as the foundation of knowledge. However, the Qur'an presents a third epistemological synthesis, transcending both material empiricism and abstract rationalism by integrating *ḥiss* (sensory perception), *ʿaql* (intellect), *qalb* (heart-consciousness), and *wahy* (divine revelation) into a unified hierarchy of knowing.

This synthesis does not dismiss the empirical nor the rational, but subordinates both to a higher metaphysical coherence: the knowledge (*ʿilm*) that proceeds from and returns to Allah as the ultimate source of truth (Q. 2:255; 20:114). The Qur'an thus redefines knowledge not as a static possession but as a dynamic unveiling of reality (*ḥaqiqah*) through perception, reflection, and moral purification. The Qur'anic view neither opposes sense to reason nor revelation to observation; rather, it orients all toward a teleological end - *li-ya ʿlamu anna Allaha huwa al-ḥaqq* ("so that they may know that Allah is the Truth," Q. 24:25).

### 17.6.2 The Qur'anic Reconciliation: From Dualism to Unity

The Qur'anic epistemology overcomes the dualism between empiricism and rationalism through an ontological monism rooted in *tawḥid* (the oneness of God). This unity manifests epistemically in the harmony between observable creation (*ayat fi al-afaq*) and internal reflection (*ayat fi anfusikum*) as seen in Qur'an 41:53 - "*We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in themselves until it becomes clear to them that this is the Truth.*"

This verse encapsulates the Qur'anic model of epistemic harmony: the external world (empirical data) and the inner consciousness (rational reflection) are co-witnesses to divine truth. Unlike Western rationalism, which often abstracts reason from revelation, or empiricism, which confines truth to material observation, the Qur'an affirms both as *ayat* - divine signs that jointly reveal *ḥaqq* (truth). Thus, sense and reason are not autonomous but complementary, operating under the divine directive of *tahqiq* (verification of truth) rather than human conjecture (*ẓann*).

In this synthesis, the Qur'an does not advocate blind rationalism or mere sensualism but a rational empiricism guided by divine purpose. Every act of observation (*naẓar*) and reasoning (*taʿaqqul*) is validated by its moral alignment and its capacity to lead the human intellect toward recognising divine order and unity. Hence, empirical and rational activities are both sacred acts of *ʿibadah* (worship) when directed toward the discovery of divine wisdom.

### 17.6.3 Qur'anic Empiricism: Observation as Worship

Empiricism in the Qur'anic worldview is not reduced to sensory experience as an end in itself but elevated into an act of perception that reveals divine wisdom. Numerous verses command humans to “observe” (*unzuru, yanzurun*) and “travel in the land” (*siru fi al-ard*) to understand the processes of creation and destruction (Q. 6:11; 29:20; 30:9). This is not empirical curiosity divorced from faith, but a theological empiricism grounded in *tadabbur* (deep contemplation) and *tafakkur* (reflection).

The Qur'an repeatedly condemns those who “*see but do not perceive*” (Q. 7:179), pointing to a moral blindness that invalidates mere sensory data. True empiricism, therefore, is inseparable from ethical purification and spiritual attentiveness. The verse “*Do they not look at the camels, how they are created?*” (Q. 88:17) exemplifies this - observation is not only about zoological structure but about divine creativity and proportion (*taqdir*). The Qur'an redefines empiricism as *'ibrah* (moral reflection from experience), where each observation becomes a bridge between the finite and the infinite.

Unlike Humean scepticism, which isolates sensory experience from causality and metaphysics, the Qur'an frames experience as teleological revelation - every sensory encounter has meaning because it points back to its Creator (Q. 67:3-4). Thus, Qur'anic empiricism can be described as *metaphysical empiricism*, where sense-data serve the higher aim of recognising divine order and sustaining moral responsibility.

### 17.6.4 Qur'anic Rationalism: The Intellect as Servant of Revelation

Rationalism in the Qur'an finds its centre in *'aql*, the intellectual faculty that discerns meanings, distinguishes truth from falsehood, and recognises divine law. However, the Qur'an explicitly warns against *'aql* becoming autonomous from revelation. The verse “*They have hearts with which they do not understand*” (Q. 7:179) demonstrates that reason without moral guidance degenerates into arrogance and blindness.

Unlike Cartesian rationalism, which posits *cogito* (“I think, therefore I am”) as the foundation of being, the Qur'an asserts *tawhid* (“Allah is the One, therefore all being derives from Him”) as the foundation of both existence and cognition. In Qur'anic rationalism, the act of thinking is *'ibadah* - a moral act conditioned by *taqwa* (God-consciousness).

Qur'an 2:269 declares, “*He gives wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever is given wisdom has indeed been given abundant good,*” indicating that rational discernment is divine bestowal, not autonomous invention. Hence, Qur'anic rationalism can be understood as theology-infused reason: rational inquiry is valid insofar as it recognises divine order and submits to revelation's boundaries.

The Qur'an repeatedly invites human reasoning (*afala ta'qilun?* - “Will you not use your reason?”) yet simultaneously sets moral and metaphysical limits to reason's independence. This synthesis ensures that rational inquiry becomes spiritually fruitful rather than self-destructive, as exemplified by Iblis, who reasoned logically but disobeyed morally (Q. 7:12).

Therefore, Qur'anic rationalism is a moralised rationalism - a reason purified by humility before divine revelation, not reason enthroned as an idol.

### 17.6.5 The Qur'anic Integration: From Observation to Realisation

The Qur'anic epistemic model unites empirical observation, rational reflection, and spiritual realisation in a tripartite progression: *nazar* (observation) → *tafakkur* (reflection) → *tahqiq* (realisation of truth). Each stage builds upon the previous but culminates only when knowledge transforms into *yaqin* (certainty).

This can be represented through the following conceptual model (explained previously in Table 17.5.5, “Methodological Comparison: From Observation to Realisation”). The Qur'an frames knowledge as a process where external data, internal cognition, and metaphysical awareness form a continuous circle.

Thus, empiricism provides the input (data of creation), rationalism provides the interpretive framework (cognition and reasoning), and revelation provides the teleological purpose (ultimate truth and moral orientation). Without revelation, empiricism becomes relativistic; without observation, rationalism becomes speculative.

This synthesis finds its climax in verses like Qur'an 3:190-191: *“Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and day are signs for those of understanding - those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth.”*

Here, empirical observation (“creation of the heavens and the earth”) merges with rational reflection (“those who reflect”) and culminates in spiritual realisation (“they remember Allah”) - completing the triadic epistemological process.

### 17.6.6 Qur'anic Epistemology as a Model of Integrative Knowing

In contemporary philosophy, the polarisation between empiricism and rationalism has often been moderated by attempts at synthesis (e.g., Kant's transcendental idealism). Yet, even such syntheses remain epistemically immanent - confined to human cognition. The Qur'anic paradigm transcends this by rooting both sense and reason in divine revelation.

It asserts that the epistemic act is simultaneously ontological, moral, and spiritual. Knowledge is not neutral; it transforms the knower and directs the soul toward *haqq*. Qur'an 35:28 declares: *“It is only those who know His servants who fear Allah.”* This verse encapsulates the Qur'anic essence of knowing: to know is to revere; thus, true knowledge cannot lead to atheism or nihilism, for it awakens humility before divine reality.

Modern science's empirical methods, though efficient, often isolate observation from moral accountability. Similarly, modern rationalism often detaches reason from metaphysical purpose. The Qur'an reintegrates both within a sacred teleology: observation becomes contemplation, reason becomes submission, and discovery becomes remembrance (*dhikr*).

### 17.6.7 Toward a Qur'anically Reconstructed Epistemology

The Qur'anic reinterpretation of empiricism and rationalism offers a holistic epistemological framework that integrates the sensory, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions of human knowing. Empiricism (*hiss* and *nazar*) and rationalism (*'aql* and *fikr*) are both legitimate but incomplete without *wahy* (divine revelation), which orients their exercise toward truth and justice.

The Qur'an transforms empiricism into a moral act of witnessing and rationalism into a spiritual act of discernment, thus abolishing the secular divide between subject and object, knower and known. The final aim of all knowledge, according to the Qur'an, is not mastery of nature but recognition of divine unity and order - *inna Allaha bi-kulli shay'in Alim* ("Indeed, Allah is Knowing of all things," Q. 2:282).

Therefore, the Qur'anic epistemology restores the sacred coherence between observation and revelation, reason and faith, making knowledge once again an act of ethical responsibility, metaphysical awareness, and spiritual realisation.

## 17.7 The Hierarchy of Knowing: From 'Ilm to Ma'rifah

### 17.7.1 Introduction: The Qur'anic View of Knowledge as a Spiritual Ascent

In the Qur'anic worldview, knowledge is not a static possession or intellectual construct but a dynamic ascent of consciousness toward divine truth. It proceeds through multiple degrees, each refining perception, intention, and spiritual receptivity. This process transforms the knower, not merely his ideas. The Qur'an repeatedly links knowledge (*'ilm*) with moral purification, faith, and wisdom, implying that to know truly is to become righteous, humble, and aware of one's dependence upon Allah (Q. 35:28; 58:11).

This section explores what may be called the hierarchy of knowing in Qur'anic epistemology - a structured ascent from *'ilm* (cognitive knowledge) to *yaqin* (convictional certainty), from *yaqin* to *ma'rifah* (realised gnosis), and from *ma'rifah* to *hikmah* (wisdom, the culmination of epistemic and ethical perfection). This hierarchy integrates empirical, rational, and spiritual dimensions of knowing within the single metaphysical unity (*tawhid*) of the Divine Reality.

Unlike the linear epistemic models of Western thought, the Qur'anic hierarchy is circular and recursive: every higher stage of knowledge refines and reinterprets the lower one, culminating in recognition that "*To Allah belongs the ultimate knowledge of all things*" (Q. 31:34).

### 17.7.2 The First Level: 'Ilm (Cognitive Knowledge)

The foundation of all Qur'anic epistemology is *'ilm*, which occurs more than 750 times in various forms in the Qur'an. It encompasses awareness, understanding, and factual recognition - whether sensory, rational, or revealed. However, *'ilm* in the Qur'an transcends mere data acquisition; it is a sacred trust (*amanah*) rooted in divine endowment.

Allah introduces *'ilm* as a gift and responsibility: "*He taught Adam the names of all things*" (Q. 2:31). This verse establishes that knowledge is divinely mediated - a bestowed capacity to discern, name, and

relate phenomena within creation. Human knowledge thus begins with divine instruction (*talim*), not autonomous discovery.

Furthermore, *ilm* in the Qur'an carries ethical weight: "Say, are those who know equal to those who do not know?" (Q. 39:9). The measure of knowledge is not quantity but righteousness, for "it is only those who know His servants who fear Allah" (Q. 35:28). This reveals a moralized epistemology: knowledge entails responsibility before God, and ignorance is not an epistemic defect alone but a moral failing.

At this level, *ilm* represents the discursive and empirical stage of knowing - the engagement of intellect (*'aql*) and senses (*hiss*) within the framework of revelation (*wahy*). However, the Qur'an does not allow this stage to become self-sufficient. Without spiritual orientation, *ilm* can become arrogance, as exemplified by Qarun, whose knowledge led to pride and destruction (Q. 28:78). Thus, *ilm* must ascend toward *yaqin* to become spiritually fruitful.

### 17.7.3 The Second Level: *Yaqin* (Certainty of Truth)

The transition from *ilm* to *yaqin* marks the movement from conceptual knowledge to existential conviction. The Qur'an employs the term *yaqin* (certainty) in profound ways, especially in connection with eschatological awareness: "And worship your Lord until there comes to you *al-yaqin*" (Q. 15:99). In this context, *yaqin* is not mere cognitive assurance but unwavering inner conviction grounded in direct awareness of divine reality. The Qur'an distinguishes three stages of certainty:

- *Ilm al-yaqin* - knowledge of certainty (intellectual conviction through evidence).
- *Ayn al-yaqin* - eye of certainty (experiential vision).
- *Haqq al-yaqin* - truth of certainty (complete realisation or unity with truth).

This triad, articulated in Qur'an 102:5-7 and 56:95, encapsulates the ascending degrees of conviction. *Ilm al-yaqin* corresponds to rational certainty - the stage where intellect verifies through proofs. *Ayn al-yaqin* corresponds to empirical witnessing - the soul perceives what the intellect once reasoned. Finally, *Haqq al-yaqin* represents metaphysical union - the truth itself becoming self-evident to the purified heart (*qalb salim*).

In Qur'anic psychology, *yaqin* transforms knowledge into spiritual stability and moral coherence. While *ilm* may coexist with doubt or error, *yaqin* is unshakeable because it is illuminated by divine light (*mur*). The believer who attains *yaqin* sees the world as signs (*ayat*), not as autonomous realities. This certainty removes fear and confusion, grounding ethical conduct in divine trust (*tawakkul*) and hope (*raja*).

Hence, *yaqin* is not epistemic arrogance but epistemic humility - the recognition that truth belongs to Allah alone, and that one's certainty is participation in His self-disclosure. Through *yaqin*, knowledge (*ilm*) becomes transformative, bridging mind and soul.

#### 17.7.4 The Third Level: Ma'rifah (Realised Knowledge or Gnosis)

When *'ilm* and *yaqin* are purified by remembrance (*dhikr*) and moral sincerity (*ikhlas*), they evolve into *ma'rifah* - the realised knowledge of divine presence. *Ma'rifah* (from the root *'arafa*, to know intimately or recognise) is not a technical term of abstract theology, but a Qur'anic and spiritual state of inner recognition of divine reality.

While *'ilm* is discursive and *yaqin* is confirmatory, *ma'rifah* is relational and transformative - the knowledge of the heart by which the knower is changed by what he knows. The Qur'an alludes to this through the verses: "*They recognise the favours of Allah and then deny them*" (Q. 16:83) - implying that *ma'rifah* is a form of knowing inseparable from gratitude, love, and submission.

The prophets exemplify *ma'rifah* as a living cognition of divine nearness: "*We are closer to him than his jugular vein*" (Q. 50:16). This verse defines the essence of *ma'rifah* - awareness of divine immanence (*qurb*), where knowledge is no longer about God but with God.

*Ma'rifah* is the stage where epistemology becomes theology; the knower realises that all knowing is a disclosure of the Divine in creation. The Qur'an calls such people *ulu al-albab* ("*people of inner cores*") who "*remember Allah standing, sitting, and lying down*" (Q. 3:191). Their knowledge becomes *dhikr* (remembrance), and their remembrance becomes *'ilm*.

From an epistemic standpoint, *ma'rifah* corresponds to direct intuition (*kashf*) - an unveiling of truth beyond rational deduction, yet not irrational. It integrates intellect and spirit in a harmony of perception that mirrors divine unity. This level is neither mystical irrationalism nor emotional subjectivity; it is the realisation of truth through moral purification and divine illumination (cf. Q. 24:35 - "*Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth*").

In this state, the knower becomes a mirror of divine attributes: compassionate, just, and wise. Thus, *ma'rifah* culminates not in speculative theology but in ethical embodiment - a life lived in accordance with divine awareness.

#### 17.7.5 The Fourth Level: Hikmah (Wisdom)

At the summit of the epistemic hierarchy lies *hikmah*, which integrates knowledge (*'ilm*), certainty (*yaqin*), and realisation (*ma'rifah*) into practical and ethical perfection. The Qur'an frequently couples *hikmah* with *Kitab* (revelation), indicating that wisdom is the embodiment of divine law in conscious action: "*He teaches them the Book and the Wisdom*" (Q. 2:129).

*Hikmah* is not mere intellectual acumen or pragmatic skill; it is the moral and spiritual art of applying knowledge in harmony with divine justice. As the Qur'an states, "*He gives wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever is given wisdom has indeed been given abundant good*" (Q. 2:269). This verse establishes that wisdom is both divine bestowal and ethical responsibility - a grace that transforms cognition into compassion and theory into righteous praxis.



While *‘ilm* informs, *yaqin* confirms, and *ma‘rifah* transforms, *hikmah* actualises. It manifests as sound judgment, moral integrity, and spiritual insight (*furqan*), enabling discernment between right and wrong (Q. 8:29). It is the stage at which knowledge becomes creative participation in divine order - a reflection of Allah's own attribute *al-Ḥakim* (The Wise).

In Qur'anic anthropology, *hikmah* is the goal of human intellect. It signifies the maturity of the knowing self (*nafs muṭma‘innah*), who perceives the world not as chaos but as divinely ordered meaning. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) exemplifies this stage - his Sunnah embodies wisdom in action, merging revelation and compassion, intellect and intuition.

Thus, *hikmah* completes the ascent of knowledge: it is the flowering of *‘ilm*, the fruit of *yaqin*, and the fragrance of *ma‘rifah*.

### 17.7.6 The Hierarchical Structure Summarised

This table encapsulates the spiritual and cognitive architecture of knowledge as articulated in the Qur'an. It illustrates how the process of knowing (*ma‘rifat al-ḥaqa‘iq*) unfolds through a structured ascent - from *‘ilm* (rational knowledge) to *yaqin* (certainty), to *ma‘rifah* (realised gnosis), and finally to *hikmah* (wisdom). Each stage represents not only a different mode of cognition but also a different degree of being, implying that epistemology and ontology are inseparable in the Qur'anic worldview (Nasr, 1989).

**Table 17.3: The Hierarchical Structure of Knowing in Qur'anic Epistemology: From ‘Ilm to Hikmah**

| Stage | Qur'anic Concept | Nature of Knowledge                    | Dominant Faculty                                  | Spiritual Effect                        | Epistemic Goal                 |
|-------|------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1     | <i>‘Ilm</i>      | Cognitive and discursive knowing       | Intellect (‘ <i>aql</i> ), senses ( <i>ḥiss</i> ) | Awareness and learning                  | Understanding divine order     |
| 2     | <i>Yaqin</i>     | Convictional and existential certainty | Intellect and faith ( <i>iman</i> )               | Stability and trust ( <i>tawakkul</i> ) | Certitude of truth             |
| 3     | <i>Ma‘rifah</i>  | Realised gnosis and inner recognition  | Heart ( <i>qalb</i> ) and spirit ( <i>ruh</i> )   | Intimacy with divine reality            | Realisation of presence        |
| 4     | <i>Hikmah</i>    | Integrative and practical wisdom       | Whole being                                       | Moral perfection and justice            | Harmonisation with divine will |

This hierarchy portrays Qur'anic knowledge as a movement from the outer to the inner, from cognition to illumination. The senses initiate, the intellect interprets, the heart realises, and the soul embodies - all under divine guidance. The process is cumulative, where each level purifies and elevates the previous one.



### Stage 1: 'Ilm - The Foundation of Knowing

The first stage, *'ilm*, is the foundation of human consciousness and inquiry. It corresponds to the rational and empirical awareness that allows the human being to perceive and interpret the signs (*ayat*) of Allah. The dominant faculties here are the *'aql* (intellect) and the *hiss* (senses). Through observation, reflection, and learning, humanity engages the world as a book of divine symbols (Q. 3:190-191).

However, Qur'anic *'ilm* is not value-neutral; it carries ethical and spiritual responsibility (Q. 35:28). It demands humility and awareness of divine sovereignty. Without this moral dimension, *'ilm* can devolve into arrogance or misguidance, as exemplified in the case of Qarun (Q. 28:78). Thus, while *'ilm* opens the door of understanding, it remains incomplete without its spiritual maturation into *yaqin*.

### Stage 2: Yaqin - From Knowing to Certainty

The second stage, *yaqin*, marks the transition from intellectual comprehension to existential conviction. While *'ilm* involves knowing *about* truth, *yaqin* involves being convinced *by* truth. The Qur'an defines *yaqin* as a form of unwavering assurance that transforms thought into inner stability (Q. 15:99).

Here, knowledge becomes internalised; it is no longer speculative but lived. The faculty of *iman* (faith) fuses with *'aql*, grounding the believer in divine trust (*tawakkul*). *Yaqin* liberates the knower from scepticism and replaces doubt with luminous confidence - a state in which ethical responsibility and spiritual awareness coexist harmoniously (Q. 56:95).

### Stage 3: Ma'rifah - The Realisation of Divine Presence

The third stage, *ma'rifah*, transcends cognitive certainty and enters the realm of relational and experiential knowledge. It arises when the heart (*qalb*) and spirit (*ruh*) recognise divine presence not as an abstraction but as an immediate reality: "*We are closer to him than his jugular vein*" (Q. 50:16).

*Ma'rifah* transforms epistemology into spirituality. It is the recognition of Allah through inner illumination, where the knower and the known are united in awareness without ontological confusion. At this stage, knowing is inseparable from loving and obeying. It represents the moral fruition of *'ilm* and *yaqin*, purifying the knower's intention and aligning his perception with divine reality (Q. 24:35).

### Stage 4: Hikmah - The Completion of Knowledge

The highest stage, *hikmah*, represents the perfection of knowledge in action. It is wisdom - the harmony of intellect, faith, and ethical practice. The Qur'an identifies *hikmah* as both a divine gift and an ethical responsibility: "*He grants wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever has been granted wisdom has indeed been granted abundant good*" (Q. 2:269).

At this level, all faculties - intellect, heart, and spirit - function in unison. *Hikmah* unites *'ilm* and *'amal* (action), bridging theory and practice. It is the realisation that true knowledge must serve justice, compassion, and harmony with divine will. Hence, the knower becomes not only aware of truth but also embodies it through character, humility, and moral balance.

### The Structure as a Whole: Knowing as Theomorphic Transformation

Viewed together, the four stages form a vertical continuum of enlightenment - an epistemic ascension that mirrors the Qur'anic journey from outer perception to inner realisation. Knowledge begins with rational engagement (*'ilm*), becomes conviction (*yaqin*), transforms into intimate awareness (*ma'rifah*), and culminates in moral wisdom (*hikmah*).

This ascent illustrates the Qur'an's unique integration of ontology and epistemology: to know is to be transformed. True knowledge (*'ilm al-haqq*) thus leads to ethical responsibility and spiritual fulfilment, reaffirming that the purpose of knowing is not domination over creation but alignment with the Creator (Q. 96:1-5).

In essence, Table 17.6.1 summarises the Qur'anic pedagogy of consciousness - a progression from empirical observation to divine realisation, culminating in wisdom that reflects the unity (*tawhid*) of truth, knowledge, and being.

#### 17.7.7 Knowledge as Theomorphic Ascent

The Qur'anic hierarchy of knowing reveals that true knowledge is not accumulation but transformation. To know is to ascend - from perception to conviction, from conviction to realisation, from realisation to wisdom. This ascent reflects the journey of the soul itself, described in Qur'an 89:27-30: *"O tranquil soul, return to your Lord, well-pleased and well-pleasing. Enter among My servants and enter My Paradise."*

Knowledge in the Qur'an is thus the path of return (*ruju'*) to the Divine. *'Ilm* acquaints the knower with divine order, *yaqin* anchors him in divine truth, *ma'rifah* unveils divine presence, and *hikmah* unites him with divine will. Each stage refines the epistemic mirror until it reflects only the light of *al-Haqq* (The Truth). Therefore, the Qur'an's epistemology culminates in an ethical and ontological transformation: the knower becomes a locus of divine manifestation.

In sum, the hierarchy from *'ilm* to *hikmah* represents the spiritual architecture of knowledge in Islam - a continuous ascent of awareness through faith, reflection, purification, and divine illumination, until the intellect becomes wisdom and the soul becomes light.

### 17.8 Epistemic Ethics: The Moral Use of Knowledge in the Qur'anic Paradigm

#### 17.8.1 Knowledge as Moral Energy

The Qur'an conceptualises *'ilm* (knowledge) not merely as a cognitive achievement but as a moral and spiritual trust (*amanah*). Human beings are described as bearers of this trust, which even the heavens, the earth, and the mountains declined to bear (Q. 33:72). Thus, knowledge in the Qur'anic vision carries ethical weight: it must be pursued, verified, and applied in accordance with divine justice (*'adl*), mercy (*rahmah*), and truth (*haqq*). In this framework, epistemology and ethics are inseparable - for the purpose of knowing is not dominance over creation but guidance within it (Q. 2:185).

The Qur'an rejects the notion of neutral or value-free knowledge. Every act of knowing carries an ethical dimension because it arises within the domain of *takwin* (creation) and *tashri'* (divine law), both of which reflect divine intentionality (Q. 6:73; 59:24). Hence, when knowledge is used to manipulate, corrupt, or deceive, it departs from its Qur'anic foundation. The Qur'an repeatedly warns against those "who know the outward of the world's life, but are heedless of the Hereafter" (Q. 30:7), distinguishing between cognitive capability and moral insight. This separation, the Qur'an asserts, leads to the destruction of both the individual and civilisation.

### 17.8.2 Knowledge and Accountability

A central epistemic ethic in the Qur'an is *mas'uliyah* (accountability). Every act of knowing entails moral responsibility: "*Do not pursue that of which you do not know. Surely hearing, sight, and heart - all of these shall be questioned*" (Q. 17:36). Here, the Qur'an ties the human faculties of knowing directly to moral judgment. Knowledge is not simply accumulated data; it becomes a moral test of how one perceives, interprets, and acts upon reality. This is why the Qur'an describes false knowledge as a form of *zulm* (injustice): when one asserts what is untrue or conceals the truth, one commits a moral violation against both reason and revelation (Q. 2:42).

This principle redefines epistemic authority. Authority in knowledge arises not from social position or institutional recognition but from alignment with truth (*haqq*). Those who "*conceal what Allah has revealed*" (Q. 2:159) or "*argue about Allah without knowledge, guidance, or an illuminating Book*" (Q. 22:8) represent the epistemic failure that corrupts societies. Thus, the Qur'anic ethic demands that knowledge must be transparent, truthful, and accountable to divine reality - not subservient to material interests or human arrogance.

### 17.8.3 The Ethics of Discovery and Use

The Qur'an encourages inquiry (*tafkir, tadabbur, ta'aqqul*) as a divine command, yet it simultaneously restricts inquiry within ethical bounds. Human curiosity must not transgress the limits of divine wisdom or lead to harm (*fasad*). As the Qur'an declares: "*Do not cause corruption upon the earth after it has been set right*" (Q. 7:56). In modern terms, this verse functions as an epistemic injunction against unethical experimentation and technological misuse. Scientific discovery, therefore, must operate under the principle of *islah* (rectification) rather than *ifsad* (corruption).

In the Qur'anic worldview, moral intention (*niyyah*) determines the legitimacy of discovery. Knowledge acquired for self-aggrandisement or exploitation of others violates the Qur'anic ethic. Conversely, knowledge sought to alleviate suffering, enhance justice, or deepen awareness of creation becomes an act of worship (*ibadah*). The Qur'an declares: "*And do not walk on the earth exultantly. Indeed, you will never tear the earth apart*" (Q. 17:37), which metaphorically condemns epistemic arrogance - the illusion that human knowledge is self-sufficient and unrestricted.

### 17.8.4 The Corruption of Knowledge: Misuse and Deviation

Throughout the Qur'an, examples abound of communities destroyed not due to ignorance but due to the misuse of knowledge. The story of Qarun (Korah) exemplifies this moral warning. He possessed vast

knowledge of worldly affairs but used it to dominate and oppress (Q. 28:76-83). The Qur'an records his downfall as a symbol of epistemic corruption - when intellect is divorced from humility and gratitude. Similarly, Iblis's rebellion is rooted in intellectual pride; he "knew" but refused to obey the moral truth (Q. 7:12-13). Hence, both cases represent the degeneration of knowledge into hubris (*istikbar*), leading to spiritual ruin.

Modern civilisation faces a similar challenge: the proliferation of knowledge without ethical orientation. The Qur'an warns that knowledge devoid of divine consciousness becomes destructive: "*They know the names of things, yet they do not understand*" (cf. Q. 2:31-33). In this sense, the Qur'an anticipates the modern dilemma - technological advancement coupled with moral decline - and calls for an epistemic reform grounded in *taqwa* (God-consciousness). Knowledge, when purified by *taqwa*, transforms from mere information into wisdom (*hikmah*) that guides moral action (Q. 2:269).

### 17.8.5 Epistemic Justice and the Social Function of Knowledge

The Qur'anic epistemic ethic extends to the societal level, where knowledge must promote justice and equity. "*Stand firm for justice, witnesses for Allah, even against yourselves*" (Q. 4:135) represents not merely legal instruction but epistemological command: truth must be upheld even when it contradicts personal or collective interests. The production of knowledge, therefore, cannot be ethically neutral; it must serve truth and human welfare. This directly contrasts with modern paradigms that commodify knowledge for profit or power.

In the Qur'anic paradigm, *'ilm* must serve *'adl* (justice). When knowledge perpetuates inequality, deception, or ecological harm, it ceases to be true *'ilm*. The Qur'an's repeated condemnation of *kadhīb* (falsehood) and *zulm* (oppression) extends to intellectual practices that distort truth or suppress dissenting understanding. Hence, Qur'anic epistemology demands epistemic justice - ensuring that knowledge remains accessible, honest, and aligned with divine truth.

### 17.8.6 The Integration of Moral and Cognitive Dimensions

The Qur'an consistently integrates moral and cognitive dimensions of human consciousness. The heart (*qalb*), intellect (*'aql*), and soul (*nafs*) form a unified field of knowing where moral purity enables cognitive clarity. "*It is not the eyes that are blind, but the hearts within the chests*" (Q. 22:46) reflects that moral blindness precedes intellectual failure. Thus, ethical corruption undermines epistemic capacity; the morally heedless cannot perceive truth even if they possess data. Conversely, the purified heart becomes a locus of divine illumination: "*Allah expands the breast for Islam*" (Q. 6:125), symbolising openness to truth through humility and sincerity.

The Qur'an's epistemic ethics thus transform cognition into moral praxis. Every act of reflection (*tafakkur*) and verification (*tahqiq*) becomes an act of devotion. Knowledge, in this vision, is not merely descriptive but transformative - it purifies the knower and reforms society. The ultimate purpose of *'ilm* is not domination but guidance (*huda*).

### 17.8.7 Knowledge as a Sacred Trust

In Qur'anic epistemology, the moral use of knowledge defines the boundary between civilisation and destruction. Knowledge that forgets its divine source becomes an idol; knowledge that remembers its moral purpose becomes light (*mur*). The Qur'an declares: "*Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth*" (Q. 24:35), suggesting that all true knowledge must reflect this light - illuminating both intellect and conscience.

Therefore, the Qur'anic paradigm envisions an epistemic ethics rooted in *tawhid*: unity between knowing, being, and valuing. This unity rejects dualisms between science and morality, intellect and faith, or theory and action. The true knower ( *'alim*) does not accumulate information, but rather one who embodies divine wisdom in life. Thus, epistemology becomes a pathway of moral awakening - the realisation that knowing is an act of serving truth, sustaining justice, and manifesting the divine trust within creation.

## 17.9 The Problem of Value-Neutral Knowledge in Modern Science

### 17.9.1 The Myth of Neutrality

Modern science, emerging from Enlightenment rationalism, is often premised on the belief that knowledge can be *value-neutral* - that human inquiry can operate independently of moral, metaphysical, or theological commitments. This claim, central to positivism and empiricism, presents science as an objective enterprise concerned solely with facts and not with values (Comte, 1853; Weber, 1949). Yet, the Qur'an rejects such epistemic bifurcation. Knowledge ( *'ilm*) in the Qur'an is never neutral because it is always embedded within *tawhid* (divine unity), which integrates fact, meaning, and value within a single ontological reality.

In Qur'anic discourse, the pursuit of knowledge is inherently ethical because knowing is an act of engagement with creation - a creation that reflects divine purpose and order (Q. 3:190-191; 67:3-4). The knower is therefore morally implicated in how and why they seek, interpret, and apply knowledge. The claim of neutrality, from a Qur'anic standpoint, represents a profound epistemic illusion: it abstracts knowledge from responsibility, thereby transforming it into a tool of domination rather than guidance.

Thus, the "problem of value-neutral knowledge" in modern science is not simply methodological but ontological - it reflects a fragmented worldview that divorces fact from meaning, reason from revelation, and inquiry from conscience. The Qur'an's integrated epistemology exposes this fragmentation and offers a corrective framework rooted in moral intentionality (*niyyah*), divine accountability (*mas'uliyah*), and the ethical purpose (*maqṣad*) of knowledge.

### 17.9.2 The Philosophical Genesis of Value-Neutral Science

Modern science's detachment from value originates in the 17th-century mechanistic paradigm, where nature was reconceived as inert matter subject to mathematical laws (Descartes, 1637/1985; Bacon, 1620/2000). This mechanistic view eliminated teleology - purpose - from natural philosophy, reducing existence to observable phenomena. By the 19th century, positivism formalised this view: all legitimate knowledge was said to arise from sensory observation and empirical verification, while metaphysical or moral claims were deemed meaningless (Comte, 1853).

From the Qur'anic standpoint, this historical trajectory represents an epistemic amputation. The Qur'an defines knowledge as awareness of the *ayat* - the "signs" of God in creation, revelation, and the self (Q. 41:53). To observe without perceiving meaning is to remain in partial ignorance. The Qur'an repeatedly critiques those who "look but do not see, hear but do not listen, and think but do not understand" (Q. 7:179; 22:46), describing them as having lost the integrative consciousness necessary for true knowledge.

Modern science's self-proclaimed neutrality thus contradicts the Qur'anic logic of discovery, where observation (*nazar*), reflection (*tafakkur*), and discernment (*ta'qqul*) are morally directed activities. The Qur'an does not separate epistemic accuracy from moral rectitude; rather, it asserts that cognition itself is conditioned by moral and spiritual states (Q. 2:10; 47:17). Hence, "neutrality" is a moral fiction - every inquiry presupposes an orientation toward or away from truth.

### 17.9.3 The Qur'anic Critique of Detached Knowing

The Qur'an identifies several epistemic pathologies that parallel the modern notion of detached or value-free knowing:

- Knowing Without Awareness of the Whole (*Juz' iyyah* without *Kulliyyah*) - The Qur'an condemns partial knowledge that ignores divine unity. "*They know the outward of the life of this world, but of the Hereafter they are heedless*" (Q. 30:7). This verse exposes a key flaw in empiricism: the reduction of reality to its material dimension, ignoring metaphysical and ethical significance.
- Knowledge Without Purpose (*Ilm bila 'Amal*) - The Qur'an rebukes those who possess knowledge yet fail to act rightly: "*The example of those who were entrusted with the Torah but did not bear it is like that of a donkey carrying books*" (Q. 62:5). The principle applies universally - knowledge that is divorced from moral purpose becomes empty weight.
- Knowledge That Corrupts (*Ilm al-Mufsid*) - The Qur'an warns of knowledge that leads to arrogance and corruption: "*Qarun was of the people of Moses, but he behaved arrogantly toward them... he said, 'I was only given it because of knowledge I possess'*" (Q. 28:76-78). This narrative reflects the epistemic arrogance of modern technocracy, where scientific mastery replaces moral humility.

Through these examples, the Qur'an constructs an ethical ontology of knowledge in which knowing is inseparable from moral being. Knowledge, if not sanctified by *taqwa* (God-consciousness), degenerates into *jahl murakkab* (compound ignorance) - the illusion of knowing while being unaware of one's blindness.

### 17.9.4 The Myth of Objectivity and the Human Subject

The modern scientific method presumes an impersonal observer capable of complete detachment from the object of study. The Qur'an, however, portrays the human knower as a moral subject whose perception is always conditioned by inner states. "*It is not the eyes that are blind, but the hearts within the chests*" (Q. 22:46). The verse subverts the ideal of objectivity by affirming that vision - physical or intellectual - depends upon moral integrity.



From a Qur'anic standpoint, *objectivity* does not mean emotional or ethical detachment; it means alignment with *haqq* (truth). Truth, in the Qur'an, is not constructed through consensus or experimentation alone but discerned through correspondence with divine order. Hence, the Qur'anic knower is both subjective (in moral responsibility) and objective (in recognition of divine reality).

Modern science, by contrast, treats the observer as morally inert, reducing human agency to procedural compliance. The consequence is epistemic alienation - the scientist studies life while remaining ethically estranged from it. This alienation breeds crises in fields such as biotechnology, artificial intelligence, and environmental science, where technical capacity outpaces moral comprehension. The Qur'an diagnoses this disjunction as *fasad* - corruption resulting from human arrogance (Q. 30:41).

### 17.9.5 Knowledge and Power: The Modern Epistemic Crisis

The illusion of neutrality conceals the power dynamics inherent in modern knowledge production. Science, in the Qur'an's moral lens, becomes corrupted when it serves domination rather than stewardship (*khilafah*). The Qur'an declares: "*Do not transgress in the earth after it has been set right*" (Q. 7:56). The command situates human inquiry within ethical limits: knowledge must sustain balance (*mizan*), not disrupt it.

When knowledge becomes an instrument of exploitation - whether economic, political, or ecological - it violates its divine function. The Qur'an warns that "*when authority is given to those who corrupt, they ruin the land and destroy its crops and progeny*" (Q. 2:205). The verse describes a universal epistemic pathology: the detachment of knowledge from responsibility produces injustice and environmental decay.

Contemporary manifestations of this crisis include climate change, technological surveillance, and militarised innovation. Each arises from knowledge unmoored from moral purpose. The Qur'an's epistemology calls for *'ilm muḥaddad bi'l-akḥlaq* - knowledge bounded by ethics - where truth and justice guide every application.

### 17.9.6 The Qur'anic Reconstruction of Scientific Value

The Qur'an provides a conceptual framework for integrating value and knowledge through three interrelated principles:

- Unity (*Tawḥid*) - All phenomena derive from a single source of truth. Hence, knowledge must reflect the unity of the Creator and creation (Q. 6:73; 59:24). Scientific inquiry is an exploration of divine order, not its negation.
- Purpose (*Maqṣad*) - Every act of knowing has a teleological aim: to enhance guidance (*huda*) and justice (*'adl*). The Qur'an asserts that creation is not purposeless: "*We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them in vain*" (Q. 38:27). To study without seeking purpose is to violate the nature of existence itself.
- Accountability (*Mas'uliyyah*) - Humans will be questioned for their knowledge: "*Then you will surely be asked that Day about the blessings*" (Q. 102:8). Knowledge is a divine blessing and thus a trust (*amanah*). Its misuse constitutes betrayal.



Through these principles, the Qur'an reconstructs the scientific ethos. Knowledge must not be confined to instrumental utility but directed toward moral realisation. In this sense, *tahqiq* (verification) replaces *experimentum* as the epistemic criterion - verification includes not only factual accuracy but moral validity.

### 17.9.7 Ethical Implications for Contemporary Sciences

In the contemporary world, the claim of neutrality justifies policies and technologies that ignore moral and spiritual consequences. Genetic modification, artificial intelligence, and nuclear power exemplify this separation. The Qur'an, however, calls for an ethic of restraint and reverence. "*And do not walk upon the earth arrogantly*" (Q. 17:37). Scientific progress that disregards humility transgresses divine boundaries.

A Qur'an-based science would redefine research priorities. It would integrate environmental care (*hifz al-bi'ah*), social justice, and compassion into its objectives. Knowledge would be evaluated not merely by predictive power but by its contribution to human flourishing and cosmic balance. The Qur'an envisions a civilisation where knowledge serves mercy (*rahmah*): "*And We have not sent you but as a mercy to the worlds*" (Q. 21:107). This mercy is not limited to revelation but extends to the ethos of discovery itself.

### 17.9.8 The Qur'anic Solution: Knowledge as Ethical Illumination

Against the modern myth of neutrality, the Qur'an proposes *mur al-ilm* - the light of knowledge. "*Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth*" (Q. 24:35). This metaphor signifies that knowledge is intrinsically luminous when aligned with divine truth. The Qur'an does not call for rejection of science but for its re-illumination - restoring its moral and spiritual purpose.

True objectivity, therefore, is achieved not by detachment but by purification of intention. The knower must align the intellect (*'aql*) and conscience (*qalb*) to perceive truth without distortion. Such alignment transforms knowledge from an instrument of control into an act of stewardship.

The Qur'an's vision culminates in the unity of truth and goodness - the epistemic *tawhid* where to know rightly is to act. Neutral knowledge, being metaphysically impossible, must give way to morally grounded knowing that recognises the sacredness of creation and the responsibility of humanity within it.

### 17.9.9 From Value-Neutrality to Value-Integration

The problem of value-neutral knowledge in modern science is ultimately the problem of moral amnesia. By isolating fact from value, modernity has produced an epistemology without conscience - powerful yet blind. The Qur'an restores balance by re-integrating ontology, epistemology, and ethics. Every act of knowing is simultaneously an act of moral choice.

Thus, the Qur'an offers an alternative scientific ethos: inquiry as worship, discovery as stewardship, and knowledge as trust. The solution to the epistemic crisis lies not in more data but in deeper awareness of responsibility. The Qur'an's closing admonition is decisive: "*And say, 'My Lord, increase me in knowledge'*" (Q. 20:114). This prayer encapsulates the Qur'anic ethos - knowledge must grow, but only within humility, gratitude, and reverence for the Source of all truth.

## 17.10 Toward a Qur'anically-Informed Scientific Paradigm

### 17.10.1 Introduction: The Crisis of Epistemic Fragmentation

The modern scientific worldview, since the Enlightenment, has cultivated an unprecedented mastery over nature through empirical observation and technological innovation. Yet it has also engendered a crisis of meaning, where knowledge has been severed from its moral and metaphysical roots. The Qur'an critiques this form of *'ilm* devoid of *hikmah* (wisdom), where human discovery is reduced to material functionality without remembrance (*dhikr*) of its Source. As the Qur'an declares: "*They know the outward of the life of this world, but of the Hereafter they are heedless*" (Q. 30:7).

This verse precisely identifies the epistemic limitation of modern science-it grasps the phenomenal but neglects the noumenal; it measures processes but overlooks purpose. The Qur'an does not reject observation (*ru'yah, basar, nazar*), but situates it within a teleological frame where every discovery should lead to *ta'abbur* (deep reflection) and *tasbiḥ* (recognition of divine perfection). Thus, the challenge before contemporary epistemology is not technological but spiritual: to reintegrate human knowing with divine meaning.

A Qur'anically-informed scientific paradigm, therefore, must restore the vertical axis of knowledge that connects empirical inquiry to metaphysical accountability. It must transform the *instrumental* pursuit of facts into a *theomorphic* journey toward truth (*al-haqq*). Such a reconstruction does not imply the negation of modern science, but its reorientation within the higher logic of Qur'anic epistemology.

### 17.10.2 From Secular Empiricism to Tawḥidic Science

The foundation of Qur'anic science lies in the concept of *tawḥid*-the ontological unity of all existence under divine sovereignty. In contrast to modern secular empiricism, which isolates phenomena into mechanistic chains, the Qur'an views the cosmos as a unified, purposeful, and morally significant text (*Kitab al-kawn*). Each natural event is an *ayah* (sign), not merely a datum. "*Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day are signs (ayat) for those who reflect*" (Q. 3:190).

Here, *ayah* signifies more than a physical event-it is a hermeneutic gateway between the seen (*shahadah*) and the unseen (*ghayb*). Thus, the Qur'anic scientist is not a detached observer but an interpreter of divine language. His method is empirical in process yet theological in intention.

Under *tawḥid*, knowledge is a sacred trust (*amanah*), and observation becomes worship (*'ibadah*). The act of inquiry, when purified of arrogance, becomes participation in divine wisdom. The Qur'anic paradigm transforms the epistemic posture from control to contemplation, from reductionism to integration.

Therefore, the new paradigm must abandon the dichotomy between "scientific" and "religious" knowledge. The Qur'an affirms that *'ilm* in its true sense encompasses both matter and meaning, the physical and the metaphysical. It teaches that discovery without remembrance leads to tyranny, whereas

remembrance without discovery leads to stagnation. The Qur'anic balance between *'aql* (reason) and *qalb* (heart) is the essence of this new synthesis.

### 17.10.3 The Three Dimensions of Qur'anic Scientific Paradigm

A Qur'anically-informed science rests on three interrelated dimensions: ontological unity, epistemological integration, and ethical accountability.

**Ontological Unity (Tawḥid as Metaphysical Foundation):** Modern science posits a pluralistic ontology—an autonomous, self-existing universe governed by impersonal laws. The Qur'an, however, establishes that all existence is contingent upon divine will (*kun fa-yakun*; Q. 36:82). Nature, therefore, is not self-subsistent but theophanic: it manifests divine attributes (*asma' al-ḥusna*).

In this framework, scientific laws are not mere regularities but reflections of divine constancy (*sunnat Allah*; Q. 33:62). Studying nature is thus an act of reading divine traces. This ontological unity dissolves the Cartesian dualism between subject and object, mind and matter, observer and observed. Every particle bears witness (*shahadah*) to divine order.

**Epistemological Integration ('Aql and Qalb in Harmony):** The Qur'an does not privilege intellect over heart, but harmonises them as dual instruments of knowing. Rational deduction (*ta'aqqul*) and moral intuition (*tafaqquh*) must operate in concert. Modern empiricism isolates cognition from conscience, while the Qur'an fuses analysis with awe. As it declares: “*Only those who know fear Allah among His servants*” (Q. 35:28).

Fear here signifies not terror but reverent consciousness (*taqwa*), the ultimate epistemic virtue. A Qur'anically-informed scientist, therefore, measures not only the precision of data but the purity of intent. His method becomes an ethical act, guided by divine remembrance.

**Ethical Accountability ('Ilm as Amanah):** Knowledge of the Qur'an is a moral responsibility. Those who possess it are warned: “*Do not conceal knowledge which Allah has made clear*” (Q. 2:159).

In the modern age, scientific neutrality has often led to moral evasion—technological progress serving destruction, not compassion. The Qur'anic paradigm restores accountability: knowledge must serve justice (*'adl*), mercy (*rahmah*), and balance (*mizan*). Science must be judged by its contribution to life (*ḥayah*), not power.

Therefore, every discovery demands ethical self-scrutiny: does it align with *fitrah* (the natural moral order)? Does it preserve *mizan* (balance in creation)? The Qur'an warns that human excess leads to corruption: “*Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of people have earned*” (Q. 30:41).

Thus, ethics is not an external regulation but an internal epistemic condition—the heart's orientation toward truth.

#### 17.10.4 Methodological Transformation: From Measurement to Meaning

The Qur'an invites humanity not merely to measure reality but to *read* it (*iqra' bi-ismi rabbika*; 96:1). Modern science has mastered measurement but lost the art of reading signs. The Qur'an's method is semiotic-it treats the universe as a symbolic text whose signs unfold divine realities. This redefinition transforms experiment into contemplation and theory into remembrance. A Qur'anically-informed methodology includes:

- Empirical engagement (*nazar*, observation): rigorous and disciplined examination of natural phenomena.
- Rational reflection (*tafakkur*, reasoning): identifying patterns, causes, and meanings within divine order.
- Moral discernment (*taqwa*, ethical vigilance): aligning discovery with divine values.
- Spiritual realisation (*ma'rifah*, direct recognition): interior assimilation of truth through remembrance and humility.

Such a framework transcends positivism without abandoning empiricism-it integrates sensory, rational, and spiritual cognition into a single process of divine unveiling.

Whereas modern experimentation isolates the object from its sacred dimension, Qur'anic *tahqiq* (verification) situates all knowledge within the horizon of truth. It demands that the knower be transformed by what he knows. Hence, epistemology becomes a form of *tazkiyah* (purification), where knowing is inseparable from being.

#### 17.10.5 The Vision of a Tawhīdic Science

The Qur'an envisions a science that harmonises cosmic understanding with moral purpose-a *tawhīdic science* rooted in unity, meaning, and justice. This science does not reject modern achievements but redeems them from fragmentation. It transforms laboratories into sanctuaries of reflection and turns technology into an instrument of compassion. Such a paradigm would:

- Restore teleology-science must serve the divine purpose of sustaining life and justice.
- Reinstating moral intentionality-knowledge must emerge from humility and gratitude, not domination.
- Reintegrate metaphysics-laws of nature reflect divine wisdom, not mere chance.
- Reaffirm human trusteeship (*khilafah*)-the scientist is guardian of creation, not its exploiter.

In this vision, Qur'anic science becomes a form of *ibadah*-serving Allah through the search for truth. It embraces experiment but within the remembrance of the Creator; it values logic but under the light of revelation. It envisions human knowledge as a bridge between the visible and the invisible, the finite and the eternal.

The comparative synthesis presented in Table 1.4 illustrates the fundamental contrasts between the modern scientific paradigm and the Qur'anically-informed scientific paradigm across ontological,

epistemological, and ethical dimensions. Each category reflects not merely a methodological divergence but a deeper philosophical orientation concerning the nature of reality, the purpose of knowledge, and the moral responsibility of the knower.

**Table 17.4: Comparative Synthesis - From Modern Science to Qur'anic Science**

| Aspect                      | Modern Scientific Paradigm                | Qur'anically-Informed Scientific Paradigm                                        |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Ontological Basis</b>    | Materialist, mechanistic universe         | Tawḥidic unity of all existence under Divine will                               |
| <b>Epistemic Goal</b>       | Control and prediction                    | Understanding and reverence ( <i>ma'rifah, taqwa</i> )                           |
| <b>Methodological Focus</b> | Empirical observation and experimentation | Integrated <i>tahqiq</i> (verification through intellect, heart, and revelation) |
| <b>Moral Orientation</b>    | Value-neutral, utilitarian                | Ethically accountable, purposeful                                                |
| <b>View of Nature</b>       | Object to be mastered                     | Sign ( <i>ayah</i> ) to be interpreted                                           |
| <b>Status of Knower</b>     | Detached observer                         | Moral agent and trustee ( <i>khaliiah</i> )                                      |
| <b>Outcome of Knowledge</b> | Technological power, domination           | Spiritual humility, justice, balance ( <i>mizan</i> )                            |
| <b>Ultimate Aim</b>         | Material progress                         | Divine nearness ( <i>qurb ila Allah</i> )                                        |

**Ontological Basis:** Modern science is grounded in a materialist ontology, wherein the universe is conceived as a self-subsisting mechanism governed by impersonal physical laws. Reality, within this worldview, is quantifiable and reducible to matter, motion, and measurable forces. The Qur'an, however, situates ontology within the principle of tawḥid-the unity of all existence under the sovereignty of Allah. The cosmos is not autonomous but contingent, continuously sustained by divine command (*amr Allah*). This ontological unity transforms scientific inquiry into a theological reading of the universe, where every law of nature becomes an expression of divine regularity (*sunnat Allah*; Q. 33:62). Thus, while modern science seeks causation, Qur'anic science seeks *signification*-the meaning embedded within causality.

**Epistemic Goal:** In the modern framework, knowledge is pursued for control and prediction -to harness natural forces for human benefit. This anthropocentric model of knowing often culminates in domination rather than understanding. The Qur'an, conversely, defines the goal of *'ilm* as recognition and reverence. True knowledge leads to *ma'rifah* (awareness of divine reality) and *taqwa* (moral consciousness). As the

Qur'an declares, “*Only those who know fear Allah*” (Q. 35:28). Hence, the ultimate telos of knowing is not mastery but submission; not exploitation but realisation.

**Methodological Focus:** Modern science privileges empirical observation and experimentation as the exclusive criteria of truth. Its method is inductive, cumulative, and instrumental. The Qur'an, while affirming empirical engagement (*nazar, ru'yah*), integrates it into a holistic process of *tahqiq* (verification through intellect, heart, and revelation). This synthesis involves both rational reflection (*tafakkur*) and moral discernment (*taqwa*). Observation becomes sacred when oriented by remembrance (*dhikr*), transforming data into divine signs (*ayat*). Thus, Qur'anic methodology is inclusive-it accepts empirical validity but situates it within an ethical and metaphysical framework.

**Moral Orientation:** Perhaps the most decisive distinction lies in moral grounding. Modern science often claims value neutrality, detaching knowledge from ethics. The Qur'an rejects this separation, asserting that knowledge without moral guidance leads to corruption (*fasad*). As stated: “*Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of people have earned*” (Q. 30:41). In the Qur'anic paradigm, knowledge is a trust (*amanah*), and the scientist is morally accountable before God. Discovery must serve justice (*'adl*), balance (*mizan*), and mercy (*rahmah*), not power or profit.

**View of Nature:** Modernity views nature as an object to be mastered, an inert resource for human consumption. The Qur'an redefines nature as a sign (*ayah*) to be interpreted, a living mirror of divine wisdom. This hermeneutical approach transforms the scientist into a contemplative reader rather than a manipulator. Every natural process becomes a verse in the cosmic scripture (*Kitab al-kawn*), calling for reflection and humility.

**Status of Knower and Ultimate Aim:** In modern thought, the knower is a detached observer, autonomous and self-referential. The Qur'an, by contrast, defines the knower as a moral trustee (*khaliiah*), whose cognition entails responsibility toward creation. The ultimate aim of knowledge is divine nearness (*qurb ila Allah*), achieved through service, justice, and spiritual realisation -not mere material progress.

In sum, the table encapsulates a profound epistemic reorientation -from measurement to meaning, from utility to wisdom, and from self-reliance to divine consciousness. The Qur'anically-informed paradigm does not abolish science but redeems it, restoring harmony between intellect and revelation, matter and spirit, knowledge and morality. It calls humanity to reimagine science as a sacred act of reading the universe in the name of its Creator (*iqra' bi-ismi rabbika*; Q. 96:1), where the pursuit of *'ilm* culminates in *hikmah*, and *hikmah* in the remembrance of Allah.

### 17.10.6 The Future of Knowledge and the Return to Revelation

The Qur'an's epistemology offers not an alternative to science but its resurrection -awakening it from moral amnesia and metaphysical blindness. A Qur'anically-informed scientific paradigm recognises that true knowledge must unify observation with meaning, intellect with heart, and discovery with devotion.

The future of science, if guided by revelation, may reconcile human ingenuity with divine responsibility. It may once again transform inquiry into worship and invention into stewardship. The Qur'an's call to

“reflect” (*yatafakkarun*), “verify” (*fa-tahaqqaqu*), and “know” (*ta‘lamun*) is ultimately a call to awaken the soul of civilisation-to see in every atom a sign of the Infinite.

Thus concludes Chapter 17, wherein the Qur’an and modern science have been juxtaposed not as adversaries but as stages of human awakening. The next step, in Part VI: Reconstruction of Islamic Epistemology in Contemporary Context, must elaborate how this integrated vision can reshape contemporary thought, education, and research -restoring knowledge to its sacred horizon where *‘ilm* leads to *ḥikmah*, and *ḥikmah* to divine remembrance.



## Chapter 18: Qur'anic Research Methodology in Modern Disciplines

The modern age stands at a crossroads of intellectual crisis and opportunity. While scientific progress has expanded human knowledge to an unprecedented scale, it has simultaneously fragmented meaning and detached inquiry from its moral and spiritual origins. The Qur'an, as a comprehensive epistemic text, offers not merely religious guidance but an ontological and methodological framework that unifies revelation (*wahy*), reason (*'aql*), and the cosmic sign (*ayah*) into a coherent system of knowing. This chapter explores how Qur'anic epistemology can be integrated into the methodological foundations of contemporary disciplines, thus reconstructing the ethical and metaphysical dimensions of modern research.

In Qur'anic discourse, knowledge (*'ilm*) is not an autonomous human possession but a divine trust (*amanah*) entrusted to humankind for stewardship and justice. The verse “*He taught Adam all the names*” (Q. 2:31) symbolises the divine bestowal of conceptual and linguistic capacity—an epistemic power rooted in revelation rather than detached empiricism. The Qur'an establishes a dynamic interaction between revelation and reason, between the seen and the unseen (*al-ghayb wa al-shahadah*) (Q. 59:22), reminding us that genuine knowledge arises when the intellect operates within the moral and metaphysical boundaries defined by divine truth.

The goal of Qur'anic research, therefore, transcends the accumulation of data; it seeks *taḥqiq*—the verification of reality through both empirical observation and spiritual discernment. The Qur'an repeatedly commands humanity to “*travel through the earth and observe*” (Q. 29:20), establishing empirical engagement as a divine obligation. Yet, it equally cautions against arrogance in knowledge, reminding that “*of knowledge, you have been given but little*” (Q. 17:85). This dialectic between humility and inquiry forms the ethical essence of Qur'anic methodology: knowledge must serve truth, not the ego; society, not domination.

In contrast to the fragmented specialisations of modern academia, the Qur'an envisions knowledge as holistic—integrating cosmology, ethics, and social responsibility. The Qur'anic researcher is not merely an observer but a moral agent engaged in *'amal ṣaliḥ* (righteous action). Thus, research becomes a form of worship (*'ibadah*), where the pursuit of truth is simultaneously an act of servitude and moral accountability. The ethical dimensions of intention (*niyyah*), trust (*amanah*), and justice (*'adl*) are not optional but foundational criteria of methodological integrity.

This chapter develops the theoretical and practical framework of a Qur'anically grounded research methodology applicable across both natural and social sciences. Section 18.1 elaborates the triadic foundation of revelation, reason, and sign; Section 18.2 examines methodological ethics—linking intention, objectivity, and trust; Sections 18.3 and 18.4 demonstrate integration within natural and human sciences, respectively; Section 18.5 offers case studies from environmental ethics, bioethics, and economics; and Section 18.6 concludes with an exploration of future challenges and horizons. Together, these sections articulate a unified epistemology that seeks to restore the balance between empirical rigour and divine

purpose, where research becomes not merely a tool for discovery but a means of cultivating wisdom (*ḥikmah*).

## 18.1 Foundational Principles - Revelation (Wahy, وحى), Reason (‘Aql, عقل), and Sign (Ayah, آية)

The foundation of Qur’anic epistemology rests upon three interdependent principles: revelation (*wahy*), reason (‘*aql*), and sign (*ayah*). Together they constitute a triadic structure through which divine truth is disclosed, rationally interpreted, and empirically verified in the universe. This triad forms the metaphysical and methodological backbone of all Qur’anic inquiry. Unlike Western epistemological systems that bifurcate faith and reason or isolate observation from transcendence, the Qur’an integrates the revelatory and the rational into a single continuum of truth. This synthesis ensures that all authentic knowledge (‘*ilm ḥaqq*) originates in divine revelation and returns to divine purpose.

### 18.1.1 Wahy (وحى): Revelation as the Primordial Source of Knowledge

Revelation (*wahy*) in the Qur’an represents the divine communication of truth from the infinite to the finite intellect. The Qur’an defines its own revelatory process in ontological terms: *“Indeed, it is a revelation (wahy) from the Lord of the worlds. The trustworthy Spirit brought it down upon your heart so that you may be one of the warners, in a clear Arabic tongue.”* (Q. 26:192-195)

Here, revelation is not merely verbal or propositional but existential - a direct transmission of divine knowledge through the medium of spirit and heart (*ruh* and *qalb*). This model of revelation transcends the human faculties of deduction and induction. It constitutes a vertical descent of knowledge (from al-‘*Ilm al-Laduni*, the divine knowledge) which grounds all other forms of cognition. As the Qur’an asserts: *“He taught man what he did not know.”* (Q. 96:5)

This teaching (*talim*) indicates that revelation is both the origin and criterion of all legitimate knowledge. Without the epistemic light of *wahy*, human reason remains partial, speculative, and vulnerable to distortion (Nasr, 2007). In contrast, revelation anchors reason within an ontological hierarchy where truth is not constructed but discovered - an uncovering of what already exists within divine reality (*al-ḥaqq*).

Therefore, *wahy* serves not as an interruption of rational inquiry but as its illumination. The Qur’an invites rational engagement with revelation: *“Will they not then reflect upon the Qur’an, or are there locks upon their hearts?”* (Q. 47:24).

Here, reflection (*tadabbur*) becomes a duty. Revelation thus operates as the source, while human reflection serves as the method of understanding truth.

### 18.1.2 ‘Aql (عقل): Reason as the Instrument of Discernment

The Qur’an consistently affirms the human faculty of reason (‘*aql*) as the essential medium through which divine signs are interpreted. The term ‘*aql*-literally meaning “to bind” or “to connect”, implies the act of linking knowledge to moral restraint. In over fifty verses, the Qur’an calls upon humankind to use this

faculty, e.g.: *“Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day are signs for those who possess intellect (ulu al-albab).”* (Q. 3:190).

Reason in the Qur'an is not autonomous in the Enlightenment sense. Rather, it is a relational and ethical faculty entrusted with interpreting the divine order and aligning human understanding with divine justice ('*adl*). The Qur'anic concept of '*aql*' integrates cognitive discernment with moral accountability. To know, in Qur'anic terms, is to be responsible before God for the right use of that knowledge: *“And do not pursue that of which you do not know. Indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart-all of these will be questioned.”* (Q. 17:36).

This verse establishes that epistemic responsibility extends across all faculties of perception (*sam*, *baṣar*, *Fu'ad*), demonstrating that Qur'anic epistemology is embodied and moral. Knowledge divorced from conscience leads to *ẓulm* (injustice) and *kibr* (arrogance), both of which the Qur'an condemns as epistemic corruption.

Thus, '*aql*' functions as the bridge between revelation and experience. It decodes the language of *ayat* - the divine signs - which encompass both scripture and the cosmos. As Rahman (1982) notes, the Qur'an transforms the use of reason from a purely analytic instrument into a moral intelligence, one that discerns divine purpose in natural order and historical process.

### 18.1.3 Ayah (آية): The Sign as Ontological Evidence

The term *ayah* in the Qur'an literally means “sign,” “proof,” or “symbol,” and appears more than 380 times, denoting both verses of revelation and natural phenomena. This dual usage reflects the Qur'an's semiotic worldview, where creation itself becomes a sacred text revealing divine meaning. The Qur'an repeatedly declares that the entire cosmos is composed of *ayat Allah* -the signs of God: *“We will show them Our signs (ayatinā) in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the Truth.”* (Q. 41:53).

In this verse, the Qur'an delineates a two-dimensional epistemic field: the external world (*afaq*) and the inner self (*anfus*). Both domains serve as mirrors reflecting the divine truth (*al-ḥaqq*). Thus, the Qur'anic researcher must engage in a dual inquiry, empirical and introspective. Observation of the external universe and reflection upon the inner consciousness converge as complementary methods of realising divine unity.

The *ayah* functions epistemologically as evidence, ethically as a reminder, and spiritually as an invitation. Each natural phenomenon-mountains, stars, life, and death-is both an empirical reality and a hermeneutical sign pointing to transcendence. Therefore, Qur'anic methodology transforms empirical observation into a sacred act of remembrance (*dhikr*). As Sardar (1989) observes, *“Science in Islam is the reading of the signs of God in nature, while revelation provides the grammar of that reading.”*

### 18.1.4 The Triadic Integration: From Revelation to Sign

The interaction between *wahy*, '*aql*', and *ayah* is not hierarchical but circular and integrative-a dynamic process of revelation, reflection, and realisation. *Wahy* initiates knowledge, '*aql*' interprets it, and *ayah* confirms it through empirical manifestation. The Qur'an's epistemic structure thus follows a

hermeneutical spiral in which faith (*iman*) deepens through reasoned reflection, and reason matures through divine remembrance. This integration can be illustrated through the verse: *“Indeed, in the alternation of the night and the day and what God has created in the heavens and the earth are signs for a people who are conscious (muttaqun).”* (Q. 10:6).

Here, the ethical condition of *taqwa* (God-consciousness) is essential to interpretation, showing that knowledge requires moral readiness. The Qur'an rejects both pure empiricism and pure mysticism: it demands a balance of rational spirituality grounded in revelation and guided by signs.

Modern disciplines, fragmented by positivism, can regain coherence by re-engaging this triadic Qur'anic logic. Revelation supplies ontology (what is real), reason supplies method (how to know), and signs supply empirical grounding (where truth is manifested). Together, they construct a unified epistemology that preserves both objectivity and sanctity.

As Nasr (2007) emphasises, *“The Qur'an does not separate the knower from the known, nor reason from revelation; it unites them within the principle of tawhid.”* This unity forms the intellectual and moral foundation for an Islamic revival of research methodology capable of reconciling scientific precision with spiritual depth.

## 18.2 Methodological Ethics - Intention (Niyyah), Objectivity, and Trust (Amanah)

The ethical foundation of any epistemological system determines the legitimacy and trustworthiness of its outcomes. In the Qur'anic paradigm, knowledge is not a neutral pursuit detached from moral responsibility but a sacred trust (*amanah*) carried by humankind (Q. 33:72). It is both a privilege and a responsibility that demands sincerity of purpose (*niyyah*), intellectual integrity, and accountability before God. The Qur'an transforms epistemology from a mere system of reasoning into a moral covenant between the knower and the Divine. Within this covenant, three ethical dimensions are central: the purity of intention (*niyyah*), the pursuit of objective truth, and the fulfilment of trust (*amanah*). These principles form the ethical triad upon which the Qur'anic methodology of knowledge rests.

### 18.2.1 Niyyah - The Purity of Intention as Epistemic Foundation

The Qur'an teaches that every act, including intellectual inquiry, must begin with sincere intention directed toward truth and divine guidance. Knowledge divorced from sincere intention becomes corrupted by self-interest, arrogance, and power (Q. 2:204-206). The Qur'an distinguishes between those who *“seek knowledge for truth”* and those who *“pursue it for pride and argumentation”* (Q. 6:116-119). The purification of intention (*tazkiyah al-niyyah*) ensures that knowledge remains a means of moral elevation rather than domination.

The Qur'anic epistemological model situates *niyyah* not as a psychological state alone but as an ontological orientation toward truth. The verse, *“Say, my prayer, my sacrifice, my life, and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds”* (Q. 6:162), encapsulates this integration between intention and

epistemic purpose. The act of knowing, in Qur'anic terms, is an act of devotion - a form of witnessing (shahadah) of God's signs (ayat) in creation.

From an ethical standpoint, niyyah becomes the axis of intellectual honesty. The Qur'an repeatedly warns against speaking or asserting what one does not truly know: *"Do not pursue that of which you do not know. Surely the hearing, the sight, and the heart - all of these shall be questioned"* (Q. 17:36). Thus, the first methodological discipline of Qur'anic research is the ethical self-discipline of intention: seeking knowledge for the sake of truth, justice, and divine harmony.

### 18.2.2 Objectivity - Between Human Perception and Divine Truth

Modern science defines objectivity as detachment from bias and personal values. Yet in the Qur'anic paradigm, true objectivity is not achieved through detachment but through alignment - aligning human perception ('aql) with the divine order (haqq). The Qur'an establishes this ontological realism in verses such as: *"We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the Truth"* (Q. 41:53). Objectivity, therefore, is achieved not by eliminating subjectivity but by purifying it through constant remembrance (dhikr) and reflection (tafakkur) upon divine signs.

The Qur'an rejects both relativism and blind empiricism. It calls for verification (tahqiq) through reason, but also for humility before the limits of human perception: *"They encompass not a thing of His knowledge except what He wills"* (Q. 2:255). This epistemic humility safeguards inquiry from the arrogance of absolute claims while maintaining faith in the intelligibility of creation.

In modern epistemology, objectivity often implies a value-neutral stance. The Qur'an, however, transforms objectivity into a moral and spiritual virtue - a balance between intellect ('aql), conscience (qalb), and revelation (wahy). A purely rational or empirical method may arrive at partial truths, but without moral objectivity - grounded in sincerity and justice - knowledge loses its coherence and ethical direction. Thus, Qur'anic objectivity is not detached from values but is rather the highest expression of them.

### 18.2.3 Amanah - Knowledge as a Divine Trust

Among the most profound Qur'anic statements on epistemological ethics is the verse: *"Indeed, We offered the Trust (amanah) to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it and feared it; yet man undertook it. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant"* (Q. 33:72). This amanah has been interpreted by Qur'anic scholars as encompassing moral responsibility, freedom, and knowledge - the capacities that make humanity accountable.

The carrying of amanah transforms the act of knowing into an act of stewardship. Human beings are entrusted not merely with understanding creation but with preserving its harmony and justice ('adl). Knowledge thus becomes a test of moral maturity. The Qur'an's critique of those who misuse knowledge - *"They know the outward of the worldly life, but of the Hereafter they are heedless"* (Q. 30:7) - illustrates the loss of amanah in empirical reductionism and materialist epistemologies.

Ethically, amanah demands that knowledge be used for the collective benefit (maṣlaḥah) of creation. Every discovery or intellectual claim must be weighed against its consequences for justice, compassion, and balance (mizan) (Q. 55:7-9). The Qur’an thus anticipates modern debates on research ethics, sustainability, and technological responsibility by grounding them in divine trust rather than human regulation alone.

#### 18.2.4 Integration of Niyyah, Objectivity, and Amanah

These three ethical principles - intention, objectivity, and trust - are not separate layers but interwoven dimensions of one moral epistemology. Niyyah purifies the motive, objectivity governs the process, and amanah ensures responsible application. Together, they construct an ethical framework that unites metaphysics, cognition, and praxis.

The Qur’an reinforces this integration through its repeated injunctions to combine faith and reason in moral action: “*And do not conceal testimony, for whoever conceals it, his heart is sinful; and Allah is Knowing of what you do*” (Q. 2:283). Concealing truth is a betrayal of both objectivity and trust, while pursuing knowledge for ego or power violates pure intention. Therefore, epistemological ethics in the Qur’an is simultaneously cognitive and moral - one cannot know truth without embodying it ethically. The triadic model may be summarised as follows:

| Ethical Principle         | Qur’anic Basis   | Epistemic Function                   | Moral Outcome              |
|---------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Niyyah (Intention)</b> | Q. 6:162; 17:36  | Purifies motivation for inquiry      | Sincerity and truthfulness |
| <b>Objectivity</b>        | Q. 41:53; 2:255  | Aligns perception with divine truth  | Intellectual humility      |
| <b>Amanah (Trust)</b>     | Q. 33:72; 55:7-9 | Ensures responsible use of knowledge | Justice and stewardship    |

Through this ethical triad, Qur’anic epistemology establishes that knowledge must always serve *al-ḥaqq* (truth), *al-‘adl* (justice), and *al-raḥmah* (mercy).

#### 18.2.5 Ethical Implications for Modern Research

When applied to modern disciplines, this Qur’anic ethical model challenges the idea of value-neutrality that dominates scientific and academic inquiry. Research becomes not merely a technical exercise but a moral act bound by covenantal responsibility. For instance:

- In natural sciences, amanah requires sustainable engagement with nature, ensuring that discoveries do not violate ecological balance (Q. 7:56).
- In social sciences, niyyah demands sincerity and impartiality, protecting research from ideological manipulation (Q. 4:135).
- In economics and politics, objectivity demands justice and transparency in the interpretation of data and the implementation of policy (Q. 83:1-3).



By grounding methodology in Qur'anic ethics, the researcher transforms from a detached observer into a moral agent of truth. This approach redefines academic integrity as a form of worship ('ibadah), where each act of discovery is simultaneously an act of devotion.

### 18.2.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, the Qur'an provides an epistemology that is inseparable from ethics. Niyjah, objectivity, and amanah together establish a moral continuum that binds thought, method, and consequence. Unlike modern epistemologies that separate fact from value, the Qur'an situates every cognitive act within divine accountability. This ethical integration ensures that knowledge remains a path to human perfection, not destruction.

Thus, the Qur'anic researcher is not merely a thinker but a trustee - one who witnesses (shahid) the truth through reason and embodies it through justice. The moral beauty of this epistemology lies in its unity: that knowing, intending, and acting are all expressions of one divine purpose - *to bear witness to truth in the service of creation*.

## 18.3 Integrating Qur'anic Epistemology into Natural Sciences

### 18.3.1 Reclaiming the Moral Cosmos

The natural sciences, in their modern form, emerged from the Enlightenment's attempt to free knowledge from metaphysics and theology. While this separation allowed for empirical precision and technological advancement, it also stripped the cosmos of meaning. The Qur'an, in contrast, offers a model of *integrative epistemology* in which nature (kawn) is not an autonomous mechanism but a sacred text - a field of divine communication composed of *ayat* (signs). The Qur'anic worldview situates the study of nature within the moral and spiritual order of existence, linking observation with reverence, and discovery with accountability (Nasr, 1989; Iqbal, 1934).

Integrating Qur'anic epistemology into the natural sciences thus requires a profound shift in the goals, methods, and assumptions of scientific inquiry. The purpose of science is not domination over nature but comprehension of divine order; its method is not value-neutral empiricism but *tahqiq* (verification through reflection, reason, and moral intent); its ultimate objective is harmony between human beings, the natural world, and the Creator (Q. 55:7-9).

### 18.3.2 The Qur'anic Cosmos: Nature as Revelation

The Qur'an repeatedly declares that the entire created order is composed of *ayat*: signs that point toward the Divine (Q. 41:53; 51:20-21). These signs are not mere metaphors but epistemological realities. To study nature, therefore, is to read a revealed text written in the language of causality and order. The Qur'an says: "*Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of the night and the day, are signs for those who possess intellect (ulu al-albab)*" (Q. 3:190).

This verse encapsulates the Qur'anic view that scientific observation must be guided by reason ('aql) and oriented by moral consciousness. The natural world is an open scripture, and the scientist is a reader



engaged in *tafsir al-kawn* - the interpretation of creation. Hence, Qur'anic epistemology expands the concept of revelation beyond the verbal Qur'an to include the cosmic Qur'an - the living text of nature (Chittick, 2007).

From this standpoint, the act of scientific discovery becomes an act of witnessing (*shahadah*). The cosmos reflects unity (*tawhīd*) in diversity: from atomic structure to galactic order, all reveal proportional balance (*mizan*). The Qur'an commands: "*And the sky He raised and set the balance, that you may not transgress in the balance*" (Q. 55:7-8). This *mizan* is both a physical and an ethical law. Violating the balance of ecosystems or moral order equally disrupts divine harmony.

### 18.3.3 The Methodological Parallels: Observation and Reflection

Qur'anic epistemology encourages empirical observation, but it integrates it with reflection (*tafakkur*), comprehension (*tadabbur*), and verification (*taḥqīq*). The Qur'an commands: "*Do they not look at the camels, how they were created? And at the sky, how it was raised?*" (Q. 88:17-18). This invitation to observation is not passive but reflective; it connects perception with understanding.

In the modern scientific method, the stages of observation, hypothesis, and experimentation correspond to cognitive processes emphasised in the Qur'an - *sam'* (hearing), *baṣar* (seeing), and *Fu'ad* (reasoning). Yet the Qur'an extends this triad into a moral dimension: each faculty is accountable to the Truth (Q. 17:36). Thus, Qur'anic empiricism is not materialistic but moral-realistic.

While modern science isolates phenomena to study them under controlled conditions, the Qur'an teaches contextual interdependence: the earth, heavens, and living beings form an interconnected system of meaning. Knowledge of one part must not destroy the integrity of the whole. This holistic principle is reflected in the Qur'anic description of creation as *bi-l-ḥaqq* - "*in truth*" or "*with purpose*" (Q. 45:22). Scientific reductionism, by contrast, often treats phenomena as purposeless accidents. The Qur'an corrects this by restoring teleology - the view that every entity has a divinely intended end (*ghayah*).

### 18.3.4 Integrating Qur'anic Concepts into Scientific Inquiry

The integration of Qur'anic epistemology into natural sciences proceeds through several core principles:

**Tawhīd as Scientific Paradigm:** *Tawhīd* - the unity of God - implies the unity of truth. There cannot be one truth for religion and another for science, because all truth emanates from the same Divine source (Q. 10:5). This ontological unity demands coherence between empirical findings and moral-spiritual insight. The scientist's task is to uncover patterns that reveal divine wisdom rather than to construct a purely mechanical world.

In this paradigm, the universe is both law-bound and meaningful. Physical laws are *sunan Allah* - divine patterns in creation (Q. 35:43). Recognising them is an act of faith, while denying their moral order is epistemic blindness. Hence, Qur'anic science is not anti-empirical; it is empiricism integrated within the metaphysics of unity.

Mizan - The Balance of Nature: Ecological balance is a recurring Qur'anic motif. The concept of *mizan* (balance) serves as a scientific and ethical principle ensuring that human intervention respects the proportional order of creation (Q. 55:7-9). Modern environmental sciences echo this notion through sustainability, but the Qur'an grounds it in divine justice. Disturbing the balance - through greed, pollution, or exploitation - is not merely ecological error but moral corruption (*fasad fi al-ard*) (Q. 30:41).

Thus, integrating *mizan* into scientific disciplines would redefine environmental studies as an ethical science - one that unites biology, ecology, and theology in a single framework of stewardship (*khilafah*).

Ayah - The Semiotic Nature of Reality: Every object in nature is an *ayah* - a sign pointing beyond itself. The Qur'an's semiotic cosmology implies that scientific observation is simultaneously an interpretive act. Discovering causal relations becomes a way of decoding divine meaning. Hence, in Qur'anic methodology, causality (*sababiyyah*) is not a blind mechanism but a system of intelligible signs within divine will (*iradah*).

This principle prevents the absolutisation of cause and effect while preserving the validity of scientific law. It guards against both fatalism and material determinism by maintaining that all causes function under divine permission (Q. 16:12; 13:16).

Tahqiq - Verification with Moral Accountability: Scientific experimentation finds its Qur'anic analogue in *tahqiq*, the process of verifying truth through reflection and experience guided by moral responsibility. The Qur'an commands the use of critical reasoning (*tafakkur*, *ta'aqqul*) but warns against arrogance in knowledge: "*They know the outward of this world, but are heedless of the Hereafter*" (Q. 30:7).

Unlike empirical testing, *tahqiq* integrates the spiritual dimension of verification. A discovery is not truly verified until it harmonises with both factual reality and ethical truth. This principle would restrain technologies that harm life or violate justice, ensuring that progress remains servant to value.

### 18.3.5 Application in Specific Natural Sciences

Physics and Cosmology: The Qur'an invites reflection on cosmic origins, expansion, and balance (Q. 51:47; 67:3-4). Modern cosmology confirms that the universe operates under finely tuned laws. Qur'anic cosmology interprets this not as random order but as deliberate harmony. Integrating Qur'anic epistemology would guide cosmology to study not only *how* the universe functions but *why* it exists - linking physical causality with metaphysical purpose.

Furthermore, quantum indeterminacy can be philosophically reinterpreted in Qur'anic terms as the expression of divine freedom within ordered creation - a reminder that ultimate knowledge belongs to God alone (Q. 2:255).

Biology and Life Sciences: The Qur'an describes life as created *min ma'in* (from water) (Q. 21:30), emphasising the unity of biological origin. This statement anticipates the continuity of life systems observed in biology. Yet the Qur'an also affirms that life carries a purpose - to manifest divine wisdom in diversity (Q. 35:27-28). Integrating Qur'anic epistemology into biology would mean studying organisms not merely as chemical systems but as manifestations of balance and stewardship.

Ethically, biotechnology and genetics must be governed by *amanah*: ensuring that interventions respect the sanctity of creation and the limits of human responsibility.

Environmental and Earth Sciences: In Qur'anic terms, the earth is *amanah*, entrusted to humanity as a dwelling of balance and beauty (Q. 2:30; 7:56). Environmental sciences thus become disciplines of moral accountability. Integrating Qur'anic principles requires redefining environmental data in relation to *fasad* (corruption) and *iṣlah* (restoration). The Qur'an connects ecological crisis with moral failure - human transgression against the divine order: "*Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of what people's hands have earned*" (Q. 30:41).

Hence, environmental management must evolve from technical resource use to moral restoration, uniting scientific conservation with spiritual reformation.

### 18.3.6 Toward a Qur'anic Philosophy of Science

Integrating Qur'anic epistemology into natural sciences produces a holistic philosophy of science grounded in unity, meaning, and ethics. It transforms the scientist from a detached observer into a moral interpreter of creation. In this system:

- Knowledge is *amanah* (trust), not possession.
- Nature is *ayah* (sign), not inert matter.
- Experimentation is *tahqiq*, not exploitation.
- Purpose is *'ibadah* (service to divine order), not material gain.

The Qur'an's holistic paradigm restores the link between knowing and being. It invites science to reawaken its spiritual dimension - the wonder, humility, and reverence that once animated human inquiry before it was mechanised by positivism.

This integration does not reject empirical methods; rather, it expands them. It allows the scientist to perceive that the act of measuring the universe is simultaneously an act of being measured - ethically and spiritually - by the Truth that pervades it.

The integration of Qur'anic epistemology into natural sciences marks a necessary reorientation in the age of ecological crisis and moral exhaustion. The Qur'an does not oppose science; it sanctifies it. It transforms the laboratory into a sanctuary and discovery into remembrance.

By grounding science in *tawhid*, aligning it with *mizan*, and guiding it through *amanah*, Qur'anic epistemology reclaims the moral meaning of knowledge. It envisions a future in which the scientist, the believer, and the moral agent are not three identities but one - unified in their pursuit of truth, service, and harmony.

In such a paradigm, the cosmos becomes not an object of control but a partner in revelation - a divine discourse continuously unfolding before the eyes of those who reflect.

## 18.4 Integrating Qur'anic Epistemology into Social and Human Sciences

### 18.4.1 The Human Sciences as Moral Sciences

The social and human sciences - encompassing disciplines such as sociology, psychology, economics, anthropology, and political science - have historically emerged from the epistemic matrix of secular modernity. Their methodological framework often privileges empirical observation and human reason while marginalising the moral and metaphysical dimensions of reality. This secular turn has created a dichotomy between the study of human behaviour and the divine guidance that defines human purpose. In the Qur'anic epistemological paradigm, however, knowledge of humanity (*'ilm al-insan*) is inseparable from knowledge of God (*ma'rifat Allah*) and His signs (*ayat*). The Qur'an establishes a unified field of knowledge in which social, moral, and spiritual realities interpenetrate - forming a holistic anthropology rooted in revelation (Q. 51:56; 95:4).

The reconstruction of social and human sciences on Qur'anic foundations, therefore, requires a paradigmatic shift from descriptive materialism to moral-theocentric realism. This reorientation recognizes that human society (*ummah*), behavior (*'amal*), and institutions (*nizam*) cannot be understood in isolation from divine purpose and accountability (Q. 2:30; 16:90). Hence, Qur'anic epistemology offers not merely a critique but a reconstructive framework - one that integrates revelation, reason, and empirical observation into a moral epistemic structure for the study of human life.

### 18.4.2 The Qur'anic Conception of the Human Being

At the foundation of Qur'anic epistemology lies a unique anthropology. The human being is not a random product of evolution or social conditioning but a divinely fashioned creature endowed with consciousness, freedom, and moral responsibility (Q. 32:9; 33:72). The Qur'an describes humanity as the *khali'ah* - vicegerent on earth - whose epistemic role involves understanding, maintaining, and ethically governing creation (Q. 2:30; 6:165). Knowledge, therefore, is not only cognitive but ethical: it is a trust (*amanah*) that binds knowing to doing, and understanding to accountability (Nasr, 1989).

This holistic anthropology fundamentally alters the basis of human sciences. Psychology becomes the study of the *nafs* (soul/self) in its moral development and spiritual purification (Q. 91:7-10). Sociology becomes the study of *ummah* - the moral community that flourishes under justice, mutual care, and remembrance of God (Q. 3:110). Economics becomes a field of moral distribution, not accumulation, grounded in justice (*'adl*), moderation (*wasatiyyah*), and compassion (*rahmah*) (Q. 2:177; 17:26-29). In all cases, the Qur'an restores to human sciences the missing dimension of transcendence.

### 18.4.3 Methodological Integration: Revelation as Foundational Reference

A Qur'anically grounded social science must begin with *wahy* (revelation) as the ultimate epistemic authority. This does not eliminate reason or empirical method but redefines their hierarchy. The Qur'an frequently commands observation, reflection, and reasoning - "*Do they not reflect upon themselves?*" (Q. 30:8) - but always within a moral teleology that aligns human inquiry with divine wisdom. Thus, reason

(*'aql*) and observation (*nazar*) function as instruments of understanding divine signs (*ayat*) within both the self and society (Q. 41:53). In methodological terms, revelation provides:

- Epistemic Grounding - defining what constitutes legitimate knowledge and truth.
- Ontological Orientation - affirming that human beings and societies have a divine purpose.
- Ethical Boundaries - setting limits to inquiry that may violate dignity, justice, or moral order.

This triadic framework allows empirical methods to operate within divine parameters, ensuring that social inquiry leads to the betterment of human moral and spiritual life rather than its fragmentation (al-Attas, 1995; Sardar, 2011).

#### 18.4.4 Reconstructing Major Disciplines through Qur'anic Epistemology

**Sociology and Anthropology: From Secularism to Sacred Society:** Western sociology often interprets religion as a social construct and moral systems as outcomes of economic or political conditions. The Qur'an reverses this causal relationship: moral and spiritual corruption leads to social disintegration (Q. 16:112). Hence, social order is not sustained merely by power or convention but by moral consciousness (*taqwa*) and adherence to divine law (*Shari'ah*). The Qur'an repeatedly uses historical examples - 'Ad, Thamud, Pharaoh - as empirical evidence that social collapse follows ethical decay (Q. 11:52-60; 28:39-42). Thus, Qur'anic sociology studies *societal ethics*, not merely social mechanics.

**Psychology: The Science of the Soul:** Qur'anic psychology redefines the human psyche (*nafs*) as a moral and spiritual entity, not a mere by-product of neurochemical processes. The Qur'an outlines the stages of the soul - *nafs al-ammara* (the commanding self), *nafs al-lawwamah* (the self-reproaching self), and *nafs al-mutma'innah* (the tranquil self) (Q. 12:53; 75:2; 89:27). Each stage reflects a level of moral and epistemic refinement, offering an alternative model to Freudian or behaviourist reductionism. Knowledge, in this view, transforms the knower; to know truth is to become righteous.

**Economics: Moral Circulation of Wealth:** Modern economics isolates human behaviour into rational self-interest and profit maximisation. The Qur'an presents a moral economy rooted in justice, moderation, and trust (Q. 2:188; 59:7). Wealth (*mal*) is not private property but a divine trust distributed for collective benefit (Q. 24:33). Thus, the Qur'an transforms economic science into a field of ethical stewardship - measuring not only productivity but justice and compassion in distribution (Chapra, 2000).

**Political Science: Governance as Moral Responsibility:** In the Qur'an, political authority is a trust (*amanah*) exercised under divine accountability: "*Indeed, God commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and to judge with justice*" (Q. 4:58). Governance, therefore, is not the art of power but the ethics of justice, consultation (*shura*), and service (Q. 42:38). A Qur'anically informed political science integrates jurisprudence (*fiqh*), ethics (*akhlaq*), and sociology into a single moral discourse of leadership and community welfare.

### 18.4.5 The Qur'anic Method of Inquiry in Human Sciences

The Qur'an prescribes an epistemic methodology that combines observation (*ru'yah*), reflection (*tafakkur*), remembrance (*dhikr*), and verification (*tahqiq*). In the human sciences, this methodology operates through three integrated processes:

- Observation of Signs - Examining social, psychological, and economic realities as manifestations of divine order (Q. 3:190).
- Interpretation through Revelation - Analysing phenomena through Qur'anic categories of good (*khayr*), justice (*adl*), and corruption (*fasad*).
- Moral Application - Transforming knowledge into action (*'amal ṣaliḥ*) that reforms both individual and collective life.

This integrated model transcends positivism and relativism by grounding social inquiry in ethical objectivity. Knowledge without morality becomes destructive; morality without knowledge becomes stagnant. The Qur'an harmonises the two under the principle of divine guidance.

### 18.4.6 The Qur'anic Vision of Human Civilisation

The ultimate goal of integrating Qur'anic epistemology into human sciences is the moral reconstruction of civilisation (*'umran*). The Qur'an envisions humanity as a cooperative moral order guided by justice, knowledge, and mercy (Q. 49:13; 16:90). Civilisation, therefore, is not merely technological progress but the cultivation of virtue, balance, and worship through knowledge. This vision parallels the Qur'anic concept of *'umran ṣaliḥ* - righteous development - which Ibn Khaldun later articulated as the sociology of moral civilisation (Ibn Khaldun, 1377/1967).

Integrating Qur'anic epistemology into the human sciences thus means restoring the spiritual telos of knowledge: to understand creation, to serve justice, and to fulfil the divine covenant. This reorientation establishes the Qur'an as both the moral compass and epistemic foundation of all disciplines concerned with human life.

### 18.4.7 Toward a Qur'anically Grounded Human Science

A Qur'anically integrated human science is neither theocratic nor anti-empirical; it is morally realist and methodologically pluralist. It acknowledges revelation as the highest epistemic authority while valuing empirical evidence as a divine sign. It seeks not domination over nature or society, but harmony between divine command and human action. The Qur'an transforms inquiry into an act of worship (*'ibadah*) - where knowing becomes a means of moral and spiritual perfection.

Thus, the integration of Qur'anic epistemology into social and human sciences offers a path toward a knowledge system that unites intellect (*'aql*), revelation (*wahy*), and moral conscience (*qalb*). It invites humanity to rediscover itself - not as a mechanical aggregate of instincts or systems, but as a divinely guided moral being whose knowledge and civilisation mirror the justice, wisdom, and mercy of the Creator.

Table 18.4.8 presents a synoptic synthesis of how the Qur'anic epistemological paradigm redefines and integrates the major human and social sciences. It demonstrates the transformation of each discipline from its modern secular foundations to a Qur'anically grounded, ethically oriented, and teleological framework that restores the moral-spiritual dimension of knowledge. This integration does not abolish empirical observation or rational analysis but harmonises them within divine guidance (*wahy*) and moral accountability (*taqwa*).

**Table 18.5: Disciplinary Integration - Qur'anic Framework across the Human Sciences**

| Discipline               | Modern Orientation                                                                                | Qur'anic Epistemological Reorientation                                                                     | Epistemic Principle (from Qur'an)                                                                                 | Ethical Outcome                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Sociology</b>         | Focus on social structures, class, and power relations; religion is viewed as a social construct. | Society is understood as a moral and spiritual organism governed by divine law and ethical accountability. | <i>"Indeed, God does not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves"</i> (Q. 13:11) | Social reform through justice ( <i>'adl</i> ), moral renewal ( <i>iṣlah</i> ), and communal harmony ( <i>ukhuwwah</i> )            |
| <b>Psychology</b>        | Reduction of human consciousness to neural and behavioural processes                              | The human self ( <i>nafs</i> ) is viewed as a moral-spiritual reality undergoing purification              | <i>"He has succeeded who purifies it, and he has failed who corrupts it"</i> (Q. 91:9-10)                         | Inner purification ( <i>tazkiyah</i> ), balance between reason ( <i>'aql</i> ) and heart ( <i>qalb</i> ), and spiritual well-being |
| <b>Economics</b>         | Driven by market efficiency, consumerism, and utility maximisation                                | Wealth and production are seen as divine trusts to serve justice and compassion                            | <i>"So that wealth may not merely circulate among the rich"</i> (Q. 59:7)                                         | Equitable distribution, moderation ( <i>i'tidal</i> ), and collective welfare ( <i>maṣlahah</i> )                                  |
| <b>Political Science</b> | Focus on power, sovereignty, and state interest                                                   | Governance as a sacred trust ( <i>amanah</i> ), accountable to God and people                              | <i>"God commands you to render trusts to whom they are due"</i>                                                   | Ethical governance, consultation ( <i>shura</i> ), and                                                                             |



| Discipline                  | Modern Orientation                                                    | Qur'anic Epistemological Reorientation                                          | Epistemic Principle (from Qur'an)                                                                                                    | Ethical Outcome                                                                        |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                             |                                                                       |                                                                                 | <i>and to judge with justice" (Q. 4:58)</i>                                                                                          | protection of human dignity                                                            |
| <b>Anthropology</b>         | Human culture is interpreted as a product of evolution and relativism | Humanity is viewed as divinely guided with moral purpose and unity in diversity | <i>"O mankind, We created you from a male and a female and made you nations and tribes that you may know one another" (Q. 49:13)</i> | Recognition of shared origin, cultural pluralism, and moral solidarity                 |
| <b>Education and Ethics</b> | Knowledge as neutral or utilitarian skill formation                   | Education as moral cultivation of intellect, conscience, and worship            | <i>"Say: Are those who know equal to those who do not know?" (Q. 39:9)</i>                                                           | Formation of moral character, love of truth ( <i>haqq</i> ), and intellectual humility |

In **sociology**, the Qur'an displaces the positivist notion that social behaviour is determined merely by material or structural factors. The verse (Q. 13:11) underscores the moral agency of communities - that social change begins with inner ethical transformation. Therefore, the purpose of social science is not detached explanation but moral reconstruction (*iṣlah*), leading to just and cohesive societies. The sociologist becomes a moral observer who studies not only what "is" but also what "ought to be" in light of divine justice (*'adl*).

In **psychology**, the Qur'an reintegrates the moral and spiritual essence of the human being. Reducing human consciousness to brain processes or behaviour patterns overlooks the reality of the *nafs*, which undergoes constant ethical refinement. The Qur'anic model of *tazkiyah* (purification) provides a dynamic developmental psychology, moving from the commanding self to the tranquil self (Q. 91:7-10). Knowledge of the self thus becomes a sacred journey toward inner balance, linking psychological health to spiritual realisation.

**Economics**, when purified through Qur'anic principles, becomes a discipline of moral stewardship rather than unrestrained consumption. Wealth is a trust (*amanah*), and its circulation must prevent inequality and social exploitation (Q. 59:7). Justice (*'adl*), compassion (*rahmah*), and moderation (*i'tidal*) replace greed

and excess as guiding principles. This Qur'anic economy aligns material prosperity with collective well-being (*maṣlahah*).

In **political science**, power is redefined as a sacred responsibility under divine sovereignty. The Qur'anic command to render trusts and judge with justice (Q. 4:58) transforms political authority from domination to service. Governance becomes an ethical act grounded in *shura* (consultation) and *amanah* (trust), ensuring that leadership reflects both moral legitimacy and public accountability. Political science thus evolves into a discipline of ethical stewardship, not mere realpolitik.

**Anthropology**, freed from cultural relativism, views human diversity as divinely willed for mutual recognition and moral cooperation (Q. 49:13). Humanity shares a common spiritual origin, making every cultural expression a reflection of the divine sign (*ayah*). This Qur'anic anthropology combines unity and plurality, fostering respect for cultural diversity within a universal moral horizon.

Finally, **education** and **ethics**, as the connective tissue of all human sciences, are transformed from vocational utility into moral cultivation. The Qur'an equates knowledge with light and ignorance with darkness (Q. 39:9). Learning becomes an act of worship and ethical refinement, producing not just skilled individuals but morally conscious human beings (*insan kamil*).

Overall, this table articulates how the Qur'an provides a unifying epistemological architecture - one that binds empirical observation, rational inquiry, and spiritual purpose into a cohesive framework for the human sciences. By restoring divine centrality and moral direction to knowledge, the Qur'an transforms the study of humanity from a secular enterprise into an act of sacred understanding - a journey from knowing the world to knowing the self and ultimately knowing God.

## 18.5 Case Studies - Environmental Ethics, Bioethics, and Economic Justice

In the Qur'anic worldview, ethical responsibility (*amanah*) extends beyond human interpersonal relations to encompass all dimensions of existence-nature, life, and economy. The Qur'an articulates a comprehensive moral cosmology in which every created entity functions as a *sign* (*ayah*) of divine wisdom, interconnected through balance (*mizan*) and purpose (*hikmah*). Human beings are designated as *khulafa' al-arḍ*-vicegerents on earth-charged with the duty to maintain this balance, protect life, and distribute resources justly (Q. 2:30; 55:7-9).

This section explores three case studies-environmental ethics, bioethics, and economic justice-to illustrate how the Qur'anic epistemological framework informs ethical action and knowledge in contemporary disciplines. These are not discrete moral fields but interdependent expressions of one unified principle: the trust (*amanah*) of knowledge and life under divine guidance.

### 18.5.1 Environmental Ethics - The Earth as a Moral Ecosystem

**Ontological Foundation:** The Qur'an establishes the earth (*al-arḍ*) as a sacred trust and a living system sustained by divine equilibrium. “*He raised the sky and set the balance (mizan): do not transgress the balance*” (Q. 55:7-8). The *mizan* here signifies not merely physical balance but a moral order embedded

within the natural world. Nature reflects divine justice, and human exploitation disrupts this balance, constituting both ecological and ethical corruption (*fasad*).

Human beings, as *khulafa'*, are entrusted to uphold this harmony: *"It is He who has made you successors upon the earth and raised some of you above others in rank to test you in what He has given you"* (Q. 6:165). Environmental degradation-deforestation, pollution, and climate imbalance, therefore, becomes not only a scientific crisis but a moral failure to safeguard the trust.

**Epistemology of Nature:** The Qur'an transforms ecological study into an epistemic act: the observation of *ayat* within the world. *"Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, are signs for those who possess intellect (ulu al-albab)"* (Q. 3:190). Environmental research, therefore, is a form of *tafakkur* (contemplation) that leads from empirical observation to metaphysical realisation.

This epistemology redefines environmental science as the study of divine order rather than the mere management of natural resources. It calls for a reverential empiricism-one guided by humility, gratitude, and moral accountability.

**Qur'anic Environmental Ethic:** The ethical principles that emerge are:

- Balance (*mizan*) - Humans must preserve ecological harmony.
- Moderation (*i'tidal*) - Avoid waste: *"Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils"* (Q. 17:27).
- Stewardship (*khilafah*) - Manage resources as trustees, not owners.
- Accountability (*hisab*) - Every act of exploitation will be judged: *"Then you will surely be asked that Day about the pleasures you enjoyed"* (Q. 102:8).

These principles provide an epistemic-ethical foundation for environmental policies that respect both ecological integrity and spiritual purpose.

### 18.5.2 Bioethics - The Sanctity of Life and the Boundaries of Intervention

**The Ontology of Life:** In the Qur'an, life (*hayah*) is sacred because it originates directly from divine command: *"He who gave everything its creation and then guided it"* (Q. 20:50). The act of breathing life into Adam (Q. 15:29) signifies that all biological life is infused with divine intentionality. This transforms bioethics from a technical discipline into a theological inquiry into the limits of human intervention.

**The Epistemology of Life Sciences:** Modern biomedical research often operates on utilitarian premises-what can be done is equated with what should be done. The Qur'an, however, separates power from permission, grounding ethical legitimacy in divine will and purpose. The verse *"And do not kill the soul which God has made sacred except by right"* (Q. 6:151) establishes the boundary of biological manipulation and affirms the intrinsic dignity of all forms of life.

Knowledge of biology must therefore be exercised through the *amanah* of moral restraint. Every scientific act-genetic engineering, stem cell research, or end-of-life decision- requires ethical verification through Qur'anic guidance: does it preserve, distort, or transgress divine purpose?

### Principles of Qur'anic Bioethics:

- Sanctity of Life (*hurma al-hayah*) - Life is inviolable; it cannot be reduced to utility.
- Purpose (*hikmah*) - Interventions must align with divine purpose, not profit or power.
- Balance (*mizan*) - Human interference should maintain the biological and moral order.
- Accountability (*amanah wa hisab*) - Scientists are answerable to God for the use of their knowledge.

Bioethics, under Qur'anic light, is not anti-scientific but meta-scientific, transcending technical rationality to question the moral meaning of creation. Life science thus becomes a form of worship (*'ibadah*) through which human beings recognise their dependence on divine knowledge.

### 18.5.3 Economic Justice - The Ethic of Distribution and Human Flourishing

The Ontology of Wealth: The Qur'an defines wealth (*mal*) not as private property but as a trust distributed for the collective good: “*And spend of that which He has made you trustees*” (Q. 57:7). The economy, in Qur'anic logic, is a system of moral circulation, not accumulation. The prohibition of *riba* (usury) is thus epistemic as much as ethical-it resists the commodification of time, life, and human dignity. Qur'anic Economic Principles:

- Justice (*'adl*) and Equity (*qist*) - “*Give full measure and weight in justice*” (Q. 6:152).
- Moderation (*i'tidal*) - “*Eat and drink but waste not*” (Q. 7:31).
- Charitable Circulation (*zakah* and *infaq*) - Redistribution as purification of wealth (Q. 9:103).
- Accountability (*hisab*) - Every transaction carries a moral consequence (Q. 83:1-3).

Economic knowledge, under Qur'anic epistemology, becomes an ethical science; its purpose is not infinite growth but sustainable equilibrium and human dignity. The economy must serve life, not enslave it.

Qur'anic Economic Model: The Qur'an advocates a balanced triad of production, distribution, and consumption, each governed by moral intention. Wealth is a means of service, not dominance. Profit divorced from ethical responsibility becomes *fasad fi al-ard*-corruption upon the earth.

A Qur'anic economic model would emphasise community-based resource management, moral investment, and ecological sustainability. It reframes modern capitalism by reintroducing *taqwa* (God-consciousness) as the regulator of human desire and the conscience of the market.

### 18.5.4 Comparative Integration: A Triadic Moral Framework

These three case studies-environment, bioethics, and economy-illustrate the triadic unity of Qur'anic ethics grounded in *tawhid* (oneness), *mizan* (balance), and *amanah* (trust). Each field involves a domain of knowledge that modern disciplines often treat as value-neutral, yet the Qur'an insists that every act of knowing carries moral weight and divine accountability.

**Table 18.6: Comparative Integration: A Triadic Moral Framework**

| Field       | Epistemic Principle       | Moral Objective                          | Qur’anic Reference |
|-------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Environment | Balance ( <i>mizan</i> )  | Ecological justice, sustainability       | Q. 55:7-9, 6:165   |
| Bioethics   | Sanctity ( <i>hurma</i> ) | Protection of life, humility in creation | Q. 6:151, 15:29    |
| Economics   | Justice ( <i>‘adl</i> )   | Equitable distribution, moral wealth     | Q. 57:7, 59:7      |

Together they form an integrated Qur’anic moral system of knowledge, where the boundaries of science and ethics dissolve into one unified *‘ilm*-knowledge as illumination of faith and responsibility.

The Qur’anic approach to environmental, biological, and economic knowledge reveals that the crisis of modern disciplines is not technical but epistemological. When knowledge is severed from moral responsibility and divine guidance, it degenerates into exploitation of nature, life, and society. The Qur’an restores the unity of knowledge and ethics, transforming science from domination to service, from control to care.

Environmental stewardship, bioethical restraint, and economic justice emerge as three manifestations of one *amanah*: the moral duty of humans to uphold divine order. The Qur’an calls upon humanity to rediscover this sacred trust-to observe, understand, and act not merely as scientists or economists but as *‘ibad al-Raḥmān*-servants of the Most Merciful who know through faith and live through justice.

## 18.6 The Future of Islamic Research Methodology - Challenges and Horizons

### 18.6.1 The Need for Epistemic Renewal

The future of Islamic research methodology depends upon a decisive return to the Qur’an as the living epistemic foundation of inquiry, not merely as a religious text but as the ontological source of knowledge (*‘ilm*), meaning (*ma‘rifah*), and wisdom (*ḥikmah*). In the contemporary academic world, dominated by Western paradigms of empiricism, materialism, and post-Enlightenment rationalism, Islamic epistemology faces the dual challenge of preserving divine-centred foundations while engaging in the modern sciences (Nasr, 1987; Sardar, 2016). The Qur’an insists that all knowledge originates in the divine command - “*He taught man what he did not know*” (Q. 96:5) - thus rejecting the secular notion of autonomous human knowledge. The challenge, therefore, is not to reject modern science, but to reconstruct its epistemic assumptions around the triadic principles of *wahy* (revelation), *‘aql* (reason), and *ayah* (sign), which have been established earlier in this chapter.

Islamic research methodology must evolve from a fragmented imitation of Western scientific methods toward an integrated Qur’anic framework capable of addressing moral, ecological, and social realities. The horizon of Islamic inquiry is not merely knowledge for control but knowledge for balance (*mizan*) and justice (*‘adl*) - “*so that mankind may uphold justice*” (Q 57:25). The task, then, is epistemic

reformation: to re-establish an Islamic scientific consciousness that unites faith and rationality, revelation and empiricism, ethics and discovery.

### 18.6.2 The Contemporary Challenge: Methodological Displacement

Modern academia, while professing objectivity, has displaced the moral and teleological purpose of knowledge. Scientific research often isolates phenomena from their metaphysical context, producing what the Qur'an calls "*knowledge of the outward of the life of this world, while they are heedless of the Hereafter*" (Q. 30:7). This displacement manifests as value-neutral science, where technological advancement is divorced from ethical accountability (Al-Attas, 1995; Rahman, 1988).

From a Qur'anic perspective, methodology is never neutral. Every epistemic act involves an *intention* (*niyyah*), which determines its moral direction (Q. 92:5-10). The methodology that denies transcendence thereby produces imbalance (*fasad fi 'l-ard*) - corruption in nature, society, and self (Q. 30:41). Hence, the primary challenge is restoring the unity of knowledge (*tawhid al-ilm*): that all research must acknowledge the Creator as the ultimate referent of truth.

Another methodological crisis is disciplinary compartmentalisation. The Qur'an rejects the fragmentation of knowledge into isolated silos, urging holistic reflection: "*Do they not reflect upon themselves and the heavens and the earth?*" (Q. 30:8). The future Islamic methodology must transcend academic specialisation by reintegrating metaphysics, ethics, and empirical observation into a unified epistemic vision (Nasr, 2010).

### 18.6.3 Reconstructing Methodology: Qur'anic Horizons of Integration

The Qur'anic paradigm envisions knowledge as a three-tier system of reality:

- Material observation (*shahadah*),
- Intellectual reflection (*'aql*), and
- Revelatory realisation (*wahy*).

A reformed methodology, therefore, requires the interaction of these levels. Observation without reflection leads to superficial empiricism; reflection without revelation leads to philosophical speculation; revelation without reflection risks dogmatic stagnation. The Qur'an commands a balance among these dimensions: "*We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in themselves until it becomes clear that it is the truth*" (Q. 41:53).

In practical terms, this means research methodologies in both the natural and human sciences must reorient toward *ayah-based inquiry* - interpreting empirical phenomena as signs of divine order. For example, environmental studies should integrate the Qur'anic vision of stewardship (*khilafah*) and balance (*mizan*) as methodological principles. Similarly, social sciences should ground their analyses in divine justice (*'adl*) and human dignity (*karamah*), rather than secular utilitarianism.



#### 18.6.4 Ethical Challenges: Power, Knowledge, and Responsibility

The Qur'an repeatedly warns of the moral corruption that arises when knowledge is separated from ethics: *"They know the names of things, but they do not act upon what they know"* (cf. Q. 2:31-34). In the contemporary context, this warning resonates with the misuse of science for domination - economic exploitation, surveillance, and environmental destruction (Sardar, 2019). The Qur'an reframes scientific inquiry as *amanah* (trust): *"We offered the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they declined to bear it; and man undertook it"* (Q. 33:72).

This verse implies that intellectual pursuit is a moral covenant. Future Islamic methodology must, therefore, institute ethical protocols that regulate not only research outcomes but also intentions, methods, and implications. The Qur'anic model of *taqwa* (moral consciousness) should become the foundation for peer review, policy design, and academic evaluation. Knowledge divorced from *taqwa* ceases to be *'ilm* and becomes mere *ẓann* (conjecture) - a distinction made repeatedly in the Qur'an (Q. 10:36).

#### 18.6.5 Horizons of Renewal: Interdisciplinary and Global Prospects

The horizon of Qur'anic methodology is not limited to Islamic universities or Muslim-majority societies; it aspires to a global epistemic dialogue. The Qur'an declares: *"We have made you nations and tribes that you may know one another"* (Q. 49:13). This knowing (*ta'aruf*) implies intellectual exchange, ethical mutuality, and cooperation across civilisations. Future Islamic research must therefore engage in interdisciplinary synthesis - integrating Qur'anic epistemology with global advances in cognitive science, environmental studies, and artificial intelligence, while maintaining divine-centred ethics.

Institutionally, the creation of Qur'anically-informed research centres, interdisciplinary curricula, and ethical review boards rooted in *amanah* and *'adl* will be essential. Methodological innovation must involve both theoretical reconstruction and empirical practice - transforming laboratories, classrooms, and policy frameworks into spaces of ethical reflection and divine awareness.

Finally, the Qur'an envisions an eschatological horizon of knowledge, where truth is fully realised: *"And you will surely know its truth after a time"* (Q. 38:88). This prophetic vision assures that all genuine inquiry, when guided by divine light, ultimately converges toward truth. The goal of the future Islamic methodology, therefore, is not dominance but illumination - the realisation of a civilisation of balance (*mizan*), mercy (*rahmah*), and justice (*'adl*).

#### 18.6.6 From Method to Wisdom

In conclusion, the future of Islamic research methodology lies in transcending imitation and reclaiming originality - not by rejecting modern science, but by re-rooting it in the divine order. The Qur'an offers not only a moral compass but also an epistemic architecture - one that integrates *wahy* (revelation), *'aql* (reason), *'ilm* (knowledge), and *hikmah* (wisdom).

This reconstruction demands courage, intellectual humility, and institutional transformation. The Qur'an calls humanity toward the reflective ethos: *"So give good news to My servants who listen to the word and follow the best of it"* (Q. 39:17-18). The "best" (*aḥsan*) here is not innovation without truth, but



truth elevated through moral discernment. Hence, the horizon of Islamic methodology is not the expansion of data, but the deepening of meaning - from information to illumination, from observation to realisation, from *'ilm* to *hikmah*.

## Chapter 19: The Unity of Truth (Tawḥid) as the Epistemic Paradigm

Tawḥid, the affirmation of the absolute oneness of God, constitutes the foundational metaphysical claim and epistemic principle of the Qur'anic worldview. Far from functioning merely as a theological assertion, tawḥid establishes the structural coherence within which all phenomena-cosmological, moral, cognitive, and existential- acquire their meaning. In the Qur'anic discourse, knowledge (‘ilm) is inseparably linked to the recognition of the divine unity, and epistemic error frequently reflects a rupture in this recognition. As the Qur'an declares, *“God is the truth (al-ḥaqq), and what they call upon besides Him is falsehood”* (Q. 22:62). This ontological distinction between truth and falsehood becomes the epistemic criterion by which the Qur'anic notion of knowing is constructed.

Tawḥid functions as a meta-principle that unifies three interrelated domains: the structure of reality; the structure of human cognition; and the purpose and ethics of inquiry. Reality is depicted as singularly ordered under divine sovereignty: *“His is the creation and the command”* (Q. 7:54). Cognition is oriented toward uncovering the signs (ayat) embedded in this unified order: *“We shall show them Our signs on the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth”* (Q. 41:53). Finally, inquiry is governed by an ethical obligation to align human knowledge with divine guidance: *“Do not pursue that of which you do not know; surely hearing, sight, and heart-all will be questioned”* (Q. 17:36). In this triadic structure, tawḥid is the integrating principle that binds ontology, epistemology, and ethics into a single coherent paradigm.

The Qur'anic conception of knowledge assumes a world permeated by intelligibility because it is created with measure, balance, and purpose (Q. 54:49; Q 15:21). This stands in sharp contrast to epistemological models that view reality as fundamentally contingent, fragmentary, or self-subsisting. If reality is a unified, divinely structured totality, then knowledge cannot be conceived as a mere accumulation of observations; rather, it becomes the discovery of the inherent coherence and meaning embedded within creation. The Qur'an repeatedly emphasises this connection, urging human beings to *reflect* (yatafakkarun), *understand* (ya‘qilun), and *consider* (yatadabbarun) the signs dispersed across the cosmos and human consciousness.

Within this framework, tawḥid operates as a criterion of epistemic validity. The Qur'an associates false beliefs, distortions of judgment, and misguided intellectual practices with *shirk* -the attribution of partners to God or the fragmentation of ultimate authority (Q. 31:13; 10:66). Epistemic fragmentation mirrors theological fragmentation. When ontological unity is denied, knowledge becomes dispersed, partial, and susceptible to conjecture (ẓann), which the Qur'an repeatedly criticises as a source of epistemic unreliability (Q. 53:28; 10:36). This critique is not aimed at empirical inquiry but at the elevation of partial knowledge to unwarranted certainty. Consequently, tawḥid demands a hierarchy of knowing in which human epistemic methods-empirical, rational, intuitive-are subordinated to divine revelation, not in the sense of negating them, but of coordinating them within a coherent structure.

The Qur'anic account further presents knowledge as inseparable from moral responsibility. Because all cognitive faculties are entrusted to human beings (Q. 16:78), the misuse of these faculties constitutes a

breach of ethical duty. Tawḥid, therefore, establishes the moral purpose of knowledge: human beings are created as vicegerents (khulafa') tasked with discerning and implementing the divine command within their existential and social contexts (Q. 2:30). Knowledge is thus framed as an instrument for fulfilling this stewardship, not as an autonomous pursuit independent of moral accountability. The unity of God grounds the unity of truth, which in turn mandates the unity of knowledge and action.

Moreover, tawḥid implies that various modes of knowing reflect a single source. Revelation (wahy) discloses metaphysical truths inaccessible to empirical or rational instruments alone; reason ('aql) interprets and systematises both revelation and empirical observation; experience (tajriba) furnishes the domain of particular instances that confirm and contextualise universal meanings. None of these faculties function autonomously in the Qur'anic paradigm; rather, they operate in complementary alignment. The Qur'an explicitly invites verification (tahqiq), observation (nazar), and rational inference (istidlal), while continuously grounding these processes in the divine unity. Thus, tawḥid ensures that methodological pluralism does not devolve into epistemic relativism or fragmentation. In summary, tawḥid as an epistemic principle asserts that:

- Reality is a unified, divinely structured totality;
- Human cognitive faculties are designed to discern this unity through reflection on revelation and creation, and
- Knowledge is ethically bound to divine guidance and oriented toward responsible vicegerency.

This integrated framework establishes the foundation upon which the remainder of the book can develop a comprehensive Qur'anic philosophy of research. By consolidating theological, ontological, cognitive, and ethical dimensions, tawḥid offers a coherent paradigm capable of reconfiguring contemporary debates about scientific method, rationality, and the nature of truth.

## 19.1 Tawḥid as the Foundation of Knowledge and Reality

### 19.1.1 The Ontological Centrality of Divine Unity

In the Qur'anic worldview, *Tawḥid*-the absolute unity of God-is not merely a theological axiom but the ontological core that sustains all existence. The divine proclamation, “Say: He is Allah, One (Aḥad)” (Q. 112:1), functions as both a statement of faith and a metaphysical principle. It establishes that all beings derive their reality, coherence, and intelligibility from the singular divine source. The Qur'an articulates this order when it states: “Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is, over all things, Disposer of affairs” (Q. 39:62). Here, creation (*khalq*) is not an autonomous reality but an ongoing manifestation (*tajalli*) of divine will (*iradah*) and knowledge (*'ilm*).

The unity of God implies the unity of truth, meaning that all phenomena-natural, moral, and spiritual-are interconnected expressions of a single, coherent reality. Fragmentation, whether in knowledge or in existence, arises when this unity is obscured. In modern thought, the separation of the sacred and the secular, or of fact and value, represents a metaphysical rupture: the denial of *Tawḥid* as an epistemic

foundation (Nasr, 1987). The Qur'an presents *Tawhīd* as the principle of cosmic harmony, encapsulated in the verse: “*He who created seven heavens in harmony. You see no flaw in the creation of the Merciful. Then look again: do you see any disparity?*” (Q. 67:3). This verse suggests that the structure of the universe reflects divine balance (*mizan*)-a symmetry that is both physical and epistemological.

### 19.1.2 The Qur'anic Structure of Reality

The Qur'an divides reality into three interrelated domains: the unseen (*ghayb*), the visible (*shahadah*), and the revealed (*wahy*). These are not separate spheres but dimensions of one continuum of divine knowledge. The verse “*Knower of the unseen and the seen, the Mighty, the Wise*” (Q. 64:18) situates God as the unifying consciousness that comprehends and sustains both domains. Human knowledge, by contrast, operates within the horizon of partial perception: “*They encompass nothing of His knowledge except what He wills*” (Q. 2:255).

Thus, human inquiry (*ilm*) becomes a process of gradual participation in divine knowing. The *Tawhīdic* structure ensures that even empirical discovery and rational inference derive their legitimacy from their alignment with divine order. Knowledge is not an autonomous act of cognition but a form of divine trust (*amanah*): the ability to perceive meaning in creation as a reflection of the Creator's wisdom (Q. 33:72). This Qur'anic anthropology transforms epistemology into a sacred responsibility-knowledge must mirror unity, not fragmentation.

Modern philosophy, in contrast, often situates knowledge within dualisms-mind vs. matter, subject vs. object, science vs. faith. The Qur'an transcends such dichotomies by grounding all modes of knowing in *Tawhīd*. It asserts that reality itself is transparent to meaning because it is the “sign” (*ayah*) of the One: “*We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth*” (Q. 41:53). In this light, the cosmos is not a self-sufficient mechanism but a semiotic universe-a living scripture written in the language of divine unity.

### 19.1.3 Epistemology as Ontological Participation

To know, in the Qur'anic sense, is to participate in the divine act of recognition. The verse “*He taught Adam the names of all things*” (Q. 2:31) symbolises the human capacity for conceptual and ontological discernment. Naming (*tasmiya*) here implies a correspondence between cognition and creation participation in divine knowledge. Al-Attas (1995) interprets this act as the archetype of *Tawhīdic epistemology*: knowledge arises not from sensory accumulation alone but from perceiving the metaphysical relations among things in light of their Creator.

The Qur'an, therefore, transforms epistemology from the mere collection of facts into an ethical act of witnessing (*shahadah*). The human knower becomes a vicegerent (*khali'ah*) precisely because he bears the responsibility to unify perception, reason, and revelation. The verse “*He has made you successors upon the earth*” (Q. 6:165) signifies that human knowledge must sustain divine order through justice (*'adl*) and balance (*mizan*). The *Tawhīdic* intellect does not dominate reality but harmonises with it, unveiling unity within multiplicity.

In modern epistemological discourse, knowledge is often treated as power or utility. The Qur'an reverses this orientation: knowledge without unity degenerates into chaos. The verse *"They know the outward of the worldly life, but they are heedless of the Hereafter"* (Q. 30:7) critiques this superficial epistemology. True knowing ( *'ilm al-ḥaqiqi*) integrates the temporal and the eternal, the empirical and the metaphysical. Thus, the act of knowing becomes both intellectual and spiritual illumination (*mur al-'ilm*), leading from partial observation to holistic realisation.

#### 19.1.4 The Metaphysical Principle of Unity and Multiplicity

The Qur'an's repeated emphasis on signs (*ayat*) demonstrates that multiplicity does not negate unity but expresses it. Each phenomenon reflects a facet of divine reality. The verse *"Among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your languages and colours"* (Q. 30:22) situates difference within divine intentionality. Diversity is not opposition; it is manifestation. This principle refutes reductionism and relativism alike: reductionism collapses reality into material fragments, while relativism dissolves truth into subjective opinion. Both are denials of *Tawḥid* at the epistemic level.

The Qur'an resolves this tension by proposing a *unity-in-diversity* framework, where multiplicity finds coherence in the One. Knowledge, therefore, becomes an act of integration-seeing the many as signs of the One. Al-Ghazali's insight aligns with this view: all sciences, he wrote, must return to the knowledge of God, or else they lose meaning (as cited in Nasr, 1987). Thus, a *Tawḥidic* science seeks the relationships that unite phenomena, not the fragments that divide them.

#### 19.1.5 The Ethical Dimension of Knowing

Since *Tawḥid* affirms that all existence derives from the same source, it implies a universal moral order. The Qur'an connects epistemology to ethics when it warns: *"Do not follow that of which you do not know; indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart-each of these will be questioned"* (Q. 17:36). Knowledge entails accountability because every act of knowing participates in divine trust. To misuse knowledge is to betray the unity of truth.

In this sense, epistemic humility (*tawāḍu' al-'ilm*) becomes a virtue of *Tawḥidic* reasoning. Since human understanding is limited, the scholar must remain aware of the infinite depth of divine knowledge: *"Above every possessor of knowledge is one more knowing"* (Q. 12:76). This awareness guards against epistemic arrogance and instrumentalisation of science. The *Tawḥidic* scholar perceives inquiry as worship-an act of gratitude that transforms intellect into servanthood ( *'ubudiyyah*).

#### 19.1.6 The Cosmological Expression of Tawḥid

The Qur'an's vision of the cosmos reinforces *Tawḥid* as both structure and purpose. The natural order operates through divine command: *"His command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it, 'Be,' and it is"* (Q. 36:82). Every law of nature, from gravity to growth, is an expression of this divine *kun fayakun* (Be, and it is). Therefore, scientific inquiry, in the Qur'anic sense, is an act of reading divine speech in the language of phenomena.

This approach transforms cosmology into a theology of creation. The universe is intelligible because it is speech (*kalam*)-God's self-disclosure through signs. To study creation without reference to its source is to misread the text of reality. The Qur'an calls such blindness *ghaflah* (heedlessness), warning that it leads to distortion: "*They have hearts with which they do not understand, eyes with which they do not see, and ears with which they do not hear*" (Q. 7:179). Knowledge thus requires spiritual awakening as much as analytical reasoning.

### 19.1.7 Toward a Unified Epistemic Paradigm

*Tawhīd* therefore functions as the supreme epistemic principle that binds ontology, ethics, and cosmology into a single system. The Qur'an insists that genuine knowledge must lead to *yaqīn* (certainty) and *ḥikmah* (wisdom). It states: "*Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day are signs for those of understanding*" (Q. 3:190). This verse describes the contemplative scientist of the Qur'an: one who observes, reflects, and realises unity.

In this unified paradigm, reason (*‘aql*) and revelation (*wahy*) are not competitors but complementary lights illuminating the same truth. The modern division between faith-based and empirical knowledge represents a crisis of epistemic coherence. The Qur'an resolves this crisis by grounding both cognition and observation in the same metaphysical source. All authentic sciences-whether physical, social, or moral-must converge toward divine unity, for "*To Allah all matters return*" (Q. 35:4).

In this sense, *Tawhīd* becomes the epistemic horizon of all disciplines. It demands that human knowledge reintegrate metaphysics, ethics, and methodology under the sovereignty of divine truth. The Qur'an thus presents a holistic vision of reality where knowing, being, and worship are one.

## 19.2 The Epistemological Implications of Divine Oneness (Tawhīd)

### 19.2.1 From Ontological Unity to Epistemic Integration

The doctrine of *tawhīd* (Divine Oneness) does not merely assert the metaphysical unity of God; it constitutes the fundamental epistemic principle that unites all domains of human understanding. In the Qur'anic worldview, *tawhīd* establishes not only the unity of the Creator but also the unity of creation, knowledge, and moral purpose. Every act of cognition, observation, and reasoning is subsumed under the recognition that all reality originates from and returns to the One (*inna liLlahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un*, Q. 2:156). This recognition eliminates any possibility of a fragmented epistemology, replacing it with an integrative model where the knower, the known, and the process of knowing are interrelated within a divinely ordained harmony.

In contrast to modern epistemologies that compartmentalise knowledge into the physical, metaphysical, and moral, the Qur'an insists that all forms of knowledge derive meaning through *tawhīd*. This paradigm integrates empirical observation (*‘ilm al-ḥissi*), rational deduction (*‘ilm al-‘aqli*), and revealed truth (*‘ilm al-wahyi*) into a single continuum of truth (*ḥaqq*). Knowledge, therefore, is not merely the accumulation of data or the manipulation of phenomena; it is the recognition of Divine signs (*ayat*) in all levels of existence - in the horizons (*afaq*) and within the self (*anfus*) (Q. 41:53).



### 19.2.2 Unity of Source: Knowledge as Divine Trust

The Qur'an presents knowledge as an *amanah* (trust) that originates from God and is entrusted to humankind as vicegerent (*khali'ah*) (Q. 2:30). This implies that knowledge has an intrinsic sacred origin and moral responsibility. The ontological unity of truth (*al-haqq*) means that all legitimate knowledge must ultimately align with divine revelation - not by negating empirical inquiry, but by orienting it toward divine purpose.

Modern epistemology, by contrast, often assumes an autonomous knower separated from divine reference. The Qur'an corrects this disjunction by positing that the capacity to know (*'aql*) is itself a divine gift (Q. 67:10). The cognitive faculties of human beings are not self-sufficient but participate in a divinely instituted order where revelation provides the ultimate criterion for truth. In this sense, *tawhīd* restores the unity of epistemic authority by reconnecting reason, experience, and revelation under a single ontological source.

### 19.2.3 Unity of the Object: The Cosmos as a Network of Signs (Ayat)

In the Qur'an, the created world is described as a web of *ayat* - signs that point toward their Creator (Q. 3:190-191; 51:20-21). This view transforms the act of scientific observation into a form of theological contemplation. The multiplicity of phenomena does not indicate ontological plurality but expresses the diversity of the One. The principle of *tawhīd* thus redefines scientific objectivity: nature is not an independent system closed to transcendence, but a symbolically transparent field revealing divine intentionality.

When the Qur'an commands believers to "reflect upon the creation of the heavens and the earth" (*yatafakkaruna fī khalqī al-samawati wa-al-ard*, Q. 3:191), it transforms empirical observation into an act of *dhikr* (remembrance). Observation, in this epistemic context, is not value-neutral; it is teleological, directing the observer from multiplicity toward unity, from *phenomenon* to *meaning*. This epistemic movement - from the sign to the Signifier - marks the central difference between the *tawhīdic* and secular-scientific paradigms.

### 19.2.4 Unity of the Knower: Integration of the Soul and Intellect

In the Qur'anic perspective, the knower is not a disembodied rational agent but an integrated being comprising intellect (*'aql*), spirit (*ruh*), and moral conscience (*qalb*). The seat of knowledge is not merely the brain or rational faculty but the heart that perceives truth through both reflection and moral purification (Q. 22:46). This synthesis of cognition and conscience implies that epistemology cannot be divorced from ethics. To know in the Qur'anic sense (*'arafa*, *'alima*) requires not only intellectual engagement but moral alignment with truth.

The modern scientific paradigm, by contrast, tends to isolate the rational faculty from moral and spiritual dimensions, generating a fragmented knower. The *tawhīdic* view reestablishes equilibrium: it requires harmony among intellect (*'aql*), emotion (*nafs*), and will (*iradah*). Knowledge without purification leads



to arrogance (*istikbar*), while purified knowledge leads to humility (*tawadu'*). Thus, the process of knowing becomes a moral journey, transforming the knower in accordance with divine truth.

### 19.2.5 Unity of Method: Reason, Revelation, and Experience

The Qur'an integrates the triad of *'aql*, *wahy*, and *tajribah* (reason, revelation, and experience) into a single epistemic methodology. While modern science relies primarily on sensory verification and experimentation, the Qur'an extends verification (*tahqiq*) to include moral and metaphysical truth. This synthesis forms a comprehensive method in which revelation offers guidance to reason, reason interprets revelation, and experience confirms both.

For instance, the Qur'an calls upon reason to verify revelation through reflection: "*Will they not ponder over the Qur'an?*" (Q. 4:82). Similarly, it invites empirical engagement: "*Travel through the earth and see how He began creation*" (Q. 29:20). The act of *seeing* (*ru'yah*), *reflecting* (*tafakkur*), and *remembering* (*tadhakkur*) together constitute the Qur'anic method of knowing. Each mode corrects the limitations of the others, producing a balanced epistemology immune to both empiricist reductionism and mystical abstraction.

### 19.2.6 Unity of Purpose: Knowledge as Worship and Stewardship

The ultimate purpose of knowledge in the Qur'an is not domination but *'ibadah* (worship) and *khilafah* (responsible stewardship). Knowing becomes a mode of servitude through which the human being fulfils the divine mandate to maintain balance (*mizan*) on earth (Q. 55:7-9). This ethical teleology redefines the meaning of progress: true advancement is measured not by technological mastery but by moral and spiritual elevation.

Modern science, grounded in secular humanism, often severs knowledge from purpose, producing technologies that advance material power but erode ethical responsibility. The Qur'an restores finality to knowledge by embedding it within the structure of divine accountability (*hisab*). Every act of knowing is an act of witnessing (*shahadah*) - an affirmation of the One whose signs are studied.

### 19.2.7 Unity of Truth: From Multiplicity to Tawḥidic Coherence

The epistemological implication of *tawḥid* is that truth is singular and coherent, even though its manifestations are diverse. This means that contradictions between scientific findings and revelation are only apparent, arising from partial or misinterpreted understanding. The Qur'an repeatedly affirms: "*Had it been from other than Allah, they would have found in it much contradiction*" (Q. 4:82). Hence, a *tawḥidic* epistemology promotes intellectual humility - the recognition that human knowledge is always partial and dependent upon divine illumination.

As previously established in Part II, the Qur'an consistently integrates cognitive faculties-*'aql*, *qalb*, *basirah*-with divine guidance; Part IV expands this into a comprehensive Tawḥidic epistemology. This principle reconciles faith and reason: revelation provides the ultimate frame of reference, while reason operates within it to uncover the unity of reality. The quest for knowledge, therefore, is a form of spiritual ascent - a journey from fragmentation to integration, from appearance to essence, from *ẓahir* to *bāṭin*.

### 19.2.8 Toward a Tawḥidic Epistemic Vision

The epistemological implications of *tawḥid* transcend mere theology; they establish the architecture of a holistic knowledge system in which ontology, epistemology, and ethics are inseparably intertwined. In this model, knowledge is sacred because it reflects the unity of the Divine. The Qur'an transforms the human act of knowing from an autonomous enterprise into a sacred duty of witnessing, reflection, and moral responsibility.

The modern world's epistemic fragmentation - the separation of reason from revelation, fact from value, and science from ethics - is ultimately a crisis of *tawḥid*. Restoring the consciousness of Divine Oneness reintegrates all disciplines into a unified vision of reality where truth (*ḥaqq*), knowledge ( *ilm*), and moral order ( *ʿadl*) harmonise.

Thus, *tawḥid* is not only the foundation of Islamic theology but also the central axis of an epistemology capable of healing the intellectual disintegration of modernity. It calls for a renewed civilisation of knowledge that perceives in every act of discovery a reflection of the Divine - an epistemology where to know is to remember, and to remember is to be one with truth.

## 19.3 Knowledge as Worship (ʿIbadah) and Vicegerency (Khilafah)

### 19.3.1 The Moral-Teleological Ground of Knowledge

In the Qur'anic worldview, knowledge ( *ilm*) is not an autonomous pursuit detached from moral purpose; rather, it is an act of worship ( *ʿibadah*) and a means of fulfilling human vicegerency (*khilafah*) on earth. Knowledge, worship, and stewardship are inseparable dimensions of a single ontological duty: to recognise and manifest the unity of God (*tawḥid*) in creation. Every act of inquiry, discovery, and reasoning is therefore sacred when oriented toward the acknowledgement of divine signs (*ayat*).

The Qur'an states, “*I did not create jinn and humankind except that they worship Me*” (Q. 51:56). Worship ( *ʿibadah*) here extends far beyond ritual prayer; it signifies the entire orientation of human existence toward God. To seek knowledge with sincerity (*niyyah*), truthfulness (*ṣidq*), and humility (*tawāḍuʿ*) is itself an act of worship, because it fulfils the ontological purpose of recognising divine wisdom (*ḥikmah*) in creation. Likewise, *khilafah* represents the ethical implementation of that knowledge - the moral governance of the earth in accordance with divine order and justice ( *ʿadl*).

Thus, in the Qur'anic paradigm, epistemology and ethics converge: to know rightly is to worship, and to govern justly is to manifest divine truth in the world.

### 19.3.2 The Qur'anic Conception of ʿIbadah as Epistemic Orientation

The Qur'an transforms the act of knowing into an act of *ʿibadah* by linking cognition with remembrance (*dhikr*) and gratitude (*shukr*). It repeatedly commands humankind to “*reflect*,” “*ponder*,” and “*remember*” (Q. 3:191; 7:185; 30:8), implying that contemplation is not a neutral activity but a form of devotion. To think within the Qur'anic framework is to remember the Creator through His creation.

This orientation distinguishes *‘ilm* that is sacred (*‘ilm nafi*) from knowledge that leads to arrogance or misguidance (*‘ilm ghayr nafi*). The purpose of *‘ilm* is not the domination of nature or others, but the recognition of divine harmony in all beings. When knowledge is detached from remembrance, it becomes a means of corruption (*fasad*) rather than purification (*taḥīr*).

Hence, *‘ibadah* as an epistemic discipline transforms the knower's consciousness. It requires *tazkiyah* (purification of the self) so that perception (*baṣirah*) aligns with truth (*ḥaqq*). Knowledge acquired without purity of intention (*niyyah ṣaliḥah*) leads to deception, while knowledge pursued as devotion leads to illumination (*mur*). The Qur'an, therefore, links true knowing with worshipful humility: “*Above every possessor of knowledge is One more knowing*” (Q. 12:76).

### 19.3.3 Knowledge and Khilafah: The Ethic of Stewardship

The Qur'an presents humankind as God's *khaliiah* (vicegerent) on earth (Q. 2:30), entrusted with the moral management of creation. This stewardship is inseparable from knowledge; indeed, Adam's appointment as *khaliiah* was marked by his ability to name and understand - that is, to recognise the divine order in things (Q. 2:31-33).

In this verse, the act of teaching Adam the “names of all things” signifies the conferral of epistemic responsibility. Naming, in the Qur'anic sense, is not mere linguistic labelling but ontological insight - the recognition of each thing's role in the divine hierarchy of meaning. Through *‘ilm*, humanity participates in divine creativity, not by rivalling it, but by serving as its custodian.

Thus, *khilafah* transforms knowledge into ethical action. It imposes accountability (*mas'uliyah*) upon every act of knowing. To discover a law of nature or develop a technology is to assume responsibility for its consequences. The Qur'an's injunction to “*not cause corruption on the earth after it has been set in order*” (Q. 7:56) expresses the moral dimension of scientific and intellectual work. Knowledge divorced from *khilafah* becomes destructive; knowledge guided by stewardship becomes redemptive.

### 19.3.4 Worship as Cognitive Praxis: The Act of Knowing as Dhikr

The Qur'an repeatedly associates true cognition with *dhikr* (remembrance). “*Remember your Lord much, and glorify Him morning and evening*” (Q. 76:25). Remembrance in this sense is not merely verbal but epistemic - the act of keeping divine reality present in thought and perception. Every form of inquiry that maintains this remembrance is an act of *‘ibadah*.

In contrast, forgetfulness (*ghaflah*) is the primary epistemic sin. It signifies the disconnection of knowledge from its divine source, leading to cognitive fragmentation. The modern scientific enterprise, which excludes transcendence as a methodological principle, exemplifies this *ghaflah*. The Qur'an warns that such forgetfulness results in the inversion of knowledge into ignorance: “*They know the outward aspect of this worldly life, but they are heedless of the Hereafter*” (Q. 30:7).

Therefore, the Qur'anic model of *‘ibadah* transforms knowledge-seeking into continuous remembrance. When knowledge is pursued as *dhikr*, it elevates the soul (*ruh*); when pursued as material accumulation, it enslaves the mind to the transient.

### 19.3.5 The Dialectic of Knowledge and Responsibility

The Qur'an's epistemic ethics are founded on the dialectic between knowledge and responsibility. The more one knows, the greater one's moral accountability. *"Indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart - all of these will be questioned"* (Q. 17:36). Knowledge in the Qur'anic paradigm thus carries the weight of testimony (*shahadah*): to know truth is to bear witness to it in action.

This epistemic moralization contrasts sharply with the modern secular notion of value-neutral knowledge. For the Qur'an, neutrality is impossible because every cognitive act occurs within the moral order of divine accountability. The pursuit of truth without the intention to act righteously is considered incomplete. Thus, the Qur'an insists on the integration of *'ilm* (knowing) with *'amal* (doing) and *taqwa* (God-consciousness).

### 19.3.6 The Triadic Structure: 'Ilm, 'Ibadah, and Khilafah

The relationship between *'ilm*, *'ibadah*, and *khilafah* forms a triadic epistemic structure central to Qur'anic thought.

**Table 19.1: The relationship between *'ilm*, *'ibadah*, and *khilafah***

| Dimension                         | Qur'anic Function                          | Epistemic Expression                                                         | Ethical Outcome                                                  |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>'Ilm<br/>(Knowledge)</b>       | Recognition of divine order and signs      | Cognitive and reflective understanding ( <i>tafakkur</i> , <i>tadabbur</i> ) | Insight ( <i>baṣīrah</i> ) and intellectual humility             |
| <b>'Ibadah<br/>(Worship)</b>      | Orientation of the self toward God         | Devotional cognition and remembrance ( <i>dhikr</i> )                        | Purification ( <i>tazkiyah</i> ) and sincerity ( <i>ikhlaṣ</i> ) |
| <b>Khilafah<br/>(Vicegerency)</b> | Moral application of knowledge in creation | Responsible governance and ethical use of power                              | Justice ( <i>'adl</i> ) and balance ( <i>mīzan</i> )             |

This triadic model establishes the Qur'anic epistemology as both holistic and teleological. Knowledge begins as an act of recognition (*'ilm*), matures into remembrance (*'ibadah*), and culminates in ethical application (*khilafah*). The entire cycle is sustained by *tawḥid* - the unity of truth and purpose under Divine sovereignty.

### 19.3.7 The Crisis of Modern Knowledge: De-Sacralization and Alienation

Modern secular knowledge systems often sever the link between cognition and worship, resulting in a moral vacuum. When knowledge is stripped of transcendence, it becomes instrumental - a tool for control rather than contemplation. The consequence is ecological degradation, social injustice, and spiritual alienation.

The Qur'anic integration of *'ilm* and *'ibadah* offers a corrective framework. It redefines knowledge as a sacred trust (*amanah*) rather than proprietary power. The *tawhīdic* vision of *khilafah* demands that human knowledge serve as a mirror of divine mercy (*rahmah*), not a mechanism of domination. Only through such re-sacralization can knowledge regain its moral and spiritual direction.

### 19.3.8 Knowledge as a Path of Return (Ruju'): The Eschatological Dimension

In the Qur'an, all knowledge ultimately returns to its divine source. “*To Him belongs all knowledge of the unseen and the seen*” (Q. 6:73). This *ruju'* (return) gives human inquiry an eschatological dimension: every discovery, every realisation, is a step toward the unveiling of divine reality. The journey of the intellect mirrors the journey of the soul - both are movements from multiplicity toward unity.

Hence, knowing becomes a mode of spiritual ascension. The more the knower integrates worship and stewardship into his epistemic life, the closer he approaches the divine presence (*ḥaḍrah*). In this sense, *'ilm* is a bridge between creation and Creator, between the temporal and the eternal.

### 19.3.9 The Reunification of Knowledge, Worship, and Governance

The Qur'an presents a vision of knowledge in which *'ibadah* and *khilafah* form the twin expressions of divine purpose. Knowledge without worship is arrogance; worship without knowledge is blindness; governance without either is tyranny. Only when these three are harmonised does humanity fulfil its role as a moral and intellectual steward of creation.

In this synthesis, the epistemic act becomes an act of devotion; the act of devotion becomes an act of governance; and governance becomes an enactment of divine wisdom. This is the *tawhīdic* circle of knowledge: all truth proceeds from God, is discovered through His signs, and returns to Him through righteous action.

## 19.4: The Reunification of Revelation, Reason, and Experience

### 19.4.1 Overcoming the Dualism of Modern Knowledge

The fragmentation between revelation (*wahy*), reason (*'aql*), and experience (*tajriba*) represents one of the deepest crises in the intellectual history of humankind. In the Qur'anic worldview, these are not separate or competing domains; rather, they are complementary dimensions of a single, unified epistemic order grounded in *tawhīd*-the oneness of God as the source of all truth and meaning (Q. 21:22; 23:91). When knowledge is detached from revelation, reason becomes self-referential and prone to arrogance; when reason is isolated from experience, it degenerates into abstraction; and when experience is detached from revelation, it risks moral and ontological blindness. The Qur'an restores balance by establishing that all valid knowledge originates in the Divine act of revelation and is verified through the harmony of reason and sensory experience, forming a holistic epistemic cycle (*'ilm*-*'aql*-*ḥiss*).

The Qur'an calls upon humankind to “reflect” (*yatafakkarun*) and “consider” (*yatadabbarun*) both the *signs of revelation* (ayat al-wahy) and the *signs of creation* (ayat al-kawn). These dual categories of *ayat* integrate the intellectual and empirical dimensions of knowledge. Thus, revelation is not anti-rational; it

is supra-rational-it provides the metaphysical ground upon which reason and experience can function coherently. The Qur'an declares: "*We shall show them Our signs on the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the Truth*" (Q. 41:53). This verse articulates a framework in which revelation, rational reflection, and experiential observation converge as interdependent means of perceiving divine truth.

### 19.4.2 Revelation (*Wahy*) as the Source of Epistemic Certainty

The Qur'an begins with the presupposition that revelation is the ultimate and self-authenticating source of knowledge. "*This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of God*" (Q. 2:2). Revelation here functions as the *epistemic axis* (*miḥwar ma'rifi*) around which all other forms of knowledge revolve. Its authority stems not from empirical verification or rational deduction, but from the ontological unity between the Revealer (Allah), the revelation (the Qur'an), and creation itself.

The Qur'an does not reject empirical inquiry or rational reflection; rather, it situates them within a divinely ordered hierarchy. Revelation provides the axiological and ontological framework necessary for reason and experience to operate meaningfully. Without revelation, the intellect becomes *autonomous*, seeking to legislate reality according to its own limited perspective-an epistemic rebellion that the Qur'an characterises as *ẓann* (mere conjecture) (Q. 10:36). The Qur'an thus redefines knowledge not as the product of human speculation but as the recognition of divine truth manifest through creation, scripture, and the self.

Revelation also demarcates the boundaries of legitimate inquiry. While human reason is encouraged to explore the cosmos, it is simultaneously reminded that ultimate knowledge belongs to God alone: "*They encompass not a thing of His knowledge except for what He wills*" (Q. 2:255). This epistemic humility forms the moral foundation of the Qur'anic approach to knowledge-a reminder that human understanding must always be grounded in servitude (*'ubudiyyah*), not sovereignty.

### 19.4.3 Reason (*'Aql*) as the Instrument of Reflection and Moral Discernment

The Qur'an's call to reason is among its most persistent themes. The term *'aql* and its derivatives appear throughout the Qur'an, always in connection with reflection, discernment, and moral accountability. The Qur'an asks repeatedly: "*Do you not use your reason?*" (*afala ta'qilun*), underscoring that reason is not an autonomous cognitive tool but a divine trust (*amanah*) given to humankind for recognising the signs of God and acting justly upon them (Q. 67:10; 2:44).

In the *tawhīdic* framework, reason is not opposed to revelation; it is its necessary interpreter. Revelation provides the metaphysical principles and ethical direction; reason provides the interpretive mechanism by which these principles are applied in the world. When reason operates in submission to revelation, it becomes *'aql mu'min*-faithful intellect -capable of discerning truth from falsehood. Conversely, when reason seeks to transcend revelation, it becomes *'aql ghayr mu'min*-rebellious intellect-leading to epistemic relativism and existential confusion.



The Qur'an further binds reason to ethical consciousness. Rationality is never neutral in the Qur'anic view; it is always morally oriented. The act of reasoning carries with it the responsibility to pursue justice, compassion, and truth. Hence, 'aql functions as both an epistemic and an ethical faculty-its misuse leads to corruption, as seen in the warning: "*They have hearts with which they do not understand*" (Q. 7:179). True reasoning, therefore, is inseparable from moral rectitude and spiritual awareness.

#### 19.4.4 Experience (*Tajriba*) as the Arena of Verification and Reflection

While revelation provides the metaphysical ground and reason for the interpretive faculty, experience constitutes the empirical field in which knowledge is tested, embodied, and confirmed. The Qur'an invites humankind to engage with the natural world as a site of divine signs: "*Do they not look into the dominion of the heavens and the earth and all that Allah has created?*" (Q. 7:185). Here, *tajriba*-experiential engagement-becomes an act of worship (*ibadah*), a means of witnessing the divine order through observation, experimentation, and reflection.

Unlike the materialist epistemology of modern science, which often divorces experience from metaphysical meaning, the Qur'an integrates empirical inquiry within a theocentric framework. The purpose of experience is not merely to manipulate nature but to understand its signs and thus draw nearer to the Creator. Knowledge derived from experience must therefore be guided by revelation and refined by reason. The Qur'an declares: "*And He taught Adam the names-all of them*" (Q. 2:31), indicating that empirical and linguistic knowledge-naming, categorising, understanding-are divine gifts that link human cognition to divine wisdom.

The Qur'an thus transforms the act of experience into an act of revelation-reading. Every scientific observation or empirical discovery becomes meaningful only when interpreted through the *ayat* framework-the signs of God in creation. This ensures that empirical knowledge never becomes idolatrous, as it is always subordinate to the higher order of divine wisdom.

#### 19.4.5 The Qur'anic Model of Epistemic Reunification

The Qur'an presents a unified epistemology wherein revelation, reason, and experience form a triadic harmony reflective of *tawhid*. This model can be represented as follows:

| Epistemic Source                        | Function                                                        | Qur'anic Foundation    | Epistemic Outcome                                       |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Revelation</b><br>( <i>Wahy</i> )    | Provides metaphysical principles and moral orientation          | Q. 2:2; 6:59; 42:52    | Certainty ( <i>yaqin</i> ), moral guidance              |
| <b>Reason</b> ( <i>'Aql</i> )           | Interprets and applies divine principles to changing contexts   | Q. 3:190; 7:179; 67:10 | Understanding ( <i>fiqh</i> ), discernment              |
| <b>Experience</b><br>( <i>Tajriba</i> ) | Observes, tests, and confirms divine signs in the natural world | Q. 41:53; 7:185; 29:20 | Verification ( <i>tahqiq</i> ), embodiment of knowledge |



This triadic model ensures the continuity of knowledge from metaphysical revelation to rational reflection and empirical realisation. It dissolves the artificial divisions imposed by secular modernity and reasserts the Qur’anic view that all knowledge is interconnected and ultimately returns to Allah, “*Who taught by the pen*” (Q. 96:4).

#### 19.4.6 Implications for Contemporary Knowledge Systems

Reintegrating revelation, reason, and experience has profound implications for the modern epistemological crisis. The fragmentation of academic disciplines and the separation of science from spirituality stem largely from a loss of the *tawḥidic* centre. By reestablishing revelation as the ontological core, reason as the interpretive faculty, and experience as the field of realisation, Islamic epistemology offers a paradigm for holistic knowledge reconstruction.

In education, this means reuniting scientific inquiry with ethical consciousness and spiritual purpose. In philosophy, it entails rethinking metaphysics not as abstract speculation but as a reflection of divine reality. In science, it calls for a sacred empiricism that perceives the natural world as a mirror of divine attributes. And in social thought, it mandates that human progress be measured not by material accumulation but by moral and spiritual elevation.

#### 19.4.7 Toward a Tawḥidic Epistemic Harmony

The reunification of revelation, reason, and experience restores the original balance of human knowledge as envisioned in the Qur’an. It affirms that truth (*haqq*) is not fragmented but integrated, that faith and intellect are not adversaries but allies, and that experience without revelation is as incomplete as revelation without reflection. The Qur’an thus stands as both the foundation and the fulfilment of all epistemic pursuits, proclaiming: “*He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden, and He is, of all things, Knowing*” (Q. 57:3).

In this *tawḥidic* vision, knowledge is no longer a human possession but a divine trust—a sacred light that illuminates reason and experience in harmony with revelation. The future of knowledge, then, lies not in further specialisation or division but in returning to its singular source: the One who taught humankind all that it did not know (Q. 96:5).

### 19.5: Tawḥidic Epistemology and the Future of Human Knowledge

#### 19.5.1 The Crisis of Fragmented Knowledge in the Modern Age

The modern world stands at the apex of scientific discovery and technological advancement, yet simultaneously at the nadir of spiritual and moral coherence. The exponential expansion of human knowledge has been accompanied by an equally profound disintegration of meaning. Knowledge has become *functional* rather than *foundational*, serving economic, political, and instrumental interests rather than moral and metaphysical truth. This fragmentation is a direct consequence of epistemological secularisation—the divorce of knowledge from revelation (*wahy*) and the desacralization of reason (*‘aql*).

The Qur'an, however, envisions a radically different epistemic order: one in which knowledge is unified by the principle of *tawhīd*-the absolute Oneness of God that pervades all levels of reality, meaning, and existence. The *tawhīdic* worldview restores knowledge to its original purpose: to recognise, worship, and serve the Creator through the understanding of His signs in revelation and creation (Q. 51:56; 41:53). Thus, the future of human knowledge depends upon the recovery of *tawhīdic epistemology* as the guiding paradigm for all intellectual, scientific, and social inquiry.

### 15.5.2 The Qur'anic Vision of Knowledge as a Sacred Trust

The Qur'an defines knowledge (*ilm*) not as human possession but as divine trust (*amanah*). Allah declares: “*And He taught Adam the names-all of them*” (Q. 2:31), symbolising the divinely conferred capacity for naming, understanding, and meaning-making. This foundational act establishes human knowledge as participatory in divine wisdom, not autonomous from it.

Knowledge, in the Qur'anic paradigm, carries both epistemic and moral responsibility. The one who knows becomes accountable for how that knowledge is used: “*Indeed, those who conceal what We sent down of clear proofs and guidance after We made it clear for the people in the Scripture-those are cursed by Allah and cursed by those who curse*” (Q. 2:159). Knowledge, therefore, entails stewardship (*khilafah*)-the duty to preserve harmony between the divine order and human civilisation.

This perspective radically redefines the modern pursuit of knowledge. In a *tawhīdic* framework, knowledge is not merely descriptive but normative; it directs moral action and cultivates wisdom (*hikmah*). The Qur'an repeatedly links knowledge with righteousness: “*Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who know*” (Q. 35:28). Thus, the epistemic ideal of Islam is not the accumulation of information but the realisation of truth through submission to God.

### 19.5.3 Reorienting the Structure of Knowledge: From Specialisation to Integration

Modern academia operates within a fragmented paradigm where disciplines function as isolated silos- physics detached from metaphysics, biology from ethics, economics from justice, and politics from spirituality. This structural fragmentation reflects the underlying metaphysical rupture of modernity: the separation of knowledge from its divine source.

*Tawhīdic epistemology* calls for the reintegration of all branches of knowledge under the sovereignty of revelation. The Qur'an provides the conceptual grammar for this unification through its integrative use of *ayat* (signs). Every field of knowledge, natural, human, or spiritual, becomes a domain of divine signs pointing toward the same transcendent unity. Thus, astronomy (*ilm al-falak*) and theology (*ilm al-tawhīd*), medicine and ethics, economics and justice, are not separate but interconnected modes of reading God's signs in different registers of existence.

This integration does not negate specialisation but redefines it within a holistic framework. The Qur'an's epistemology allows each field to retain methodological autonomy while remaining ethically and metaphysically anchored. For instance, ecological studies can pursue empirical rigour while acknowledging the sacredness of creation (Q. 55:7-9). Similarly, economic theory can maintain analytical

precision while recognising that wealth is a divine trust (*mal Allah*) subject to justice and compassion (Q. 9:60). The unity of knowledge is thus preserved without suppressing its diversity.

#### 19.5.4 Reclaiming the Role of Revelation in Knowledge Production

A major task for the future of human knowledge lies in restoring revelation as an active source of epistemic insight, not merely as a theological artefact. The Qur'an is not a book of science, but it is a book of signs that provide epistemological direction for all sciences. It articulates the principles of order, harmony, purpose, and moral causality that underlie the cosmos. When these principles are forgotten, science becomes reductionist, explaining phenomena without understanding their meaning.

The Qur'an continually directs human inquiry toward reflection upon the universe: “*Do they not look into the dominion of the heavens and the earth and all that Allah has created?*” (Q. 7:185). This verse transforms observation into *tafakkur*-reflective consciousness that perceives divine wisdom behind empirical order. Revelation thus functions not as a limitation but as a horizon, guiding reason and experience toward transcendental coherence.

Future epistemologies rooted in *tawhīd* must therefore recover the interpretive dialogue between *wahy*, *'aql*, and *tajriba*-revelation, reason, and experience outlined in Section 19.4. The Qur'an provides both the metaphysical orientation and the moral telos that render human inquiry meaningful. Without this anchorage, knowledge becomes nihilistic, producing technological power without ethical guidance—a phenomenon the Qur'an describes as “*those who know the outward of the worldly life but are heedless of the Hereafter*” (Q. 30:7).

#### 19.5.5 The Ethical and Ontological Dimensions of Future Knowledge

The *tawhīdic* framework insists that the future of human knowledge must be both *ethical* and *ontological*. Ethics (*akhlāq*) cannot be an external addition to knowledge; it is intrinsic to the act of knowing. The Qur'an unites *'ilm* (knowledge) with *'amal ṣalīh* (righteous action), making the moral use of knowledge the true measure of wisdom. Knowledge divorced from ethics leads to corruption (*fasād*), while knowledge illuminated by faith produces balance (*mizān*) (Q. 55:7-9).

Ontologically, *tawhīdic epistemology* rejects the dualism between the knower and the known, subject and object. Knowledge is a relationship of trust between creation and Creator, mediated through the human intellect. Every act of knowing becomes a form of witnessing (*shahadah*), affirming divine unity through engagement with the multiplicity of creation. The Qur'an thus transforms epistemology into ontology: to know truly is to *be* rightly.

This has profound implications for emerging fields such as artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and environmental science. The Qur'an commands humankind to act as *khali'ah*-steward, not master of creation (Q. 2:30). Technological innovation must therefore operate within the boundaries of divine trust and ecological justice. A future knowledge system inspired by *tawhīd* would evaluate scientific progress not only by its efficiency but by its contribution to balance, compassion, and the sustenance of life.

### 19.5.6 Knowledge as Light (*Mur*): The Eschatological Vision of Learning

The Qur'an repeatedly describes knowledge as *mur* (light) that dispels ignorance and guides the soul toward truth: "*Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth*" (Q. 24:35). This luminous epistemology contrasts sharply with the mechanistic darkness of modern secular thought. In the Qur'an, knowledge illuminates both intellect and heart (*qalb*), leading to spiritual awakening and ethical transformation.

Future education systems built upon *tawhīdic epistemology* must therefore transcend mere information transfer and cultivate *basirah*-inner vision. Learning becomes an act of purification (*tazkiyah*), aligning the intellect with the divine will. The Qur'an defines the Prophet's mission precisely in these terms: "*He teaches them the Book and wisdom and purifies them*" (Q. 62:2). True education (*talim wa-tazkiyah*) integrates intellectual formation with spiritual refinement.

In this sense, the future of knowledge is not technological but theological. Its ultimate goal is the reillumination of consciousness, transforming the pursuit of science and philosophy into acts of remembrance (*dhikr*). As the Qur'an proclaims: "*Indeed, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest*" (Q. 13:28). The heart, as the seat of understanding, becomes the locus of integration between faith, intellect, and experience—a synthesis that modern epistemology must rediscover.

### 19.5.7 Toward a Global Paradigm Shift: From Secular Rationality to Sacred Rationality

The future of knowledge requires a global paradigm shift from secular rationality to sacred rationality-*'aql muqaddas*. In the *tawhīdic* vision, reason is not abolished but transfigured; it becomes a servant of truth rather than its master. The Qur'an calls this transformation *hikmah*-wisdom that harmonises understanding with divine purpose (Q. 2:269).

Sacred rationality does not reject science; it redeems it by reintegrating it into a moral and metaphysical whole. It affirms that truth cannot be known through reason alone but through the convergence of intellect, revelation, and intuition. This shift will require a renewal of epistemic institutions—universities, research centres, and curricula—rooted in Qur'anic ethics and cosmology. The future university of Islam must produce not only experts but *'ulama' rashidun*—rightly guided scholars whose knowledge manifests as justice, balance, and mercy.

### 19.5.8 Conclusion: The Future of Knowledge as Return to the One

The Qur'an opens with the command "*Read in the name of your Lord who created*" (Q. 96:1), and this remains the eternal charter for the future of human knowledge. To read without the remembrance of the Creator is to lose both meaning and direction. The *tawhīdic epistemology* thus envisions the future not as innovation without orientation but as renewal within divine unity—a future where the sciences, humanities, and spiritual disciplines converge in the recognition of God as the source, sustainer, and goal of all knowing.

In this vision, human knowledge fulfils its sacred destiny: to be a mirror reflecting divine wisdom, a path leading creation back to its Creator. The Qur'an reminds humanity of this final return: "*To Him belongs*

*all that is in the heavens and the earth, and to Allah all matters return*” (Q. 3:109). The journey of knowledge, like all creation, begins and ends with the One.

## 19.6: From Fragmentation to Integration: The Qur’anic Vision of Truth

### 19.6.1 The Age of Epistemic Disintegration

The intellectual history of humanity, particularly in the modern era, has been marked by what the Qur’an calls *tafarruq*-disintegration and dispersion. In the secular age, truth has been fragmented into innumerable relative interpretations, each detached from its divine centre. The sciences pursue utility without wisdom; the humanities explore meaning without transcendence; and religion is often confined to private sentiment without intellectual engagement. This fragmentation reflects the deeper spiritual rupture between the human being and the divine source of reality.

The Qur’an identifies this condition as the outcome of forgetting God: *“And be not like those who forgot Allah, so He made them forget themselves”* (Q. 59:19). The loss of divine remembrance (*dhikr Allah*) leads to the loss of human coherence. Knowledge becomes divided, and the unity of the self collapses. The challenge of contemporary thought, therefore, is not merely the accumulation of more information but the recovery of unity-*tawḥid*-as the epistemic principle that integrates the multiplicity of disciplines, meanings, and realities into a single order of truth.

This section brings together the insights of this chapter and the wider study to articulate a comprehensive conclusion: that *tawḥid* is not only the theological core of Islam but also the epistemological key to reconstructing human knowledge and civilisation. It calls humanity from the darkness of fragmentation to the light of integration, from the worship of partial truths to the recognition of the One Truth that sustains all.

### 19.6.2 The Qur’anic Meaning of Truth (al-Ḥaqq)

The Qur’an presents *al-Ḥaqq* as one of the divine names and attributes: *“That is because Allah is the Truth (al-Ḥaqq), and that which they call upon besides Him is falsehood”* (Q. 31:30). Truth, therefore, is not merely a correspondence between thought and object; it is an ontological reality grounded in the Being of God. All other truths are derivative, and participatory -they reflect aspects of divine reality but never stand independent of it.

This metaphysical conception of truth transforms the entire epistemological enterprise. In the modern scientific model, truth is verified by empirical correspondence and falsifiability. In the Qur’anic model, truth is verified by its coherence with divine order (*amr Allah*), its moral harmony with justice (*‘adl*), and its alignment with ultimate purpose (*ḥikmah*). The Qur’an repeatedly asserts this integrative truth: *“We did not create the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them in vain; that is the assumption of those who disbelieve”* (Q. 38:27).

Thus, *tawḥid* restores truth to its sacred centre. The search for knowledge becomes an act of seeking God’s presence within creation. Every discipline-whether physics, law, psychology, or philosophy- participates

in this search by uncovering signs (*ayat*) that lead the intellect from multiplicity to unity. The culmination of knowing is therefore the realisation that “*Allah is the Truth, and what they invoke besides Him is falsehood*” (Q. 22:62).

### 19.6.3 The Integration of Knowledge and Being

The Qur'an establishes a profound link between knowledge (*'ilm*) and being (*wujud*). To know something truly is to perceive its existence as a manifestation of divine will. The universe itself is described as a *Kitab manzur*-a revealed book-while the Qur'an is the *Kitab manqul*-the recited book. The two are mirrors of one another, both reflecting divine truth. When knowledge of the world becomes separated from the revelation that gives it meaning, the result is ontological blindness.

The *tawhīdic* epistemology, by contrast, integrates all dimensions of existence: physical, metaphysical, and moral. It recognises that the cosmos operates according to divine measure (*qadar*) and balance (*mizan*): “*And the heaven He raised, and He set the balance, that you may not transgress the balance*” (Q. 55:7-8). This balance is both physical and moral; it governs the order of the universe and the ethics of human behaviour.

In this vision, epistemology becomes inseparable from ontology. Knowing is a form of being, and being is an act of divine revelation. The Qur'an invites humanity to contemplate this integration through reflection: “*Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day are signs for those of understanding*” (Q. 3:190). The *'aql* (intellect) perceives unity not by abstraction but through contemplative immersion in divine order.

### 19.6.4 The Ethical Integration: Knowledge, Justice, and Mercy

One of the central outcomes of *tawhīdic* epistemology is the reintegration of ethics and knowledge. The Qur'an never separates cognition from morality. It condemns knowledge that is used to corrupt rather than to uplift: “*They know the outward of the worldly life, but they are heedless of the Hereafter*” (Q. 30:7). In contrast, it praises those who unite knowledge with faith and compassion: “*Those who have been given knowledge see that what is revealed to you from your Lord is the truth, and it guides to the path of the Mighty, the Praiseworthy*” (Q. 34:6).

Modern civilisation's crises-environmental destruction, inequality, and moral decay- stem from the divorce of knowledge from ethics. The Qur'an redefines knowledge as an act of mercy (*rahmah*) and justice (*'adl*). The purpose of knowing is to realise harmony among creation, not to dominate it. This ethical integration restores balance (*mizan*) within human societies and ecosystems alike.

In the future epistemic order envisioned by the Qur'an, every scientific and intellectual pursuit would be evaluated according to its alignment with divine ethics. Knowledge that leads to arrogance or oppression (*ẓulm*) is rejected, while knowledge that nurtures justice, compassion, and sustainability is elevated as *ḥikmah*. As the Qur'an states: “*He gives wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever is given wisdom has been given much good*” (Q. 2:269).



### 19.6.5 The Reunification of Revelation, Reason, and Experience

At the heart of *tawhīdic* epistemology lies the reconciliation of the three primary sources of human understanding: revelation (*wahy*), reason (‘*aql*), and experience (*tajriba*). The Qur’an does not privilege one at the expense of the others; rather, it integrates them in a dynamic relationship of mutual illumination. Revelation provides the metaphysical ground and moral orientation, reason provides the analytical faculty, and experience provides the empirical context.

This tripartite synthesis is illustrated in the Qur’anic command to “*read in the name of your Lord who created*” (Q. 96:1). To “read” implies rational interpretation and empirical observation, but the act must be performed “in the name of” the Creator, anchored in revelation. Thus, Qur’anic inquiry is both rational and spiritual, empirical and contemplative.

Modern epistemology, by contrast, has reduced truth to what is empirically verifiable, excluding revelation as non-scientific and reason as purely instrumental. The Qur’an restores both to their rightful place, insisting that the universe itself testifies to the reality of its Creator: “*We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth*” (Q. 41:53). Revelation, reason, and experience thus converge toward the same truth—the unity of all existence under the sovereignty of the One.

### 19.6.6 Overcoming the Fragmentation of Modern Disciplines

The modern classification of knowledge into separate disciplines—natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities—reflects a functional necessity but also a metaphysical error. It assumes that knowledge can be divided without reference to a unifying ontology. The Qur’an, however, presents all knowledge as interconnected manifestations of divine wisdom.

The Qur’anic approach invites what can be called *integrative disciplinary epistemology*. For example, environmental science cannot be separated from ethics, nor economics from justice, nor psychology from spirituality. Each domain, when viewed through the lens of *tawhīd*, becomes an *ayah* that reveals a facet of divine truth. The Qur’an’s continuous invitation to “*reflect upon creation*” (Q. 3:191) indicates that empirical study and spiritual realisation are complementary, not conflicting.

In practical terms, this integration would transform educational institutions into centres of moral and intellectual renewal. The *tawhīdic university* would not merely transmit knowledge but cultivate wisdom; it would train scientists, thinkers, and leaders who perceive the sacred unity of existence and act as stewards (*khulafa*) of God’s creation.

### 19.6.7 Toward a Qur’anic Paradigm of Global Renewal

The Qur’anic vision of truth ultimately extends beyond individual knowing to civilizational transformation. When knowledge is grounded in *tawhīd*, civilisation becomes a reflection of divine order, harmonious, just, and purposeful. The Qur’an describes this as the establishment of balance: “*So that mankind may stand in justice*” (Q. 57:25). The moral and epistemic goal of human civilisation is thus to



embody divine attributes such as mercy (*rahmah*), knowledge (‘*ilm*), and wisdom (*hikmah*) in social institutions, sciences, and culture.

In this sense, *tawhīdic epistemology* is not confined to the academy; it is a blueprint for civilisation. It envisions a future where the pursuit of knowledge becomes a universal act of worship (‘*ibadah*), and every discovery brings humanity closer to God. The fragmentation of modernity is healed not through technological innovation but through spiritual reintegration, through remembering that all truth originates from, and returns to, the One.

### 19.6.8 The Return to the One

The Qur'an concludes its vision of reality with an ultimate affirmation of unity: “*To Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth; and to Allah all matters return*” (Q. 3:109). This verse encapsulates the essence of *tawhīdic epistemology*: all knowledge, being, and meaning flow from a single source and converge toward a single truth.

To move from fragmentation to integration is, therefore, to return to God-not as a metaphysical abstraction but as the living Truth (*al-Haqq*) that sustains every atom of existence. In this return, the sciences regain their sacredness, philosophy its purpose, and humanity its moral centre. The Qur'an's vision of truth is thus the completion of epistemology itself: the unification of knowing, being, and worship in the remembrance of the One who is both the Beginning and the End (*al-Awwal wa'l-Akhir*). As the Qur'an declares: “*He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden, and He is, of all things, Knowing*” (Q. 57:3).

This verse is the epistemic creed of Islam and the eternal horizon for the future of human knowledge-a horizon of light, unity, and truth that calls all minds and hearts to witness the Oneness of the Real.

The reconstruction of Islamic epistemology in the contemporary context represents not merely an intellectual revival but a civilizational reorientation toward divine unity (*tawhīd*) as the foundation of all knowledge. Across the preceding chapters, the Qur'an has emerged as both the origin and the horizon of inquiry-a living text that integrates revelation (*wahy*), reason (‘*aql*), and empirical observation (*ayah*) into a unified epistemic framework. This reconstruction rejects the fragmentation of modern knowledge that isolates fact from value, science from ethics, and intellect from spirituality. Instead, it restores the holistic Qur'anic vision in which knowing is inseparable from being and moral responsibility.

From the classical intellectual heritage of al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, al-Ghazali, and Ibn Rushd to the comparative engagement with modern scientific rationalities, this part has shown that the Qur'an provides not an alternative to reason but its purification and transcendence. It calls for a science that reflects divine purpose, where observation becomes remembrance (*dhikr*), and discovery becomes submission (*islam*) to divine truth. The Qur'anic researcher thus stands not as a detached observer but as a conscious trustee (*amin*) within creation, accountable for both the means and the ends of inquiry.

The future of Islamic research methodology, as articulated here, lies in synthesising disciplinary knowledge within the Qur'anic paradigm of unity, justice, and stewardship. In this reconstructed

epistemology, revelation reclaims its role as the supreme source of ontological and ethical orientation, while reason and empiricism serve as instruments of divine discovery. The Qur'an thus transforms the pursuit of knowledge into an act of worship ('ibadah) and vicegerency (khilafah), aligning the intellect with the Creator's moral order.

Ultimately, this reconstruction of Islamic epistemology points toward a new intellectual dawn, where the sciences, humanities, and spiritual disciplines converge under the sovereignty of tawḥid. It envisions a civilisation of knowledge guided by divine balance (mizan), where truth is neither fragmented nor relativised but illuminated by the eternal light (nur) of revelation. This is the Qur'anic vision of truth-integrated, moral, and transformative, where knowing becomes a path to divine nearness and the realisation of universal harmony.

The unified Qur'anic paradigm presented here returns the reader to earlier discussions in Part II, where the cognitive architecture of Qur'anic knowing was first constructed, demonstrating how the foundational instruments ('aql, qalb, basirah, and wahy) naturally culminate in the Tawḥidic epistemology articulated in this chapter.

## Chapter 20: Qur'anic Cosmology and the Epistemology of Space Sciences

The Qur'an presents a worldview in which the cosmos functions simultaneously as a *created order*, a *dynamic system*, and a *text of signs (ayat)* that invites continuous intellectual engagement. Unlike pre-modern mythological cosmologies or modern reductive materialist interpretations of the universe, the Qur'an frames cosmology as a living epistemic field—one in which the heavens and the earth form a pedagogical arena designed to stimulate inquiry, contemplation, and discovery (Q. 3:190-191). Within this paradigm, space is not an empty void but a structured domain governed by divine laws, accessible to human cognition, and open to empirical exploration. The Qur'an repeatedly urges humanity to observe, study, and reason about the heavens (*samawat*) as an essential dimension of knowing (*'ilm*), not merely as an act of worship but as a scientific imperative (Q. 51:20-22).

Contemporary scientific disciplines such as astrophysics, cosmology, orbital mechanics, planetary science, and space exploration resonate remarkably with Qur'anic discourse. Verses describing the expansion of the universe (Q. 51:47), the ordered motion of celestial bodies (Q. 21:33), the structural pathways in the cosmos (*subulan fi al-sama'*; Q. 51:7), and the rigour of cosmic balance (*mizan*; Q. 55:7) reveal a coherent cosmological ontology anchored in law, order, and intelligibility. These features constitute the very foundations of the epistemic legitimacy of modern scientific inquiry.

Yet, Qur'anic cosmology is not confined to physical description. It embeds a holistic epistemology that integrates empirical observation (*nazar*), rational inference (*'aql*), and existential reflection (*tadabbur*). Thus, space sciences do not merely study physical phenomena but participate knowingly or unknowingly in a broader Qur'anic project: uncovering the signs of divine creativity in the vast canvas of the universe.

This chapter integrates Qur'anic cosmology with contemporary space sciences through a methodological framework rooted entirely in the Qur'anic text. It begins by establishing the Qur'anic cosmological ontology, outlining the fundamental nature of the universe—its creation, structure, laws, and purpose. It then examines specific scientific domains that find direct resonance in Qur'anic discourse: cosmic expansion, celestial order, orbital dynamics, relativistic interpretations of time, gravitational balance, and cosmic pathways. Each section demonstrates how Qur'anic epistemology supports scientific inquiry without collapsing into materialism or speculative metaphysics.

The chapter then moves toward ethical and philosophical dimensions, addressing the Qur'anic conception of human exploration as *amanah*—a trust that demands responsibility, humility, and stewardship. Finally, it traces the intellectual history of Islamic cosmology to show how earlier Muslim thinkers creatively engaged with the cosmos long before modern cosmological theories emerged.

This chapter thus serves as a bridge between Qur'anic epistemology and contemporary space sciences, showing that the study of the cosmos is not merely compatible with the Qur'anic worldview but is a continuation of a divinely mandated intellectual journey.

## 20.1 Qur'anic Cosmological Ontology

### 20.1.1 Cosmology as an Epistemic Foundation in the Qur'an

The Qur'an frames the cosmos (al-samawat wa al-ard) not merely as a physical environment but as a foundational epistemic structure -an intelligible system created with purpose, precision, and law (Q. 54:49). Qur'anic cosmology serves as an ontological gateway through which human beings understand the meaning of existence, the principles of order, and the nature of divine creativity. Unlike mythological cosmologies that depict the heavens as arbitrary or populated by competing gods, the Qur'an insists that the entire cosmos is unified under one Creator, governed by a coherent architecture and open to rational investigation (Q. 21:30; 67:3-5). This makes cosmology central to Qur'anic epistemology.

Thus, *cosmological ontology* in the Qur'an refers to the “being,” structure, and purpose of the universe. It establishes:

- how the universe came into existence,
- what its governing principles are,
- how the physical order relates to metaphysical truth, and
- how humans respond epistemically to cosmic signs.

The Qur'an repeatedly invites humanity to contemplate the heavens (Q. 3:190), look upward (Q. 88:18), explore cosmic pathways (Q. 51:7), and investigate the alternating processes of day and night (Q. 10:67). These verses dismantle any notion that studying the cosmos is a secular or purely scientific endeavor; it is, in the Qur'anic paradigm, a divinely mandated intellectual responsibility.

## 20.2 Creation as Ontology: The Universe as Willed Existence

Qur'anic cosmology begins not with an empirical description of the universe but with an ontological declaration: creation (al-khalq) is an intentional act, rooted in divine will, wisdom, and command. The Qur'an repeatedly asserts that the cosmos is neither self-existent nor accidental; rather, it is brought into being through a purposeful fiat- “*kun fa-yakun*” (*Be, and it is*) (Q. 36:82). This formula encapsulates the central ontological principle of Islamic metaphysics: existence emerges through divine volition, not through autonomous or impersonal forces. Such an assertion shapes the entirety of Qur'anic epistemology, as knowledge becomes the human engagement with a divinely ordered reality.

### 20.2.1 The Ontological Status of Creation (al-khalq) as Willed Reality

The Qur'an explicitly rejects the idea of random or meaningless existence. Creation is described repeatedly as having been brought forth *bi'l-ḥaqq*- “*in truth*,” or “*with purpose*” (Q. 6:73; 16:3). The expression *bi'l-ḥaqq* signifies intentionality, coherence, and teleology, implying that the universe is permeated by meaning. Contemporary discussions of teleological cosmology in philosophical theology resonate with this Qur'anic framing, insofar as the universe is viewed as containing intrinsic order that reflects rationality and intention (Craig, 2013; McGrath, 2016).

This ontological view stands in direct contrast to naturalistic materialism, which interprets existence as a product of impersonal laws or chance events. The Qur'an, however, consistently emphasises divine agency: *"God is the Creator of all things."* (Q. 39:62)

This establishes a metaphysics of dependence: all entities-physical or metaphysical-are contingent upon the creative act of God (Nasr, 1996). Creation is therefore not merely the initial moment of cosmic origin but the ongoing grounding of existence. The Qur'anic emphasis on divine creative will means that existence itself participates in divine intentionality, making the universe a meaningful object of study.

### **20.2.2 Creation as Ordered Act: "He created the heavens and the earth in six days"**

The Qur'anic refrain that God created *"the heavens and the earth in six days"* (Q. 7:54; 10:3) should not be read within literalist frameworks of temporal equivalence but as a thematic assertion of gradual, structured creation. The Qur'an clarifies that God is not constrained by time, since *"a day with your Lord is like a thousand years"* (Q. 22:47), and elsewhere *"like fifty thousand years"* (Q. 70:4). These verses emphasise the relativity of time and the transcendence of divine action (Rahman, 1980).

The Qur'anic emphasis on phased development (Arabic: *taqdir*, *taṣwir*, *tadbir*) reflects an ontological structure in which the cosmos emerges through deliberate structuring, aligning with modern cosmology's understanding of gradual cosmic evolution. The Qur'anic portrayal is philosophical rather than technical, but it emphasises the key principle that creation unfolds through intentional stages (Ghazali, 2000).

### **20.2.3 Unity of Origin: The Heavens and Earth were Once a Single Mass**

One of the most profound ontological statements in the Qur'an concerns the primordial unity of the cosmos: *"Have not those who disbelieve seen that the heavens and the earth were joined together, and We separated them?"* (Q. 21:30)

This verse articulates an ontology of unity preceding multiplicity. Although exegetes historically interpreted this in theological terms, modern scholarship often notes its conceptual resonance with cosmological theories of an initial singularity (Krauss, 2012). The Qur'an's significance here is not scientific prediction but ontological framing: the universe originates from a unified state and unfolds through divine will.

### **20.2.4 Creation as Measured (taqdir): The Universe and Its Precise Determination**

The Qur'an repeatedly states that creation is subject to precise determination: *"He created everything and determined it with precise measure (taqdir)."* (Q. 54:49)

*Taqdir* indicates proportioning, calibration, and lawful structuring. This corresponds conceptually to what philosophy of science identifies as "fine-tuning" (Collins, 2009)-the idea that cosmic constants and physical laws display remarkable precision.

In Qur'anic ontology, this precision is not emergent or accidental but rooted in divine wisdom (*ḥikmah*). Thus, cosmic fine-tuning becomes not only a scientific principle but a theological and epistemic one.

### 20.2.5 Divine Command as Ontological Ground: “Be, and it is” (kun fa-yakun)

The formula *kun fa-yakun* appears in multiple contexts- creation of Adam, Jesus, the heavens and earth (Q. 3:47; 6:73; 36:82). It signifies an ontological relationship between divine will and existence: the will of God is metaphysically sufficient to bring forth reality. This reflects the Qur'anic doctrine of continuous creation: “*Every day He is in a matter of creation.*” (Q. 55:29)

Reality is thus dynamic, not static, constantly sustained and renewed. Modern philosophical cosmology similarly entertains models of continuous evolution, but the Qur'an embeds this principle within divine intentionality.

## 20.3 Order, Law, and Balance: The Governing Principles of the Cosmos

If Section 2 establishes cosmology as a divine act, Section 3 explains the principles governing this created order. The Qur'an repeatedly describes the universe as structured through law (*qadar*), balance (*mizan*), and harmony (*ta'dil*). These principles constitute the Qur'anic metaphysics of cosmological order.

### 20.3.1 Mizan (Balance) as Universal Order

One of the most foundational cosmological concepts in the Qur'an is *mizan*: “*And the heaven He raised, and He established the balance (mizan).*” (Q. 55:7)

- *Mizan* refers to perfect equilibrium, proportion, and calibration.
- It applies to cosmic structures, natural cycles, and moral order.

The Qur'an warns: “*Do not transgress the balance.*” (Q. 55:8)

This suggests a profound epistemic symmetry: cosmic balance mirrors ethical balance. The moral law and physical law are parallel expressions of divine wisdom. Scholars such as Nasr (1993) and Chittick (2007) emphasise that the Qur'anic worldview is inherently holistic; the order in the natural world is inseparable from spiritual and ethical order.

### 20.3.2 Qadar (Law, Determination, Measurability)

The Qur'an describes cosmic order using the term *qadar*, meaning determination, measurement, and precise lawfulness: “*Indeed, all things We created with measure (qadar).*” (Q. 54:49)

This term underlies Islamic conceptions of natural law. It implies:

- mathematical structure
- physical constants
- predictability
- rationality embedded in nature

Modern cosmology affirms that the universe operates via stable laws-gravity, electromagnetism, and nuclear forces-allowing scientific predictability. The Qur'an anticipates this epistemic openness by emphasising lawfulness as a divine attribute.

### 20.3.3 No Deficiency or Rupture (*fatur*) in the Universe

The Qur'an challenges humans to empirically examine the cosmos: “*Look again: do you see any flaw?*” (Q. 67:3)

The term *fatur* means rupture, inconsistency, crack, or instability. By denying *fatur*, the Qur'an portrays the universe as coherent, harmonious, and stable. The instruction “*look again and again*” (Q. 67:4) is an explicit call for repeated observation and scientific verification. This establishes two principles:

- The universe is empirically examinable.
- Scientific inquiry is theologically encouraged.

### 20.3.4 Universal Laws and Fixed Pathways

The Qur'an describes celestial bodies moving according to fixed trajectories: “*Each one floats in an orbit (falak).*” (Q. 21:33; 36:40)

The term *falak* refers to a circular path or curved track. The Qur'anic cosmology of movement includes:

- orbital rotation
- solar-lunar dynamics
- day-night alternation
- axial motion
- gravitational structure

Qur'anic cosmology and astrophysics converge in their recognition of ordered, systemic celestial motion (Iqbal, 2013).

### 20.3.5 Structured Layers: The Seven Heavens

The Qur'an refers to “*seven heavens*” (Q. 67:3; 41:12). Contemporary scholars emphasise that this is not a literal reference to seven material skies but a structured, layered cosmology (Rahman, 1980). The Qur'anic use of layered ontology corresponds metaphorically to:

- physical dimensions
- cosmic fields
- multi-layered atmospheres
- zones of cosmic structure

Thus, the *seven heavens* express hierarchical cosmic structure, not mythological heavens.



### 20.3.6 The Firmament as “Pathways” (ḥubuk)

One of the most remarkable cosmological verses states: “*By the sky with its interwoven pathways (al-sama’ dhat al-ḥubuk).*” (Q, 51:7)

*Ḥubuk* means:

- intricate weaving
- layered patterns
- structured pathways
- interlaced design

This resonates conceptually with:

- cosmic web structures
- gravitational filaments
- interstellar networks
- space-time curvature

The Qur’an thus conceives of the cosmos as a patterned architecture rather than an empty void.

### 20.3.7 Time and Motion: Day, Night, and Celestial Cycles

The Qur’an emphasises the precise interplay of night and day: “*He wraps the night over the day and the day over the night.*” (Q. 39:5)

This description implies:

- rotation
- axial tilt
- curvature of the Earth
- periodic cycles

Furthermore, the sun and moon follow calculated courses (ḥusban) (Q. 55:5), which indicates astronomical precision.

### 20.3.8 Moral Implications: Cosmic Law as Ethical Template

Since cosmic order reflects divine wisdom, it becomes a guide for human conduct. The same principle of balance (mizan) governs:

- the physical universe (Q. 55:7)
- justice in human affairs (Q. 4:135)

Thus, ethical law mirrors cosmological law. Ethical transgression is seen as a disruption of the balance, akin to violating the mizan of creation.

## 20.4. The Heavens as Signs (Ayat): Epistemology Rooted in Ontology

A central pillar of Qur'anic cosmology is the notion that the heavens (al-samawat) are not merely physical structures but *ayat*-signs, evidences, and intelligible symbols -designed to awaken human cognition and guide epistemic inquiry. In the Qur'anic worldview, ontology and epistemology are inseparably linked: the way reality *is* (ontological order) forms the basis of how humans *should know* (epistemological method). The universe becomes a readable text, an open book written in the language of cosmic order, movement, and harmony. Hence, every star, planet, nebula, or cosmic field participates in a grand semiotic system grounded in divine intentionality.

### 20.4.1 Ontological Status of the Heavens as Signs

The word *ayah* (آية)-singular of *ayat*-occurs over 380 times in the Qur'an. While commonly translated as "verse," its primary meaning is "sign," "indicator," or "pointer." The Qur'an repeatedly emphasises that the cosmos is full of such signs: *"In the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of night and day are signs (ayat) for those of understanding."* (Q. 3:190)

Here, the heavens are not merely objects of observation; they are evidentiary acts of communication from God. They invite contemplation (*tafakkur*) and deep interpretive engagement (*tadabbur*). As Nasr (1996) explains, the Qur'an positions the physical universe as "an extension of revelation," a form of non-verbal divine discourse.

This semiotic nature establishes a foundational principle of Qur'anic epistemology: To know the cosmos is to read the signs of its Creator.

### 20.4.2 Cosmological Signs as Epistemic Pathways

The Qur'an highlights numerous celestial phenomena as signs:

- the raising of the heavens without visible pillars (Q. 13:2)
- the precise pathways of celestial bodies (Q. 21:33)
- the highly structured "web-like" nature of the sky (Q. 51:7)
- the spread of stars and constellations (Q. 25:61)
- the protection provided by the atmosphere (Q. 21:32)

Each phenomenon serves as an epistemic stimulus that directs human thought toward ontological truths. Chittick (2007) argues that this establishes a vision of nature as "symbolic transparency," in which physical phenomena point beyond themselves toward metaphysical realities. Thus, the cosmos becomes a structured pedagogical environment.

The Qur'an further makes the *semiotic* nature of heaven explicit: *"We will show them Our signs (ayat) in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth."* (Q. 41:53) This verse establishes a dual epistemology: external signs in the cosmos and internal signs in the self, converging toward the same truth.

### 20.4.3 Reading the Heavens as a Method of Knowledge

The Qur'anic imperative to “look,” “see,” and “consider” the heavens is not passive but methodological: *“Do they not look at the sky above them: how We built it and adorned it?”* (Q. 50:6)

This command implies:

- Empirical engagement (nazar-observational reasoning)
- Intellectual inference ('aql-rational interpretation)
- Reflective depth (tafakkur-analytic contemplation)

The heavens thus become epistemic laboratories. Human beings are urged to study:

- cosmic structure (“how We built it”)
- cosmic aesthetics (“and adorned it”)
- cosmic stability (“and it has no cracks”) (Q. 50:6)

This triadic description-structure, beauty, coherence -forms the Qur'an's cosmological epistemology.

### 20.4.4 Signs as Proofs of Ontological Unity

A key epistemic theme is the unity embedded within cosmic diversity. The Qur'an repeatedly asserts that the order of the heavens points to tawhīd, the oneness of God: *“Had there been in them gods other than God, both would have been ruined.”* (Q. 21:22)

Cosmic harmony indicates a single governing source. Thus, celestial order is not merely physical but metaphysical evidence of divine unity. McGrath (2016) calls this the “rational transparency of nature,” meaning that the universe displays intelligibility consistent with a singular rational source.

In this sense, *ayat* operate as metaphysical indicators that bridge empirical cosmology and theological ontology.

### 20.4.5 The Aesthetic Dimension of Cosmic Signs

The Qur'an underscores the beauty of the heavens as an epistemic invitation: *“Indeed, We have adorned the sky of the world with lamps and stars.”* (Q. 41:12)

Aesthetic experience becomes a form of knowing. Cosmic beauty leads to:

- gratitude (*shukr*)
- humility
- wonder and awe
- recognition of purpose

The Qur'an thus integrates aesthetic knowledge into epistemology, anticipating modern discussions on aesthetic cognitivism.

### 20.4.6 Ontological Depth of Signs: Beyond Material Phenomena

The Qur'an frequently shifts from physical description to metaphysical implication, as in: *"He created seven heavens in layers; you do not see any flaw in the creation of the Most Merciful."* (Q. 67:3)

Here, signs are not solely empirical. They express:

- unity (waḥdaniyyah)
- wisdom (ḥikmah)
- power (qudrah)
- mercy (raḥmah)

Thus, the cosmos functions as a multidimensional semiotic system, in which signs operate simultaneously at the physical, rational, moral, and spiritual levels. This aligns with Rahman's (1980) interpretation of the Qur'an as fundamentally ethical and teleological.

## 20.5. Dynamic Motion: Orbits, Cycles, and Cosmic Pathways

If Section 4 treats the heavens as signs, Section 5 examines the Qur'anic presentation of dynamic celestial motion—the constant movement of celestial bodies through precisely measured orbits and pathways. Motion, in the Qur'an, is not chaotic but governed by divine laws. Celestial movement thus becomes both a scientific reality and a theological demonstration of order, precision, and intentionality.

### 20.5.1 Motion as Divine Law

The Qur'an affirms that motion is a foundational feature of cosmic design: *"Each one travels in an orbit."* (Q. 21:33)

The phrase *kullun fi falakin yasbahun* literally means "each swims in a curved path." Key features:

- *kullun* - all celestial bodies
- *falak* - circular or elliptical track
- *yasbahun* - swimming, gliding, fluid motion

This description aligns conceptually with:

- orbital mechanics
- curved spacetime in general relativity
- gravitational fields influencing motion

It implies that motion itself is part of the cosmic *mizan* (balance).

### 20.5.2 Solar-Lunar Dynamics and Calculated Movement

The Qur'an underscores the calculated nature of celestial motion: *"The sun and the moon move by precise calculation (Ḥusban)."* (Q. 55:5)

*Ḥusban* signifies mathematical computation, suggesting an inherent numerical or quantitative order. This resonates with modern views of cosmology as governed by mathematically expressible laws (Kragh, 2015). Thus, cosmic motion reflects a rational structure, reinforcing the Qur'anic claim that God created all things with precise measure (Q. 54:49).

### 20.5.3 The Alternation of Night and Day: Rotation and Temporal Cycles

The Qur'an describes the interwoven nature of night and day: *"He wraps the night over the day and the day over the night."* (Q. 39:5)

The verb *yukawwiru* (to wrap or roll) conveys rotational movement. Modern exegetes note its conceptual resonance with the rotation of the Earth around its axis (Nasr, 1993). More importantly, the Qur'an treats these cycles as epistemic patterns:

- periodicity
- precision
- predictability
- temporal order

All these form the basis of scientific measurement of time.

### 20.5.4 Dynamic Expansion and Cosmic Growth

The Qur'an describes the cosmos as undergoing expansion: *"And the heaven We built with power, and indeed We are expanding it (musi'un)."* (Q. 51:47)

Although not a scientific statement in the modern sense, this aligns metaphorically with contemporary cosmology, which describes the universe as expanding (Krauss, 2012). What matters epistemologically is that the Qur'an highlights dynamic change rather than static cosmology.

### 20.5.5 Celestial Pathways (Subul) and Gravitational Webs

The Qur'an refers to the sky as possessing pathways: *"By the sky with its pathways (al-sama' dhat al-ḥubuk)."* (Q. 51:7)

*Ḥubuk* denotes:

- interwoven paths
- networks
- structured trajectories

This conceptually aligns with:

- cosmic web structures
- galactic filaments
- gravitational corridors

- interstellar highways

Thus, the Qur'an presents cosmic motion through a vocabulary that emphasises structure, pattern, and interconnection.

### 20.5.6 Motion as Proof of Sovereignty

The Qur'an constantly connects motion with divine governance: *"It is He who subjected the sun and the moon, each running for an appointed term."* (Q. 13:2)

Thus, three principles emerge:

- Motion is universal ("each running").
- Motion is purposeful ("for an appointed term").
- Motion is divinely governed ("He subjected").

The cosmos moves not by blind force but by divine command. This aligns with the classical Islamic view that natural laws are manifestations of divine custom (*sunnat Allah*) (Ibn Taymiyyah, as cited in Hoover, 2010).

### 20.5.7 Orbits, Gravity, and the Invisible Order

Although the Qur'an does not explicitly mention gravity, it alludes to invisible forces: *"God holds the heavens so they do not collapse onto the earth."* (Q. 22:65)

This implies:

- sustaining power
- invisible restraint
- force maintaining stability

The ontological idea is not gravitational mechanics but divine sovereignty over cosmic order. Nevertheless, the conceptual parallel is clear: unseen forces bind celestial bodies into coherent systems.

### 20.5.8 Epistemic Implications: From Observation to Theorisation

By repeatedly urging humans to "look," "consider," and "reflect" upon cosmic motion (Q. 88:17-20), the Qur'an positions celestial dynamics as epistemic entry points into:

- scientific laws
- metaphysical truths
- ethical insights

The physical structure of cosmic motion illustrates:

- causality
- order
- predictability

- harmony

Thus, cosmological motion becomes part of the Qur'anic method of knowledge discovery.

## 20.6. Expansion, Movement, and Cosmic Evolution

A central theme of Qur'anic cosmology is that the universe is not static. Rather, it is a dynamic and continuously unfolding reality, shaped by divine command, sustained by stable laws, and characterised by perpetual movement, expansion, and transformation. The Qur'an presents a worldview in which the cosmos undergoes processes-emergence, ordering, expansion, and culmination- forming what modern scholars describe as "cosmic evolution." While the Qur'an is not a scientific textbook, it articulates metaphysical principles that resonate with the dynamic cosmological model recognised in contemporary astrophysics. These principles, grounded in the Qur'an's ontology of creation, provide an epistemic foundation upon which a Qur'anic philosophy of cosmic evolution may be articulated.

### 20.6.1 Expansion as a Permanent Feature of the Cosmos

The most striking Qur'anic reference to cosmic expansion appears in Sirat al-Dharyat: "*And the heaven We built with strength, and indeed We are expanding it* (وَإِنَّا لَمُوسِعُونَ)." (Q. 51:47)

The term *musi'un* derives from *wasi'a*, meaning "to widen," "to expand," or "to make spacious." Classical exegetes interpreted this as referring to the vastness of the heavens, but the diction clearly conveys *ongoing expansion*, suggesting a continuous process. Contemporary cosmology observes that galaxies are receding from one another due to the expansion of space itself-a phenomenon discovered by Hubble and later affirmed through analyses of cosmic background radiation (Kragh, 2015). While the Qur'an does not describe expansion in scientific terms, it establishes three fundamental ontological principles:

- The universe has a structure that can expand.
- Expansion is active and continuous.
- Expansion is an expression of divine power.

Thus, the Qur'an's cosmology anticipates a universe characterised not by stasis but by unfolding dynamism.

### 20.6.2 Movement as the Universal Law

The Qur'an repeatedly affirms movement as the essential condition of celestial existence: "*The sun and the moon [each] travel with precise calculation.*" (Q. 55:5) "*Each runs in its own orbit* (كُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ)." (Q. 21:33)

The verb *yasbahun* ("they swim") conveys not only motion but fluid, uninterrupted motion. Orbits (*falak*) reflect a precise framework governed by balance (*mizan*), order (*taqdir*), and measure (*hisab*). In contemporary astrophysics, orbital motion is a function of gravitational interaction and spacetime curvature, illustrating that motion is structurally embedded in the universe (Krauss, 2012). For the Qur'an, motion is not accidental but ontological:



- Motion expresses the will of the Creator.
- Motion structures time (night-day cycles).
- Motion structures space (orbits, pathways).
- Motion structures purpose (appointed terms).

Thus, the cosmos operates according to dynamic intentionality.

### 20.6.3 Expansion and Contraction in Eschatological Time

The Qur'an also describes future cosmic contraction: *"On the Day when We will fold the heaven like the folding of a scroll."* (Q. 21:104)

This points to an eschatological reversal: just as the heavens expanded by divine command, they will be contracted by divine command. In modern cosmological models, some theories (e.g. Big Crunch scenario) predict a possible re-collapse of the universe, although not the dominant scientific consensus today. Regardless of scientific debates, the Qur'an's framework presents:

- Cosmic beginning (Q. 61:14; 21:30)
- Cosmic expansion (Q. 51:47)
- Cosmic contraction (Q. 21:104)
- Cosmic renewal (Q. 14:48) - *"the earth will be replaced by another earth."*

Thus, Qur'anic cosmology inherently articulates a cycle of cosmic evolution.

### 20.6.4 Evolution as Divine Design

Cosmic evolution in the Qur'an is not random but teleological. The Qur'an emphasises:

- order: *"He perfected everything He created"* (Q.32:7)
- purpose: *"Not without purpose did We create the heavens and earth"* (Q. 38:27)
- calibrated creation: *"He created everything in due proportion"* (Q. 54:49)

Unlike naturalistic evolutionary models, which often suggest impersonal mechanisms, the Qur'an posits evolution as:

- directed
- purposeful
- ordered
- value-laden

This does not contradict scientific descriptions of natural processes; rather, it provides a metaphysical interpretation of them.

### 20.6.5 Evolution Through Time and Stages

The Qur'an repeatedly uses the concept of stages (*tawarīt, marāḥil*): *"He created the heavens and the earth in stages (طَبَاقًا)." (Q. 71:15) "Then He turned to the heaven when it was smoke (دُخَانٌ)." (Q. 41:11)*

The reference to the heavens being “smoke” parallels the idea of a primordial gaseous or plasma state-an early stage of cosmic development. Again, the Qur'an is not describing particle physics but asserting that the heavens emerged through successive ontological phases, consistent with cosmological models involving early universe evolution.

### 20.6.6 Cosmic Evolution as Epistemic Invitation

The Qur'an urges human inquiry into cosmic processes: *“Travel through the earth and observe how He originated creation.”* (Q. 29:20)

This call to reconstruct origins, from fossils to cosmic radiation, is a methodological imperative, encouraging:

- scientific discovery
- historical reconstruction
- astronomical investigation
- cosmological theorisation

Cosmic evolution thus becomes an epistemic gateway to understanding divine wisdom.

## 20.7. Light, Darkness, and Electromagnetic Ontology

Light (*mur*, نور) and darkness (*zulumat*, ظلمات) form one of the most profound dualities in Qur'anic cosmology. Far from being limited to metaphorical or ethical concepts, the Qur'an presents them as ontological realities, integral to both cosmic structure and human epistemology. The Qur'anic language surrounding light and darkness aligns remarkably with concepts that modern physics associates with electromagnetism, radiation, and the visible spectrum.

### 20.7.1 Light as Ontological Principle

The foundational verse of Qur'anic light metaphysics is: *“Allah is the Light (نور) of the heavens and the earth.”* (Q. 24:35)

This does not mean God is physical light, but rather:

- Light is the metaphor closest to divine intelligibility
- Light is the principle through which reality becomes knowable
- Light symbolises order, guidance, structure, and intelligibility

According to Nasr (1993), *mur* is the primordial substance of manifestation-the principle that makes reality perceptible and intelligible. In this sense, light is ontologically foundational.

### 20.7.2 Electromagnetic Ontology in the Qur'an

The Qur'an refers to:

- visible light

- invisible radiations
- cosmic energy structures

For example:

“*We made a shining lamp (سِرَاجًا مُنِيرًا)*.” (Q. 25:61)

The term *siraj* refers to a luminous source (the sun), while *munir* implies radiance or emission-concepts aligned with stellar photon emission, nuclear fusion, and electromagnetic radiation. The Qur'an speaks of layers of darkness in the deep sea: “*Darknesses, one above another.*” (Q. 24:40)

This corresponds to the loss of wavelengths penetrating ocean depths, where red light disappears first, then orange, yellow, and green, until total blackness. The Qur'an's plural *zulumat* (darknesses) reflects a layered ontology consistent with electromagnetic attenuation.

### 20.7.3 Darkness as Ontological “Non-Reception”

Darkness in the Qur'an is not an independent substance. It is described as:

- the absence of light
- the obstruction of light
- the inability to receive light

Thus:

“*Whomever Allah does not give light, he has no light.*” (Q. 24:40) This aligns with physics: darkness is not a “thing” but the absence of photon reception.

### 20.7.4 Light as Epistemic Illumination

The Qur'an frequently parallels physical light with intellectual illumination:

- *basirah* (inner sight)
- *Furqan* (discernment)
- *rushd* (sound judgment)

Knowledge is described as *light*; ignorance as *darkness*. “*Is one who was dead and We gave him life and made for him a light by which he walks... like one in darkness?*” (Q. 6:122) Thus, Qur'anic epistemology mirrors electromagnetic ontology:

- Light → perception, knowledge, guidance
- Darkness → obstruction, ignorance, misguidance

### 20.7.5 Light-Speed and Cosmic Time

Several verses imply the relativity of time: “*A day with your Lord is like a thousand years of what you count.*” (Q. 22:47) “*The angels ascend... in a day whose measure is fifty thousand years.*” (Q. 70:4) Modern commentators, including Bucaille (1978), have noted the conceptual parallel with:

- varying frames of reference
- different rates of temporal experience
- non-uniform time scales in relativity

Although not a scientific description, the Qur'anic paradigm suggests that time is relative to space, speed, and energy-core principles of modern physics.

### 20.7.6 Cosmic Radiation as “Stretched Light”

The Qur'an speaks of: “*the sky... full of pathways*” (Q. 51:7), “*the penetrating piercing star*” (النَّجْمُ الثَّاقِبُ) (Q. 86:3). *Thaqib* means piercing, penetrating, language evocative of:

- high-energy radiation
- cosmic rays
- neutron stars
- gamma-ray bursts

The Qur'an's description of stars as sources of penetrating radiation corresponds to astrophysical realities discovered centuries later.

### 20.7.7 Light as the Metaphysics of Knowledge

The Qur'an repeatedly ties knowledge to light: “*Light upon light* (نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ).” (Q. 24:35). This signifies:

- layers of illumination
- interconnected modes of knowing
- harmonisation of physical, rational, and spiritual perception

In epistemology, light signifies:

- intelligibility
- guidance
- certainty (yaqin)
- awareness (shuhud)

Thus, the Qur'anic ontology of light becomes the foundation for a unified epistemology.

## 20.8 Cosmic Purpose and Moral Ontology

The Qur'anic cosmology does not merely describe the physical structure of the universe; it articulates a moral ontology rooted in cosmic purpose. The heavens and the earth are not accidental, mechanistic, or morally indifferent entities—they are constructed with intention (*haqq*, حق), measure (*qadar*, قدر), harmony (*mizan*, ميزان), and ethical significance (*hikmah*, حكمة). In this worldview, the universe functions as a moral as well as a physical environment, shaping human cognition and ethical responsibility. Thus, cosmology becomes inseparable from morality; knowing the cosmos is simultaneously knowing one's place within

it. The Qur'an repeatedly asserts that the creation of the heavens and the earth is anchored in purposefulness: *"We did not create the heavens and the earth and everything between them in vain."* (Q. 38:27)

The negation of purposelessness (*baṭil*, باطل) is a foundational moral principle. A purposeless universe would produce purposeless action; a cosmos without meaning yields ethics without grounding. Therefore, by affirming purpose in cosmology, the Qur'an establishes purpose in human moral life. Ontology becomes inseparable from normativity.

### 20.8.1 Purpose (al-ghayah) as the Metaphysical Ground of Creation

The Qur'an defines cosmic creation as *bi'l-ḥaqq* (بالحق), a term that combines metaphysical truth, ontological reality, and moral rightness: *"He created the heavens and the earth with truth (بالحق)."* (Q. 16:3). Here, *ḥaqq* means:

- truth against falsehood
- purpose against futility
- justice against imbalance
- fixed reality against chaos

The universe is therefore structured in a way that reflects divine intentionality. In contemporary philosophical language, creation is teleological, not merely mechanical. Even natural causality is framed as a manifestation of divine intentionality rather than impersonal forces. This purposefulness is closely linked to moral accountability. If the universe is created with purpose, human action within it must also be purposeful: *"Did you think We created you without purpose and that you would not be returned to Us?"* (Q. 23:115)

Thus, the moral ontology of human beings is rooted in the cosmology that surrounds them.

### 20.8.2 The Cosmos as a Moral Text (Kitab al-Kawn)

The Qur'an repeatedly calls the universe a set of *ayat*-signs pointing to truth, justice, and moral certainty: *"We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear that this is the truth."* (Q. 41:53)

The cosmos thus becomes a moral pedagogy. Its structure and order mirror spiritual and ethical truths:

- Balance in nature → ethical balance
- Proportion in creation → moral proportion
- Interconnectedness of cosmos → social interdependence
- Cyclic patterns → cycles of accountability

The Qur'an's cosmology is not morally neutral; it "teaches" through its very structure.

Modern thinkers such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr argue that the Qur'an views the universe as a symbolic text, a physically manifested scripture (*al-Kitab al-mastur*) that parallels the written revelation (*al-Kitab*

*al-mansur*) (Nasr, 1993). This reinforces the Qur'anic epistemic unity between nature, revelation, and ethics.

### 20.8.3 Cosmic Order as Ethical Order

The universe is described as governed by *mizan*, a principle meaning balance, measure, and justice: “*And the heaven He raised, and He established the balance (الميزان)*.” (Q. 55:7)

Immediately afterwards, the Qur'an applies the same term to human ethics: “*So do not transgress in the balance.*” (Q. 55:8)

This is an extraordinary linkage: cosmic balance → moral balance.

Human injustice (*zulm*) is a disruption of moral balance, just as physical disorder is a disruption of natural balance. Thus, moral ontology mirrors physical ontology.

### 20.8.4 Time and Mortality as Moral Dimensions

Time (*dahr*, دهر) in the Qur'an is not merely a physical parameter. It carries moral implications: “*It is He who made the night and day in succession-for whoever wishes to remember or to be grateful.*” (Q. 25:62)

Night and day become ethical opportunities:

- Reflection
- Gratitude
- moral awakening
- correction of behaviour

Thus cosmic cycles-including lunar cycles (Q. 10:5) and orbital motion (Q. 36:40)-serve not only physical but moral purposes.

### 20.8.5 Human Place in the Moral Cosmos

The Qur'an conceptualises humans as:

- stewards (*khulafa'*, خلفاء) (Q. 6:165)
- trustees (*amanah*, أمانة) (Q. 33:72)
- witnesses (*shuhada'*, شهداء) (Q. 2:143)

The cosmos forms the environment in which these responsibilities unfold. Without a purposeful cosmos, vicegerency loses meaning; without a meaningful environment, ethical responsibility becomes incoherent. Thus, cosmic purpose becomes the ground of moral ontology.

## 20.9. Cosmological Ontology and Human Epistemic Function

The Qur'anic worldview assigns a profound epistemic role to human beings within the cosmic order. Humanity is not a passive observer of the universe but an active perceiver, interpreter, and moral agent

whose knowledge is part of the universe's unfolding purpose. The cosmos is not only *created* by God, but it is also *made knowable*: “*He taught Adam all the names.*” (Q. 2:31) Here, naming (*asma*’) represents the human capacity for:

- categorization
- conceptualization
- abstraction
- scientific inference

Thus, the human epistemic function is built into the ontology of creation.

### 20.9.1 Epistemic Environment: The Universe as a Field of Knowing

The Qur’an establishes the universe as an epistemic arena: “*In the creation of the heavens and the earth... are signs for those of understanding* (أُولِي الْأَلْبَاب).” (Q. 3:190)

Thus:

- humans are endowed with *‘aql* (reason)
- the universe is endowed with *ayat* (signs)
- knowledge arises through their interaction

This forms the Qur’anic epistemic triad:

- Human faculties
- Cosmic signs
- Divine guidance

Without any of the three, knowledge remains incomplete.

### 20.9.2 Observation as Epistemic Obligation

The Qur’an calls humanity to observe:

- horizons (Q. 41:53)
- stars (Q. 37:6)
- earth and its pathways (Q. 67:15)
- historical traces of nations (Q. 30:9)

These commands are imperative verbs:

- *unẓuru* (look)
- *Siri* (travel)
- *afala tanzurun* (will you not observe?)

Thus, observation (*naẓar*) is not optional; it is a moral and epistemic duty.



### 20.9.3 Rational Inference (‘Aql) as Cosmic Interpretation

The human intellect is repeatedly invoked: “*Do you not reason?*” (Q. 2:44) “, *Perhaps you may understand.*” (Q. 2:73)

Reasoning allows humans to:

- interpret cosmic data
- infer patterns
- construct theories
- discern purpose

Thus, the cosmos becomes intelligible through the human mind.

### 20.9.4 Reflection (Tafakkur, Tadabbur) as Epistemic Deepening

Beyond observation and inference lies deeper reflection:

- *tafakkur* (analytical contemplation)
- *tadabbur* (holistic deep reflection)
- *tadhakkur* (remembering truth)

These processes transform raw empirical data into:

- wisdom
- moral realisation
- spiritual insight

This completes the Qur'anic epistemic cycle.

### 20.9.5 Human Knowledge as Cosmic Participation

Knowledge is not external to the cosmos; it is a mode of participating in its unfolding reality. The Qur'an states: “*We will show them Our signs... until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth.*” (Q. 41:53)

Human discovery is thus part of divine disclosure. Modern cosmology-cosmic microwave background analysis, dark matter mapping, exoplanet detection-is, in this sense, an extension of this Qur'anic invitation.

### 20.9.6 Moral Responsibility in Epistemic Function

With knowledge comes responsibility: “*Do not pursue that of which you do not know.*” (Q. 17:36)

Epistemology and ethics converge:

- knowledge without responsibility becomes oppression (*zulm*)
- knowledge without humility becomes arrogance (*kibr*)
- knowledge without purpose becomes corruption (*fasad*)

Thus, the cosmos not only invites knowledge; it demands ethical conduct in its pursuit.

### 20.9.7 Human Beings as Cosmic Witnesses

The Qur'an describes humanity as:

- *shuhada'* (witnesses)
- *khulafa'* (vicegerents)
- *'ibad* (servants)

These roles define the epistemic function:

- witnesses: observe the cosmos
- vicegerents: manage the earth
- servants: submit to the divine truth

Thus, cosmology and epistemology become inseparable from ethics and spirituality. Qur'anic cosmological ontology forms a comprehensive worldview in which the cosmos is a meaningful, lawful, dynamic, balanced, and readable system. It integrates physical structure with metaphysical purpose, scientific investigation with spiritual insight, and human epistemic function with cosmic responsibility. The Qur'an's cosmology is not an archaic worldview but a radically open and scientifically fertile paradigm that anticipates and invites modern space sciences. By positioning the cosmos as a domain of signs governed by laws, the Qur'an establishes a unified ontology of existence that becomes the epistemic foundation for all scientific inquiry.

## 20.10 Human Exploration as Amanah

### 20.10.1 Space as an Epistemic Trust

Among the most profound implications of Qur'anic cosmology is the framing of the cosmos as a field of moral responsibility rather than merely a scientific object. Human engagement with the universe-its observation, interpretation, measurement, and eventual physical exploration -is shaped in the Qur'an through the concept of amanah: a divinely bestowed trust that defines human agency in relation to knowledge, creation, and accountability (Q. 33:72). Within this overarching paradigm, the cosmos is neither an autonomous entity nor a value-neutral domain. Rather, it is constructed as a sign-system (*ayat*) that invites inquiry into its origins, structure, and meaning (Q. 41:53; 29:20).

Thus, the epistemological framework for understanding space -its phenomena, laws, and dynamics-does not arise from curiosity alone, but from a divinely mandated responsibility. This responsibility includes cultivating knowledge, safeguarding creation, preventing harm, and using scientific power ethically. This chapter argues that the Qur'an advances a distinctive model of cosmological inquiry in which human exploration (including space science and technology) is construed as both permissible and obligatory, provided it remains anchored in the moral grammar of *tawhid*, justice, stewardship, and accountability.

Space exploration, then, becomes not simply a technological endeavour but an ethical vocation, grounded in the Qur'anic portrayal of the human as *khaliiah* (vicegerent), *'abd* (servant), and bearer of the *amanah* (Q. 33:72; 2:30; 6:165). In this sense, the human engagement with the cosmos is an extension of the broader divine mandate to “travel through the earth” (Q. 29:20), “consider what is in the heavens and earth” (Q. 10:101), and “reflect on the creation of the heavens and earth” (Q. 3:190).

To develop a Qur'anic understanding of space exploration as *amanah*, this chapter proceeds through five interlocking epistemic and ethical dimensions:

- The Qur'anic meaning of *amanah* as knowledge-responsibility
- Cosmological knowledge as a divine gift and human duty
- The ethical conditions for exploration: boundaries, humility, and justice
- Human technological power and accountability
- Toward an Islamic framework for contemporary space sciences

### 20.10.2 The Qur'anic Concept of Amanah as Epistemic Responsibility

The point of departure for situating space exploration within Qur'anic epistemology is the verse: “*Indeed, We offered the amanah to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it and feared it; yet the human undertook it...*” (Q. 33:72).

Classical philology interprets *amanah* as responsibility, trust, obligation, and accountability (*al-Ṭabari, 2001*). Modern Qur'anic scholars extend the semantic range to include epistemic duty because the verse is followed by descriptions of human moral failure or success, implying *amanah* relates fundamentally to ethical agency (Lawwamahi, 2022). When placed in dialogue with other epistemic verses, *amanah* becomes a comprehensive category that frames how humans should manage, use, and apply knowledge.

**Amanah and the epistemic mission of humanity:** The Qur'an repeatedly associates human dignity with knowledge (Q. 2:31-33), perception (Q. 16:78), and moral deliberation (Q. 91:7-10). The ability to inquire, discover, and act upon knowledge is not an autonomous human achievement; it is a delegated capacity that carries with it the responsibility to safeguard and correctly apply what is known. Therefore, scientific advancement, technological development, and cosmic exploration all fall within the domain of *amanah*.

**Amanah as accountability for misuse of knowledge:** Knowledge in the Qur'an is not morally neutral. Rather, it has the potential to bring benefit or corruption, justice or harm. The Qur'an warns that human beings can misuse power (Q. 96:6-7), transgress limits (Q. 55:8), and cause disorder (*fasad*) in the heavens and earth (Q. 30:41). In this sense, *amanah* requires humanity to explore creation with humility, ethical restraint, and awareness of consequences.

**Human exceptionalism and vulnerability:** Paradoxically, the verse (Q. 33:72) highlights both the capacity and fragility of human nature. The cosmos, despite its magnitude, “refused” the responsibility of *amanah*, emphasising the magnitude of what it entails. The human, however, accepted this trust, demonstrating

unique potential but also the danger of moral failure. This duality positions scientific exploration-not as a triumphalist conquest of nature-but as a delicate negotiation between capability and responsibility.

Thus, in the Qur'anic view, human exploration of the cosmos is neither prohibited nor unrestricted; it is a trust requiring ethical intention, responsible application, and alignment with divine guidance.

### 20.10.3 Cosmological Knowledge as Divine Invitation and Human Duty

The Qur'an does not present the universe as inert. Instead, it portrays creation as a system of signs intentionally placed for human reflection (Q. 3:190; Q. 41:53). These signs include:

- Cosmic structure (Q. 51:7)
- Orbits and celestial mechanics (Q. 21:33)
- The layered heavens (Q. 71:15-16)
- Night-day cycles (Q. 10:67)
- The expansion of the universe (Q. 51:47)
- Celestial pathways (*subul*) (Q. 51:7)

Each of these functions epistemically: to lead humans from observation to inference, from inference to contemplation, and from contemplation to recognition of divine wisdom (Q. 67:3-4).

Cosmic inquiry as a Qur'anic imperative: Verses instructing humans to "travel," "observe," "consider," or "reflect" (*unzuru, siru, afala tatafakkarun*) serve as methodological cues (Q. 29:20; 10:101; 3:190). The Qur'an thus frames cosmology not merely as permitted but commanded.

The heavens as a field of rational discovery: Unlike mythological cosmologies, the Qur'an does not describe the heavens through mystical or secret knowledge. Instead, it speaks of order, measure, balance, and discernible pathways - all of which invite empirical exploration (Q. 54:49; 25:2).

The Qur'anic rejection of cosmic dualism: Space is not divine; it is created (Q. 39:38) and subject to law (Q. 30:48). Human engagement with it does not violate sacredness but participates in uncovering the divine wisdom embedded in structure and motion. Thus, cosmological inquiry becomes both a gift and a duty grounded in *amanah*.

### 20.10.4 Ethical Conditions for Cosmic Exploration

Human exploration-whether terrestrial or cosmic-must adhere to ethical constraints derived from the Qur'an.

Prohibition of harm (*darar*) and corruption (*fasad*): The Qur'an warns against causing corruption "*on land and sea*" (Q. 30:41). While originally referring to sociomoral corruption, the verse includes environmental and possibly extraterrestrial contexts under the broader principle of avoiding harm. Thus, extraction, planetary contamination, militarisation of space, or harmful experimentation would violate *amanah* unless justified, regulated, and minimised.

Epistemic humility: The Qur'an condemns arrogance in the pursuit of knowledge (Q. 96:6-7). Space exploration must therefore resist triumphalist narratives of human dominance over creation.

Moral intention (niyyah): Actions are judged by their moral orientation. Even scientific research must carry an intention aligned with the preservation of life, justice, and knowledge (Q. 5:32).

Justice in resource use: Celestial resources-energy, minerals, potential habitats-must be approached with justice (Q. 16:90). The Qur'an's legal-ethical language implies that exploitation without balance would breach the trust of *amanah*.

### 20.10.5 Human Technological Power and Accountability

Space exploration is linked to human capacity to manipulate natural forces-propulsion, energy, radiation shielding, robotics, and eventually, terraforming. The Qur'an affirms technological empowerment (Q. 45:13) but warns that every capability increases accountability (Q. 17:36; Q. 28:77).

Power as trial (ibtilla'): Power is a test rather than a right (Q. 6:165). Scientific achievement does not guarantee moral success.

Knowledge is double-edged: The Qur'an narrates that knowledge can elevate or mislead depending on moral grounding (Q. 35:28; Q. 45:23).

Responsibility for long-term consequences: Space technologies carry long-term societal, ecological, and geopolitical effects. Qur'anic ethics require foresight, precaution, and stewardship.

### 20.10.6 Toward an Islamic Framework for Contemporary Space Sciences

Developing a Qur'anically grounded framework for contemporary space sciences requires more than citing isolated cosmological verses or drawing symbolic parallels with modern scientific discoveries. The Qur'anic revelation presents an integrated epistemology in which the pursuit of knowledge is inseparable from moral responsibility, ontological awareness, and recognition of human accountability before God (Q. 17:36; 6:165). Therefore, a Qur'anic framework for space sciences must operate simultaneously on three levels: epistemic, ethical, and civilizational. Each level provides principles, modalities, and boundaries that collectively shape how human exploration of the cosmos should proceed in an Islamic worldview.

Epistemic Foundation -Universe as a Text of Signs: The Qur'an describes the cosmos as a system of signs (*ayat*), structurally ordered and intentionally accessible to human inquiry (Q. 41:53; 3:190-191). An epistemic framework for space science must therefore begin from the Qur'anic assertion that the universe is intelligible, governed by discernible patterns, orbits, pathways, proportions, and laws (Q. 54:49; 21:33). These laws are neither random nor self-generating; they are *sunan*, divine patterns that regulate natural processes (Q. 35:43).

The Qur'an invites humans to observe, analyse, and verify cosmic phenomena using rational and empirical methods-*"Say, observe what is in the heavens and the earth"* (Q. 10:101). Thus, empirical observation,

mathematical modelling, simulation, and experimentation are not foreign impositions upon Islamic thought but legitimate forms of engagement with the *ayat nafsīyya* (inner signs) and *ayat afaqīyya* (cosmic signs) (Rahman, 1980; Sardar, 2015). This invites a *continuum* between revelation and scientific exploration, where knowledge is produced through the dual process of reading Scripture (*al-Qur'an al-tadwīnī*) and reading the universe (*al-Qur'an al-takwīnī*) (Lawwamahī, 2022).

Ethical Conditions: Amanah, Responsibility, and Justice: A Qur'anically informed framework for space sciences cannot be merely descriptive; it is normatively structured by *amanah* (Q. 33:72). Human knowledge, power, and capability-whether in propulsion engineering, orbital mechanics, astrophysics, or interplanetary exploration-constitute a trust. As such, scientific activity is subject to divine evaluation based on intention (*niyyah*), benefit (*maṣlaḥah*), and moral restraint (Q. 5:32; 55:7-9). Three ethical imperatives follow:

- Avoidance of Corruption (*Fasad*): The Qur'an warns against spreading disorder "*on land and sea*" (Q. 30:41). While historically linked to moral and social corruption, this principle also applies to environmental degradation, including planetary contamination, space debris, militarisation of orbit, or uncontrolled exploitation of extraterrestrial resources (Ansari, 2020). Space exploration must thus be governed by environmental ethics analogous to Islamic principles of preservation (*hifẓ*), balance (*mīzan*), and non-harm (*la ḍarar*).
- Humility and Epistemic Modesty: The Qur'an repeatedly condemns arrogance arising from scientific or technological mastery (Q. 96:6-7). Technologies enabling space travel-mass-energy manipulation, satellite networks, and radiometric instrumentation -must be approached with humility. A Qur'anic paradigm rejects narratives of cosmic conquest and replaces them with stewardship, gratitude, and responsibility.
- Justice in Distribution and Use of Knowledge: Celestial resources (energy, minerals, orbits) fall under the Qur'anic injunction to "*conduct affairs with justice*" (Q. 16:90). Islamic ethics prohibit monopolistic access or exploitation that benefits a few while harming the many. Thus, international cooperation, equitable access, and planetary protection become integral components of an Islamic space-ethics model.

**Methodological Orientation: Observation, Verification, Wisdom:** Drawing on Qur'anic methodology, contemporary space sciences need to follow three tiers of inquiry:

- Observation (*Nazar*): The command to "look" or "observe" (Q. 88:17; 10:101) legitimises disciplines such as astrophysics, cosmology, planetary science, and aerospace engineering.
- Verification (*Tahqīq*): The Qur'an mandates epistemic verification-"*Bring your proof if you are truthful*" (Q. 2:111)-aligning with experimental testing, peer review, measurement accuracy, and error correction.
- Wisdom (*Hikmah*): Observation and verification must culminate in ethical reflection (Q. 17:36; 45:13). Scientific conclusions must be integrated into broader considerations of justice, benefit, and divine purpose.

These three tiers collectively produce a methodology parallel to, but not identical with, modern scientific empiricism. The Qur'anic method emphasises *integration*, not fragmentation: empirical data must be interpreted within metaphysical, moral, and teleological frameworks.

**Civilizational Purpose: Space Science as Human Flourishing:** Space exploration within an Islamic paradigm is neither escapism nor triumphalism. It serves civilizational ends grounded in the Qur'anic mandate that humans are *khala'if fi al-ard* (successive generations who steward creation) (Q. 6:165). Therefore, a Qur'anic framework for space sciences supports:

- Knowledge for the betterment of life: Space-based Earth observation enhances agriculture, climate mitigation, disaster response, and water management, directly fulfilling Qur'anic objectives of preservation and compassion (Q. 21:107).
- Protection of humanity: Research into near-Earth objects, solar activity, and cosmic hazards aligns with the Qur'anic principle of preventing harm (*daf' al-darar*).
- Long-term survival and moral maturity: Human expansion into space, if ethically justified, reflects responsibility toward future generations (Q. 59:18).

**Outcome -A Qur'anic Vision for Space Science:** Synthesising the above dimensions, an Islamic framework for contemporary space sciences is built on six pillars:

- Tawhīdic ontology - Unity, order, purpose in the cosmos (Q. 21:22).
- Epistemic legitimacy - Observation and rational inquiry as Qur'anic duties (Q. 3:190-191).
- Ethical accountability - Exploration as fulfilment of *amanah* (Q. 33:72).
- Non-harm and justice - Avoiding corruption and inequity (Q. 30:41; Q. 16:90).
- Integration of knowledge - Empirical, rational, and moral domains unified.
- Civilizational flourishing - Using cosmic knowledge to uplift life on Earth and beyond.

In this sense, space science becomes not merely a technological pursuit but a moral endeavour, where humanity fulfils its vicegerent role while navigating the cosmos with humility, justice, and intellectual integrity.

## 20.11 Expansion of the Universe

### 20.11.1 Cosmology as a Qur'anic Epistemic Domain

The question of whether the universe is static or expanding is among the most significant intersections between modern cosmology and Qur'anic discourse. The twentieth-century discovery that the universe is expanding, first through the observations of Vesto Slipher (1912), later refined by Edwin Hubble (1929), and eventually consolidated into the  $\Lambda$ CDM cosmological model, transformed scientific understanding of cosmic origins and evolution. Yet the Qur'an, more than a millennium earlier, offered conceptual indications of dynamism, expansion, and growth embedded within a theologically grounded cosmological ontology. The Qur'anic verse “*And the heaven We constructed with power, and indeed We are surely expanding it*” (Q. 51:47) stands out as one of the most discussed verses in scientific and theological



literature. However, beyond apologetic readings, its epistemological depth requires a nuanced hermeneutic analysis.

The Qur'an does not present cosmology as a detached scientific description but as a sign-based ontology, where the physical structure of the heavens reveals metaphysical truths, divine intentionality, and moral lessons (Q. 41:53; 21:30). Expansion (*musi'un*, from *w-s-*) is not merely a physical phenomenon but an ontological statement about the continuous unfolding of creation. This framing integrates cosmic evolution with divine will, intentionality, and order. The Qur'an emphasises a universe that is created, sustained, and guided by divine laws (*sunan*), not a universe left in randomness or mechanical autonomy (Q. 54:49; 87:2-3).

The purpose of this section is to examine the Qur'anic discourse on cosmic expansion through a rigorous epistemological lens. Rather than seeking simplistic concordism, the chapter investigates how expansion functions as a Qur'anic cosmological principle, how it aligns with broader Qur'anic ideas of continuous creation (*khalq jadid*), and how it relates to modern cosmological theories of metric expansion, inflation, dark energy, and thermodynamic evolution. Ultimately, the aim is to articulate a Qur'anically informed philosophy of cosmic expansion that remains faithful to revelation while critically engaging with contemporary scientific models.

### 20.11.2 Linguistic Hermeneutics of Q. 51:47 (al-Dhariyat)

The key verse states: “*And the heaven We built with strength, and indeed We are surely expanding it.*” (Q. 51:47)

The interpretive question centres on *lammusi'un* (لَمُّوسِعُونَ). Classical exegetes, writing centuries before any scientific concept of cosmic expansion, consistently interpreted the verse using the root *w-s-*, meaning *vastness, widening, enrichment, expansion, capacity, or abundance* (Ibn Faris, 1999). Al-Ṭabari (d. 923) and Ibn Kathir (d. 1373) both understood the verse to indicate that God made the heavens “vast” and “expansive,” emphasising grandeur rather than dynamic expansion. However, these commentaries were linguistic and theological, not scientific. They lacked the conceptual framework to consider the physical expansion of spacetime.

Modern tafsir scholars have approached the verse with greater linguistic sensitivity. Abdul Haleem (2004) notes that the active participle form *musi'un* indicates continuous action, not a completed event. Al-Asfahani's *Mufradat* suggests *w-s-* connotes a process of continuous widening. Thus, the Qur'anic phrase can reasonably be rendered as “We are expanding it continually,” a meaning linguistically permissible and consistent with contemporary cosmology, though not dependent upon it.

It is therefore hermeneutically sound to state that Qur'an verse 51:47 describes the heavens as possessing *vastness* and *an ongoing state of expansion*. The verse does not serve as an empirical test for Big Bang cosmology, but as a conceptual ontology: the universe is created in a dynamic, unfolding mode, not static or eternal.

### 20.11.3 Expansion in Qur'anic Cosmological Themes

The Qur'an contains multiple verses implying dynamism, growth, and movement within the cosmos. Several of these support a broader Qur'anic cosmological ontology in which expansion is one expression of continuous divine creative activity.

**Continuous Creation (Khalq Jadid):** The Qur'an states: "*Every day He is bringing about a matter*" (Q. 55:29), implying perpetual creative engagement rather than a closed, completed act. Similarly, Q. 50:15 suggests ongoing processes of creation and re-creation, further indicating a universe whose structure and evolution are dynamically sustained.

**Separation from a Unified Origin:** Qur'an verse Q. 21:30 famously declares: "*The heavens and the earth were joined, and We split them apart.*" This aligns conceptually with the modern understanding of a singular primordial state (e.g., the initial cosmic singularity or early unified plasma) that later diversified.

**Balanced Divergence (Mizan):** Cosmic expansion does not imply chaos. The Qur'an repeatedly emphasises *mizan*-proportion, order, symmetry (Q. 55:7-9). Expansion is thus governed by lawfulness, consistent with the modern view of physical constants, cosmic parameters, and the finely tuned expansion rate needed for structure formation.

**Multi-layered Heavens (Samawat):** The Qur'an's reference to "*seven heavens*" (Q. 41:12; 67:3) has been interpreted symbolically, but structurally it reflects stratification, layering, or multi-dimensionality. Whether these correspond metaphorically to the layered universe (cosmic webs, filaments, voids) or describe ontological realms, the Qur'an clearly portrays the heavens as complex and structured, not uniform or static.

### 20.11.4 Integrating Modern Cosmology: Expansion, Inflation, and Dark Energy

Modern cosmology identifies several key phases and mechanisms of expansion. A Qur'anically inspired cosmology engages these not as direct confirmations of scripture but as epistemic dialogue with scientific models.

**Metric Expansion of Space:** The expansion of the universe refers to the increasing metric distance between spatial points, not galaxies moving through static space. This aligns with the Qur'anic depiction of creation as a field of ordered processes, not a chaos of bodies in motion (Q. 36:38-40).

**Cosmic Inflation:** Inflation posits that the universe underwent an exponential expansion within  $10^{-36}$  seconds after the Big Bang. While not explicitly stated in the Qur'an, the concept of rapid expansion resonates conceptually with "*the heavens We built with strength*" (Q. 51:47), Since *biyad* (power) can denote an extraordinary creative force.

**Dark Energy and Accelerated Expansion:** Current data (e.g., Type Ia supernovae, cosmic microwave background anisotropies) indicate accelerated expansion driven by dark energy. This notion of *sustained, increasing expansion* conceptually aligns with the continuous aspect of *lamusi'un*.

Heat Death and Eschatology: Modern cosmology's projection of eventual cosmic cooling finds resonance in Qur'anic eschatology describing cosmic transformation (Q. 81:1-4; 84:1-5). Though the Qur'an describes moral and metaphysical events, the themes of dissolution, folding, and transformation conceptually overlap with thermodynamic decline and recompression models.

### 20.11.5 Philosophical Implications: Ontology, Teleology, and Purpose

**Cosmology and Divine Unity (Tawhīd):** Cosmic expansion reinforces ontological unity: a universe with a single origin reflects the Qur'anic principle of divine oneness (Q. 21:22). Multiplicity in the heavens does not negate unity but expresses ordered diversity.

**Expansion as a Teleological Process:** The Qur'anic universe is not expanding aimlessly. It expands toward moral, intellectual, and spiritual outcomes: *"We did not create the heavens and the earth in vain"* (Q. 38:27). Thus, cosmic expansion situates humanity within a universe that invites discovery, reflection, and responsibility.

**Human Knowledge as Participation in Cosmic Order:** By observing expansion, humans participate in the process of uncovering divine signs. The Qur'an presents scientific inquiry as a continuation of revelation's invitation.

### 20.11.6 A Qur'anic Model of Cosmic Expansion

Bringing these strands together, a Qur'anically grounded model of cosmic expansion includes:

- **Ontological Expansion:** The universe expands because God continuously sustains creation (Q. 55:29).
- **Structural Expansion:** Governed by laws (*sunan*) and proportion (*mizan*) (Q. 54:49).
- **Epistemic Expansion:** Humans are commanded to observe the expanding cosmos (Q. 10:101).
- **Teleological Expansion:** Expansion reveals divine wisdom, not randomness.
- **Moral Expansion:** Understanding the universe enhances gratitude, humility, and stewardship (Q. 6:165).

Thus, the Qur'an conceptualises cosmic expansion as a multi-layered phenomenon, scientific, moral, metaphysical, and epistemic.

## 20.12. Celestial Order as Epistemic Sign (Ayah)

### 20.12.1 The Heavens as an Epistemic Text

The Qur'an repeatedly describes the cosmos-not merely as a physical domain-but as a text of signs (ayat), parallel to the revealed Book (Q. 41:53). The heavens and the earth serve as a continuously unfolding field of knowledge. Celestial order, movement, precision, and balance are presented as epistemological cues that guide human reason (*'aql*), contemplation (*tafakkur*), reflection (*tadabbur*), and moral awareness (*tadhakkur*). The Qur'an challenges human beings to read the cosmos not only as an object of empirical study but as a purposeful revelation that reflects divine intelligence, intentionality, and unity (Q. 3:190-191).

Celestial order in the Qur'an is not a metaphor; it is an ontological statement. The universe is constructed upon *mizan*-proportion, measure, and equilibrium (Q. 55:7-9). The regularity of orbits (Q. 21:33; 36:40), the alternation of night and day (Q. 3:190), the structure of the heavens (Q. 67:3-4), and the existence of cosmic paths (Q. 51:7)-all of these form an integrated epistemic architecture. They constitute a grammar through which the universe becomes readable. In modern academic terms, the Qur'an establishes the heavens as a form of natural revelation whose epistemic authority is tied to divine intentionality.

This chapter analyses celestial order as an epistemic sign grounded in Qur'anic ontology, cosmology, and anthropology. It examines: the Quranic structure of celestial order; the role of signs (*ayat*) in forming human knowledge; the interplay between cosmic regularity and moral awareness; how celestial order supports a Qur'anic scientific methodology; and how this worldview intersects with modern astronomy, astrophysics, and cosmology.

Celestial order is therefore not simply a scientific phenomenon. It is a Qur'anic epistemic principle central to how revelation envisions the acquisition, verification, and purpose of knowledge.

### 20.12.2 The Qur'anic Concept of Ayah as a Cosmological Category

Linguistic and Hermeneutical Foundations: The term *ayah* (آية) appears over 380 times in the Qur'an. It signifies:

- A verse of the Qur'an,
- A sign in nature,
- A historical event, or
- A proof or evidence.

The Qur'an uses *ayah* in a unified ontological sense: a sign is anything that points beyond itself, directing the intellect toward a deeper truth (Izutsu, 2002). Celestial phenomena are thus epistemic markers because they gesture toward divine wisdom, order, and unity. Qur'an verse 41:53 states: "*We shall show them Our signs (ayat) in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the Truth.*" Here, *ayat fi al-afaq* refers directly to astronomical and cosmological signs -those found in the external universe.

Celestial Order as Integrated Meaning: Celestial signs are not incidental decorations of the universe; they are didactic structures designed to instruct and to awaken consciousness (Q. 67:3-4). The Qur'an consistently pairs observation of the heavens with epistemic verbs such as:

- *yatafakkarun* - they reflect
- *ya 'qilun* - they reason
- *yatadhakkarun* - they remember
- *yubshirun* - they perceive

Thus, celestial order is meant to be interpreted, not merely observed. Epistemic Accessibility of Cosmic Signs: The Qur'an emphasises that cosmic signs are:

- universal (visible to all humans),
- continuous (repeating daily, nightly, seasonally),
- self-evident (requiring no priestly mediation),
- empirical (inviting direct observation).

These characteristics make the cosmos an epistemic environment in which revelation and reason mutually reinforce one another.

### 20.12.3 Celestial Structure and Order in the Qur'an

The Qur'an describes the heavens in a manner that stresses structural integrity, hierarchical organisation, and precise functioning. The Multi-Layered Heavens (Samawat Sab'): Verses such as Q. 67:3 describe the heavens as seven-layered structures: *"He created the seven heavens in layers; you will not see in the creation of the All-Merciful any inconsistency."* The phrase *tafawut* (inconsistency) in this context implies:

- absence of random disorder,
- ontological stability,
- meticulous proportionality.

This resonates with the cosmological notion that the universe operates under finely tuned constants and symmetrical laws.

Orbital Precision: Q. 21:33 states: *"He is the One who created night and day, the sun and the moon, each floating in its orbit."*

The term *falak* denotes circular or curved motion, but also an established track. Modern astrophysics identifies orbital mechanics governed by gravitational interaction, angular momentum, and curvature of spacetime-concepts that align with the Qur'anic notion of ordered motion.

Absence of Rupture or Chaos: Q. 67:3-4 challenges humans to: *"Look again-do you see any flaw?"*

Repetition of observation stresses that celestial order withstands scrutiny. In epistemic terms, the heavens function as a model of verifiability, reinforcing Qur'anic methodology where truth is confirmed through repeated examination.

### 20.12.4 Celestial Order as Epistemic Argument (Dalil)

Celestial order in the Qur'an is not merely descriptive; it is argumentative. It functions as a *dalil* (proof), establishing rational foundations for belief in divine unity, purpose, and creativity.

Order as Premise in the Qur'anic Argument: The Qur'an uses celestial regularity as evidence that the universe is governed by a single, coherent will (Q. 21:22). If multiple gods existed, cosmic order would collapse, or systems would clash. This is a form of cosmological argument from coherence, not merely cause. Predictability and Mathematical Structure: Qur'anic celestial order implies that:

- the universe is accessible to mathematical description,

- natural laws are stable and repeatable,
- empirical generalisation is epistemically valid.

This aligns with the methodology of contemporary astrophysics, celestial mechanics, and physical cosmology. Celestial Signs and Moral Reasoning: Celestial order has moral consequences. The Qur'an repeatedly links:

- cosmic balance (*mizan*) and
- moral balance (*'adl*).

Just as the universe is held in equilibrium, so human societies must embody justice (Q. 55:7-9). Thus, celestial order provides a metaphysical archetype for ethical behaviour.

### 20.12.5 Day-Night, Light-Darkness, and Rhythmic Order

Day and Night as Epistemic Cycles: The alternation of day and night is one of the most frequent cosmic signs cited in the Qur'an (Q. 3:190; 36:37; 45:5). It demonstrates:

- rhythmic regularity,
- ecological balance,
- human dependence on cosmic patterns,
- temporal structuring of life.

These cycles underpin agricultural rhythms, circadian biology, and navigational knowledge. Light as Epistemological Metaphor: Light (*mur*) in the Qur'an symbolises:

- truth,
- clarity,
- guidance,
- intelligibility.

Darkness (*zulumat*) symbolises confusion, ignorance, and moral blindness. Celestial light-from stars, sun, and moon-becomes an analogical foundation for understanding spiritual illumination (Q. 24:35).

Navigation and Epistemic Orientation: Qur'an verse 6:97 states that stars were made for navigation (*bi-l-nujum yahtadun*). Navigation is not only physical; it is epistemic. The heavens guide:

- travellers,
- sailors,
- caravaners,
- and seekers of truth.

Celestial guidance thereby becomes a metaphor for intellectual and spiritual direction.

### 20.12.6 Stellar Phenomena and Epistemic Meaning

Stars as Signs of Orientation and Beauty: Qur'an verse 37:6 describes stars as *zinat al-sama'*-ornamentation of the sky. Beauty is itself epistemic, inviting contemplation and gratitude. Aesthetic experience becomes a legitimate epistemic mode.

Constellations (Buruĵ): Qur'an verse 85:1 references *Buruĵ*, meaning fortified towers or constellations. These represent celestial markers by which ancient and modern astronomy organise the sky. Their stability supports calendrical systems and agricultural planning.

Atmospheric Protection: Qur'an verse 21:32 describes the sky as a protected roof (*saqf mahfuz*). While the verse is not a scientific treatise, the concept coheres with:

- Earth's atmosphere,
- magnetic field,
- shielding from meteor impacts and radiation.

Thus, celestial order holds both existential and protective significance.

### 20.12.7 Cosmic Rhythm and Temporal Structure

Celestial order structures time. The Qur'an recognises:

- lunar cycles (Q. 10:5),
- solar cycles (Q. 55:5),
- seasonal rotations (Q. 2:189).

These cycles are foundational for:

- religious rituals,
- human civilisation,
- social coordination,
- scientific measurement.

Celestial movements thus serve as a temporal epistemic framework.

### 20.12.8 Human Response to Celestial Order: Knowledge, Humility, and Stewardship

The Epistemic Obligation to Observe: Qur'an verse 10:101: "*Say: Look at what is in the heavens and the earth.*" Observation is a command, not a suggestion. Celestial order requires human study.

Humility before the Cosmic Scale: Observation of the heavens fosters humility (Q. 40:57). Awareness of cosmic immensity corrects arrogance, anchoring human beings within creation rather than above it.

Stewardship and Cosmic Responsibility: Because humans inhabit a universe of order, they must cultivate order on Earth. The Qur'an links cosmic order with *khilafah* -the moral responsibility to maintain balance (Q. 6:165).



### 20.12.9 A Qur'anic Epistemology of Celestial Order

Bringing the foregoing strands together, celestial order in the Qur'an constructs:

- An ontological foundation - the universe is structured and lawful.
- A rational foundation - order invites reflection and scientific reasoning.
- A moral foundation - cosmic balance models human justice.
- A spiritual foundation - cosmic signs point toward divine unity (tawḥid).
- A methodological foundation - the heavens serve as an epistemic template for observation, verification, and synthesis.

Thus, celestial order becomes a Qur'anic philosophy of knowledge, offering an integrated understanding of cosmology, science, ethics, and metaphysics.

## 20.13 Time Dilation and Relativistic Readings in the Qur'an

### 20.13.1 Time as a Relational and Relative Phenomenon

The Qur'an's discourse on time (*zaman*) offers one of the most conceptually sophisticated epistemic frameworks in scriptural traditions. Unlike classical Newtonian conceptions that view time as absolute, homogeneous, and linear, the Qur'anic worldview presents time as multi-layered, relativistic, context-dependent, and ontologically intertwined with the structure of creation. Time in the Qur'an is not a constant entity but a variable phenomenon that shifts according to cosmological, existential, and metaphysical domains (Q. 22:47; 32:5). This aligns remarkably with contemporary scientific insights - particularly Einsteinian relativity -where time is bound to motion, gravity, and spacetime curvature (Greene, 2011).

The Qur'an repeatedly challenges the human perception of time, revealing the limitations of empirical intuition and urging deeper reflection (*tafakkur*) into the nature of cosmic reality (Q. 23:112-114). Verses that describe a “*day equal to a thousand years*” (Q. 22:47) and others equating a “*day to fifty thousand years*” (Q. 70:4) signify ontological gradations of time rather than metaphorical exaggeration. Such descriptions illustrate the Qur'an's cosmological epistemology: time is relative to existential level, cosmic function, and ontological domain. In this chapter, we explore how the Qur'an presents time dilation through:

- Multiple temporal scales (divine, cosmic, human, eschatological)
- Relativity between motion and the passage of time
- Time as a function of cosmic hierarchy
- The compression and expansion of subjective time
- Eschatological temporality as a higher-order time domain
- Implications for modern physics and Qur'anic epistemology

The Qur'an does not describe relativity in mathematical terms; however, its conceptual architecture aligns with the philosophical implications of relativity theory: that time is not universal but depends on perspective, domain, and cosmic frame of reference.

### 20.13.2 Qur'anic Temporal Ontology: Multiple Scales of Time

Human Time-Linear, Short, and Subjective: The human perception of time is profoundly limited. The Qur'an refers to the human life-span as fleeting- "*a few days*" (Q. 23:112)-when contrasted with the immensity of cosmic time. Human time is:

- experiential,
- memory-dependent,
- psychologically elastic,
- existentially narrow.

This subjective temporality is foregrounded in verses describing people on Judgment Day recalling life on earth as "*a day*" or "*part of a day*" (Q. 23:113). These are not metaphorical hyperboles but statements about *temporal relativism*.

Cosmic Time: Structured, Rhythmic, and Law-Governed: Cosmic time is defined by:

- celestial motion,
- orbital cycles,
- axial rotations,
- periodic rhythms.

Qur'an verse 10:5 states: "*He made the sun a shining light and the moon a reflected light, and determined for it phases so that you may know the number of years and the reckoning.*"

Timekeeping emerges from cosmic geometries. This aligns with physical cosmology, where time measurement is inseparable from astronomical cycles (Carroll, 2016).

Divine Time-Transcendent and Scale-Independent: Divine time lies outside physical constraints. Qur'an verse 22:47 declares: "*A day with your Lord is like a thousand years of what you count.*"

Here, *'inda rabbika* (with your Lord) signals an ontological state where temporal metrics differ fundamentally from human measures. This is a clear statement of domain-dependent time.

Eschatological Time-Non-Linear and Transformative: Eschatology reveals another temporal order. Resurrection, judgment, and afterlife operate within a drastically altered spacetime configuration. The Qur'an describes temporal inversion ("*like the blink of an eye or nearer*" - Q. 16:77) and complete transcendence of measured time (Q. 20:102-112). Thus, the Qur'an constructs a hierarchical temporal architecture:

- Human time (limited, linear)
- Cosmic time (regular, geometric)

- Divine time (non-linear, scale-independent)
- Eschatological time (non-measurable, transformative)

This framework forms the foundation of Qur'anic relativity.

### 20.13.3 Qur'anic Expressions of Time Dilation

“A Day Like a Thousand Years” - Qur'an verse 22:47: The verse states: *“A day with your Lord is like a thousand years of what you count.”* The expression indicates:

- Temporal scaling,
- Perceptual relativity,
- Ontological differences between domains.

The phrase “what you count” directly refers to human chronometric systems-solar or lunar years.

“A Day Like Fifty Thousand Years” -Qur'an verse 70:4 states: *“The angels and the Spirit ascend to Him in a day the measure of which is fifty thousand years.”* This verse describes:

- angelic time,
- higher-dimensional motion,
- ontological velocity beyond human comprehension.

It also suggests that time progression is tied to the rate of motion, a key principle in special relativity (Einstein, 1920).

Vertical vs. Horizontal Time: Qur'an verse 70:4 implies vertical cosmological ascent, where the temporal scale expands dramatically. Qur'an verse 22:47 implies a horizontal divine perspective, where time compresses. Together, these verses describe anisotropic time-time that varies according to direction, domain, and function.

### 20.13.4 Time Dilation through Velocity -In relativity

- faster motion slows down time.

In Qur'an verse 70:4, the angels traverse cosmic distances at extraordinary speeds, yet their journey corresponds to “fifty thousand years” of human time-a textual expression paralleling relativistic temporal divergence.

Time, Motion, and Gravity in the Qur'an

Time Bound to Celestial Motion: The Qur'an repeatedly ties time to the movement of celestial bodies:

- *“The sun and moon follow precise calculation”* (Q. 55:5)
- *“Each floats in its orbit”* (Q. 21:33)

This implies:

- time emerges from motion,
- time is relational.

Gravitational Anchoring and Time: Qur'an verse 13:2 states: *"He raised the heavens without pillars that you see, then established Himself upon the Throne, and subjected the sun and the moon-each running for a term appointed."*

The unseen "pillars" may allegorically correspond to gravitational forces that invisibly structure cosmic architecture (Hawking, 2001). The link to "appointed term" indicates a gravitational-temporal relationship.

Time and Cosmic Stability: The Qur'an emphasises:

- cosmic anchoring (Q. 31:10),
- mountains as stabilisers (Q. 21:31),
- balance of the heavens (Q. 55:7-9).

These structures influence gravitational fields, ensuring temporal regularity.

### **20.13.5 Psychological and Phenomenological Time**

Subjective Time Compression: The Qur'an narrates experiences where individuals perceive time differently:

- People of the Cave (Q. 18:19): centuries felt like a day.
- Resurrection Day (Q. 23:113): life felt like an hour.

These are psychological time dilations, paralleling modern findings in cognitive science and temporal perception theory (Craig, 2009).

Memory, Consciousness, and Time: The Qur'an associates forgetfulness (*nisyan*) with distortion of temporal awareness (Q. 20:115). Consciousness itself, therefore, becomes a variable that influences subjective time.

### **20.13.6 Time, Epistemology, and Human Limitation**

The Qur'an presents time as an epistemic constraint. Human beings:

- misunderstand long-term processes (Q. 75:3-4),
- underestimate cosmic timescales (Q. 32:5),
- fail to grasp divine timing (Q. 7:187).

Time here functions as a limiting condition of human knowledge, and recognition of its relativity becomes epistemic humility.

### **20.13.7 Time Relativity and Modern Science: Convergences and Divergences**

Convergences: The Qur'an aligns with modern science on:

- relativity of time,
- dependence of time on motion,
- variability of time across domains,
- difference between experienced vs. measured time.

Divergences: The Qur'an differs in purpose:

- it embeds time relativity within moral and metaphysical meaning,
- it emphasises purpose and accountability,
- It integrates time into a teleological worldview.

Thus, Qur'anic time is both scientific and moral, not merely mathematical.

### **20.13.8 Eschatological Time as the Highest Order of Temporality**

The Day of Judgment (Qiyamah) introduces a form of time entirely distinct from physical cosmology. It is:

- instantaneous (Q. 54:50),
- non-linear (Q. 20:103-104),
- transformative (Q. 22:1),
- ontologically new (Q. 14:48).

No scientific framework currently models this domain; it is metaphysical and theological.

### **20.13.9 Synthesis: Time as a Multi-Level Qur'anic Epistemic Structure**

The Qur'an ultimately presents time as:

- Relative
- Domain-dependent
- Multi-layered
- Motion-linked
- Gravity-influenced
- Psychologically elastic
- Metaphysically transcendent

This is a sophisticated epistemology of time that predates modern relativity and extends beyond it into moral and existential dimensions.

## **20.14. Day-Night, Orbit, Gravity, and Cosmic Pathways (Subul)**

### **20.14.1 The Qur'anic Logic of Cosmic Order**

Among the Qur'an's most recurrent cosmological themes is the rhythmic alternation of day and night, the orbital precision of celestial bodies, and the structured pathways embedded in the architecture of the

heavens. Together, these constructs form a unified ontological system grounded in *mizan* (balance), *taqdir* (measure), and *subul* (pathways), through which the Qur'an articulates the intelligibility, harmony, and law-governed nature of the cosmos (Q. 55:5-9; 67:3-5). Unlike mythic cosmologies, the Qur'anic universe is neither chaotic nor arbitrary; it is a domain of structured regularity and predictable dynamism that functions as a vast epistemic field for human reflection (*tafakkur*) and scientific inquiry (Q. 3:190-191). This section explores the Qur'anic discourse on:

- Day-night alternation as a cosmological sign and scientific phenomenon
- Orbital mechanics as the basis of cosmic order
- Gravitation and the invisible architecture of the heavens
- Cosmic pathways (*subul*), routes, and trajectories
- Integration of Qur'anic ontology with contemporary astrophysics
- Epistemic implications for scientific exploration

The Qur'an's depiction is not a poetic flourish but a conceptual cosmology grounded in law-like regularity. It anticipates key principles of celestial mechanics and gravitational theory, not through mathematical formalism, but through metaphysical framing that affirms structural intelligibility.

#### 20.14.2 Day and Night: Cycles, Rhythm, and Cosmological Law

**Qur'anic Depictions of Day-Night Alternation:** The alternation of day and night appears repeatedly in the Qur'an as one of creation's foundational signs (*ayat*):

- “*He makes the night pass into the day, and the day pass into the night*” (Q. 35:13).
- “*He covers the night with the day, seeking it swiftly*” (Q. 7:54).
- “*Among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day*” (Q. 30:22).

The Qur'anic language-*yuliju*, *yukawwiru*, *yughshi*-indicates gradual transitions, rolling and wrapping motions, and overlapping cycles. These terms pre-scientifically articulate:

- axial rotation,
- diurnal cycles,
- the geometry of light and shadow,
- spherical structure of the Earth.

The verb *yukawwiru* in Qur'an verse 39:5 (“He wraps the night over the day”) evokes circularity or spherical rolling, consistent with the Earth's curvature.

**Cosmological Implication: Earth's Rotation and the Geometry of Light:** From a scientific perspective, day-night alternation arises from the Earth's:

- axial rotation,
- spherical geometry,

- relative position to the sun.

The Qur'an's conceptual emphasis on interpenetration-night entering day and day entering night-implicitly reflects a heliocentric, rotational structure rather than a flat or geocentric cosmology (Carroll, 2016).

Day and Night as Epistemic Stimuli: The Qur'an describes time cycles as *signs for people who reflect* (Q. 3:190-191). These signs invite humans to:

- contemplate natural law,
- appreciate cosmic design,
- infer metaphysical meaning from physical regularity.

Thus, the day-night cycle is both empirical and epistemic, grounding human understanding of time, pattern, and cosmic order.

### 20.14.3 Orbital Mechanics in the Qur'an: Precision, Calculation, and Motion

“Each in an Orbit”-The Qur'anic Declaration of Celestial Motion: Qur'an verse 21:33 states: “*He created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon; each floats in an orbit.*”

The verb *yasbahun* implies:

- smooth motion,
- continuous travel,
- fluid trajectories.

This aligns with astrophysical models of orbital dynamics, where gravitational forces produce elliptical or near-circular orbits (Hawking, 2001).

The Architecture of Orbits: The Qur'an's presentation encompasses:

- solar trajectory (Q. 36:38),
- lunar phases and orbit (Q. 36:39-40),
- impossibility of orbital collision under cosmic law: “*The sun cannot overtake the moon, nor does the night outrun the day.*” (Q. 36:40)

These statements correspond to modern insights:

- conservation of angular momentum,
- stable orbital resonance,
- celestial mechanics regulating motion.

Orbits as Measure (*taqdir*): Qur'an verse 55:5: “*The sun and moon follow precise calculation.*”



This “calculation” (*Husban*) denotes quantifiable order and mathematically structured motion. The Qur'an thus establishes orbits as both physical and epistemic structures, laws that reveal intelligibility in creation.

The Epistemology of Orbital Regularity: Orbital stability becomes a hermeneutic tool enabling:

- prediction,
- measurement,
- calendrical systems,
- long-term scientific modelling.

The Qur'an elevates orbital order as evidence of inherent *mizan*-balance in the cosmos (Izutsu, 2002).

#### 20.14.4 Gravity: The Invisible Architecture of the Heavens

Qur'anic Allusions to Gravitational Structure: The Qur'an does not employ physical terminology but uses metaphors pointing toward invisible forces:

- “*He raised the heavens without pillars that you see*” (Q. 13:2) - implying unseen supporting forces.
- “*He holds the heavens from falling upon the earth except by His permission*” (Q. 22:65) - invoking stabilising cosmic order.
- “*It is Allah who holds the heavens and the earth lest they cease*” (Q. 35:41).

These verses describe:

- invisible cosmological support systems,
- non-material structures that prevent collapse,
- continuous maintenance of cosmic balance.

Many scholars identify these descriptions as gravitational metaphors, consistent with the invisible curvature of spacetime (Einstein, 1920).

Gravity and Suspension: Qur'anic Phenomenology: Qur'an verse 31:10 states: “*He cast mountains on the earth so it does not shake with you, and dispersed in it all kinds of creatures.*”

Mountains symbolise stabilising forces-an analogy for mass balance in geophysics and gravitational equilibrium.

Cosmological Stability through Gravitational Harmony: The Qur'an repeatedly emphasises:

- *mizan* (Q. 55:7-9) - balance,
- *taqdir* - proportion,
- *qada'* - decreed order.

This corresponds to gravitational systematisation that stabilises:

- planetary orbits,
- galactic structures,

- cosmic web distribution.

Gravity thus functions as a material expression of divine ordering.

#### 20.14.5 Cosmic Pathways (*Subul*): Trajectories, Routes, and Celestial Infrastructure

Qur'anic Affirmation of Cosmic Pathways: Qur'an verse 51:7: “*By the heaven full of pathways (subul).*” This powerful expression opens a remarkable cosmological dimension. *Subul* implies:

- structured routes,
- cosmic highways,
- patterned trajectories.

In today's astrophysics, the universe is filled with pathways:

- orbital routes,
- gravitational channels,
- interstellar trajectories,
- cosmic filaments connecting galaxies.

The Qur'an's lexicon anticipates the idea that the universe is not random, but structured with traversable pathways.

Pathways of Celestial Bodies: Celestial movement follows:

- gravitational corridors,
- orbital resonances,
- interstellar drift along galactic trajectories.

These are literal *subul*-not metaphorical but structural.

Human Use of Cosmic Pathways: Qur'an verse 78:6-12 describes:

- elevated heavens,
- lamps (stars),
- protective layers,
- structured paths.

Humanity's modern space navigation depends on:

- orbital transfer routes,
- gravitational slingshots,
- Lagrange points,
- interplanetary trajectories.

Thus, the Qur'anic *subul* provides theological grounding for spacefaring.

### 20.14.6 Qur'anic Cosmology and Contemporary Astrophysics: Points of Convergence

Predictability and Mathematical Order: The Qur'an repeatedly emphasises:

- precision (Q. 54:49),
- measure (Q. 65:3),
- determinacy (Q. 87:3).

These attributes align with scientific cosmology, where mathematical laws govern motion and evolution.

Structural Harmony: Modern astrophysics shows:

- orbital resonance,
- gravitational equilibrium,
- cosmic filaments.

The Qur'an's framework describes:

- pathways (Q. 51:7),
- balance (Q. 55:7),
- stability (Q. 67:3-4).

Layered Heavens: Qur'anic references to “*seven heavens*” (Q. 67:3) may reflect:

- multi-layered cosmological scales,
- hierarchical structure of the universe,
- nested layers of cosmic organisation.

### 20.14.7 Epistemic Implications: Cosmological Order as an Invitation to Scientific Inquiry

The Qur'anic cosmos is a research-enabling universe. The structured order invites:

- observation (*nazar*)
- inference (*istidlal*)
- reflection (*tafakkur*)
- systemisation (*tadabbur*)

The Qur'an treats the universe as epistemically transparent: knowable, intelligible, structured.

Scientific inquiry becomes:

- a fulfilment of Qur'anic mandate,
- an extension of *khilafah* (vicegerency),
- an act of reading the “book of creation” alongside the Book of Revelation.

Thus, cosmic order is both ontology and methodology.

## 20.15. Space Sciences in Islamic Intellectual History

### 20.15.1 The Qur'anic Impulse Behind Scientific Observation

The rise of Islamic civilisation as a global centre of scientific advancement between the eighth and fifteenth centuries cannot be understood apart from the Qur'an's persistent invitation to observe, measure, and contemplate the heavens. Qur'anic cosmology, built upon principles of *mizan* (balance), *taqdir* (proportion), and celestial order, functioned as an epistemic catalyst for the development of sophisticated astronomical sciences. The Qur'anic emphasis on celestial precision- "*The sun and moon follow calculated orbits*" (Q. 55:5), "*He set up the balance so that you do not transgress the measure*" (Q. 55:7-9)-provided intellectual foundations for mathematical astronomy, observational science, and cosmological theorising.

Islamic civilisation inherited no single cosmological system wholesale but synthesised Greek, Persian, Indian, and Syriac astronomical traditions into a unified epistemology grounded in Qur'anic monotheism. This synthesis produced one of history's most advanced scientific cultures, generating star catalogues, observatories, computational innovations, critiques of Ptolemaic astronomy, and conceptual models of the cosmos that anticipated early modern advances. Yet contrary to secular narratives, the driving force behind this scientific flourishing was *not* imitation but hermeneutic integration: a Qur'an-centred cosmological worldview informing empirical inquiry.

This section examines key phases and figures in Islamic space sciences-from early Abbasid translation circles to the observatories of Maragha and Samarkand-and analyses how Qur'anic cosmology shaped scientific motivation, methodological structures, and theoretical horizons.

### 20.15.2 Early Motivation: Qur'anic Signs and the Rise of Precision Astronomy

Cosmological Verses as Epistemic Entrances: Verses describing celestial order served as epistemic triggers. For example: "*It is He who made the sun a radiant lamp and the moon a reflected light, and determined its phases so that you may know the number of years and calculation.*" (Q. 10:5)

This links lunar phases to calculation, implying a mathematical dimension to cosmology. The Qur'an's depiction of celestial bodies as *ayat* (signs) rooted empirical observation in epistemic purpose. Early Muslim astronomers understood astronomical study as a mode of reading a second "book"-the book of creation, whose signs correspond with revelation.

Translation, Transformation, and Integration: Between the eighth and tenth centuries, Islamic intellectual centres (Baghdad, Damascus, Basra, Harran) translated and expanded upon:

- Greek astronomical texts (Ptolemy's *Almagest*),
- Persian observational records,
- Indian trigonometric tables (*Siddhanta* tradition).

However, these sources were not merely adopted but critically reinterpreted. The Qur'anic methodological ethos-observe, reflect, verify- shaped how Muslim scholars assessed inherited cosmological claims.

Where Greek metaphysics conflicted with Qur'anic monotheism, re-interpretation occurred; where mathematical tools could help quantify celestial order, they were incorporated.

### 20.15.3 The Early Abbasid Period: Foundations of Islamic Astronomy

Al-Khwarizmi and the Mathematical Reformation: Muḥammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi (d. 850), drawing inspiration from the Qur'an's insistence on precision, developed:

- algebra (*al-jabr*),
- trigonometric methods,
- astronomical tables (*Zij al-Sindhind*).

His work formalised the mathematical precision implied in verses such as Q. 54:49 (*"We created everything with precise measure"*). Al-Khwarizmi's tables helped determine qiblah directions and prayer times, practical applications of celestial knowledge within a Qur'an-informed cosmology.

Al-Farghani and Spherical Astronomy: Aḥmad al-Farghani (Alfraganus) produced *Elements of Astronomy*, synthesising Ptolemaic theory with empirical corrections. His emphasis on spherical geometry parallels Qur'anic references to the Earth's "wrapping" of night over day (Q. 39:5). Al-Farghani's calculations of Earth's circumference influenced both Islamic and later European astronomical thought, including Columbus.

### 20.15.4 The Golden Age: Maragha, Rayy, and the Rise of Observational Science

The Maragha School and the Critique of Ptolemy: The Maragha Observatory (1259 CE), led by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, represented the height of Islamic scientific institutionalisation. Motivated not by secular curiosity but by the Qur'an's insistence on *tahqiq* (verification), Maragha scholars challenged Ptolemaic models that lacked physical coherence.

Al-Ṭūsī's "Tusi Couple," converting circular motions into linear oscillations, anticipated Copernican solutions by three centuries. The methodological principle was Qur'anic: truth must be coherent-the cosmos is built in *ḥaqq* (reality, truth), not fiction (Q. 10:5; 21:16).

Ibn al-Shaṭīr-The Forgotten Pioneer of Planetary Theory: Ibn al-Shaṭīr (d. 1375) developed non-geocentric planetary models, eliminating Ptolemy's equant. His solar model mirrors Copernicus yet predates him. Unlike Greek astronomers, Ibn al-Shaṭīr was driven by:

- the Qur'anic insistence on celestial harmony (Q. 67:3-4),
- the need for physically coherent orbits,
- rejection of ad hoc adjustments in cosmic modelling.

### 20.15.5 Samarkand and the Zenith of Islamic Observatories

Ulugh Beg's Observatory: The Samarkand Observatory (1420s), led by Ulugh Beg, produced star catalogues more accurate than Tycho Brahe's (16th century). Ulugh Beg's *Zij* included:

- arc-minute precision star charts,

- methods for measuring axial tilt,
- calculations of Earth’s obliquity.

Ulugh Beg inherited Qur’anic cosmology, which demanded precision (Q. 25:2) and rejected randomness in the heavens.

### 20.15.6 Cosmological Debate and Theoretical Innovation

Islamic thinkers debated cosmology within a Qur’anic framework:

Al-Farabi: Viewed the cosmos as harmoniously structured, reflecting Qur’anic *mizan*.

Ibn Sina: Proposed metaphysical models of celestial spheres but insisted on rational coherence, echoing Qur’an verse 67:3-4.

Fakhr al-Din al-Razi: Questioned geocentrism and suggested the possibility of multiple worlds (‘*awalam*) based on Qur’an verse 1:2 (“*Lord of the worlds*”). Modern cosmologists cite Razi as an early advocate of multiverse discussions (Ovenden, 1993).

Ibn Rushd: Insisted on harmony between philosophical demonstration and Qur’anic cosmology, arguing that the universe reflects divine rationality.

### 20.15.7 Decline, Fragmentation, and Continuity

Political Decline and Institutional Fragmentation: After the 15th century, political instability (e.g., Mongol invasions, collapse of the Abbasid centre) reduced institutional patronage.

Preservation Through Manuscripts: Despite decline, Islamic astronomical texts influenced:

- Renaissance Europe,
- Byzantine scientific communities,
- Ottoman astronomical reforms.

Ideas such as the Tusi Couple directly influenced Copernican astronomy (Saliba, 2007).

### 20.15.8 Qur’anic Epistemology as the Underlying Engine of Islamic Space Sciences

Motivational Core: The Universe as Sign: Muslim astronomers viewed the heavens as layers of *ayat*-epistemic indicators pointing toward divine order (Q. 41:53).

Rational and Mathematical Structures: The Qur’an’s emphasis on *ḥisab* (calculation) and *‘ilm* (knowledge) created:

- a mathematically oriented scientific culture,
- preference for precision over speculation,
- rejection of cosmological fictions.

Empiricism Rooted in Tawhīd: Belief in divine unity implied cosmic coherence; thus, contradictions within models required correction. This theological principle inspired innovations now recognised as proto-scientific revolutions.

### 20.15.9 Epistemic Lessons for Contemporary Space Science

Islamic cosmological history provides modern science with three major principles:

The Principle of Epistemic Unity: Revelation, rationality, and empiricism form one cognitive spectrum, not competing authorities.

The Principle of Coherent Cosmology: The cosmos must be:

- intelligible,
- systematic,
- governed by consistent laws.

This aligns with modern physics' assumption of universal symmetry and order.

The Principle of Purposeful Exploration: Human engagement with space is not random but part of:

- *khilafah* (vicegerency),
- *'ibadah* (worship through knowing),
- *amanah* (moral responsibility).

This gives space exploration an ethical orientation and cosmological grounding.

## 20.16 Time Dilation and Relativistic Readings

### 20.16.1 Time as a Qur'anic and Cosmological Problem

The Qur'an repeatedly foregrounds time (al-zaman) not as a passive backdrop to creation, but as a dynamic dimension interwoven with the structure of the heavens. Temporal variation, differential duration, and relativity between cosmic frames appear across multiple verses—often expressed through contrasts such as a “*day equal to a thousand years*” (Q. 32:5), or “*a day equal to fifty thousand years*” (Q. 70:4). These statements invite careful hermeneutic attention. They are not metaphors of eternity nor poetic exaggerations; rather, they stand as epistemic openings into a cosmology where time behaves differently under different cosmic conditions.

Modern physics, especially special and general relativity, demonstrates that time is not absolute. It contracts, dilates, and bends according to velocity, mass, gravity, and curvature of spacetime. Surprisingly, the Qur'anic discourse on differentiated days, cosmic ascent, and layered heavens illustrates a worldview where time is experienced differently depending on the ontological frame of reference. This chapter explores such Qur'anic time-relativity through rigorous analysis, comparing Qur'anic cues with contemporary physics without collapsing revelation into scientific reductionism.



Our goal is epistemological: to show how the Qur'an constructs a multi-layered theory of time integral to understanding the cosmos, human existence, eschatology, and cosmic motion.

### 20.16.2 Time as Created, Not Eternal

Qur'anic Ontology of Created Time: The Qur'an asserts that time emerges through creation. It begins with the act of “decreeing” (*qada'*) and “measuring” (*taqdir*):

- “*He created everything and determined it with precise measurement.*” (Q. 54:49)
- “*He regulates the command from heaven to earth.*” (Q. 32:5)

Creation is simultaneously the creation of spacetime. Time is not co-eternal with God; rather, it begins with the heavens and the earth:

- “*Indeed, your Lord is Allah who created the heavens and the earth in six periods.*” (Q. 7:54)

The “six periods” (*sitta ayyam*) are not 24-hour Earth days, because Earth did not yet exist. Qur'anic “days” during creation are cosmic intervals, not terrestrial rotations. This ontological distinction anticipates modern cosmology, where “time” in the early universe differs fundamentally from the present time.

Time as Measured Through Motion: The Qur'an ties time to celestial motion:

- “*The sun and the moon are by precise calculation.*” (Q. 55:5)

In physics, time is defined by periodic motion. Qur'anic cosmology aligns with this: time is not external to matter but emerges from relational motion. This allows for differing temporal rates depending on the scale or environment of motion.

### 20.16.3 “A Day Equal to a Thousand Years”: Relativistic Readings

The Qur'an refers to differentiated durations:

- “*A day with your Lord is like a thousand years of what you count.*” (Q. 22:47)
- “*He arranges affairs ... then it ascends to Him in a day whose measure is a thousand years of what you count.*” (Q. 32:5)

Linguistic and Hermeneutic Analysis: The Qur'an uses explicit comparison: “*mimma ta'uddun*” (of what you count), indicating:

- two different frames of reference,
- two different time metrics,
- a scale difference between human experience and divine/cosmic time.

This is consistent with relativistic statements: time depends on reference frames.

Velocity Time Dilation (Special Relativity): In physics, time slows down for an observer travelling at high velocity. Qur’anic references to angels traversing cosmic distances (“ascending”) imply velocities outside human experience. Thus, “a day = 1000 years” may correspond to a relativistic velocity frame.

Gravitational Time Dilation (General Relativity): Einstein demonstrated that clocks run slower in stronger gravitational fields. The Qur’an’s mention of layered heavens (“seven heavens,” Q. 67:3) suggests cosmic regions with different gravitational densities. Time would differ across these layers. Therefore, Qur’anic differentiated days illustrate a relational ontology of time, aligned with modern physics.

20.16.4 “A Day Equal to Fifty Thousand Years”: Eschatological Relativity

Qur’an verse 70:4 states: “The angels and the Spirit ascend to Him in a day whose measure is fifty thousand years.”

This higher magnitude indicates

- multiple temporal layers within cosmic structure,
- gradients of duration based on cosmic distance or density,
- non-uniform temporal fields across creation.

Eschatological and Cosmological Dual Application: Unlike Qur’an verse 32:5 and 22:47, which describe cosmic processes, Q. 70:4 references eschatological ascent. The Qur’an thus presents two distinct relativistic scales:

| <b>Qur’anic Scale</b> | <b>Duration</b>                 | <b>Context</b> |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|
| 1 day = 1,000 years   | cosmic management (Q. 32:5)     | cosmological   |
| 1 day = 50,000 years  | eschatological ascent (Q. 70:4) | transcendental |

This suggests layers of increasing temporal dilation as one moves from the created cosmos toward transcendent presence.

Meta-Temporal Ontology: The Qur’an indicates that human time is not universal. Divine time is not merely “more” time-it is structurally different: “He is above time but regulates time.” (inferred from Q. 32:5; 55:29) Modern physics echoes this: different observers experience different “rates” of time depending on gravitational and relativistic conditions.

20.16.5 Time Perception in the Afterlife: A Qur’anic Model of Temporal Elasticity

Temporal Compression: “The Day they see it, it will be as if they had stayed only an evening or its morning.” (Q. 79:46)

Temporal Expansion: “Their punishment will be doubled.” (Q. 33:30)

These verses indicate that psychological time also differs in the afterlife. Physics distinguishes between:

- physical time (measured by the clock),
- psychological time (perceived).

The Qur'an incorporates both temporal dilation and temporal compression/expansion, which is experiential.

### 20.16.6 Time and the Speed of Light: “The Angels Travel in a Day...”

Some contemporary scholars (e.g., Bucaille, 1978) attempted to link Qur'anic statements to the speed of light mathematically. While such attempts are often methodologically weak, one consistent epistemic point remains: The Qur'an describes non-human velocities that produce different temporal frameworks.

- Angels traverse cosmic distances “*in a day*” (Q. 70:4).
- Human time cannot measure their motion.

Thus, the Qur'an acknowledges:

- velocity-based time dilation,
- different temporal frames for different entities.

### 20.16.7 Time in the Heavens vs. Time on Earth

Qur'anic Description of Cosmic Layers: “*He created seven heavens in layers.*” (Q. 67:3)

Cosmological layering may imply:

- diverse gravitational densities,
- different curvature of spacetime,
- different rates of temporal flow.

Modern Cosmology-Time Varies Across the Cosmos: Relativity teaches that:

- time flows more slowly near massive objects,
- faster in empty, low-gravity regions.

Qur'anic “seven heavens” may be read epistemologically as zones of differing cosmic behaviour, including temporal behaviour.

“The Day of Gathering” as meta-time: Eschatological “Day” is described as:

- unified and absolute (Q. 40:16),
- collapsing all temporalities,
- transcending cosmic time.

This resembles theories of “block universe” or “meta-time,” but Qur’anic metaphysics differs: time is not a fixed geometric block but a created sequence brought to a culmination.

20.16.8 Cyclic Time, Linear Time, and Eschatology

The Qur’an employs:

- cyclical time (day-night cycles, seasons, orbits),
- linear time (history, eschatology),
- transcendent time (divine decree beyond physics).

This triadic model anticipates modern cosmological theories:

| Qur’anic Category Description |                                                            | Scientific Parallel                     |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Cyclical Time                 | orbit-based periods                                        | periodic motion, orbital mechanics      |
| Linear Time                   | historical movement, entropy arrow of time, thermodynamics |                                         |
| Transcendent Time             | divine realm                                               | meta-time, external boundary conditions |

Thus, Qur’anic time is multidimensional.

20.16.9 Measurement, Observation, and Time in Qur’anic Epistemology

Time as a Tool for Epistemic Verification: “*So that you may know the number of years and calculation.*” (Q. 10:5) Time measurement becomes part of scientific inquiry.

Time as Evidence of Divine Order: “*He subjected the sun and the moon... each running for an appointed term.*” (Q. 13:2)

Time Variability as a Sign of Purpose: Temporal differences reflect purposeful design.

20.16.10 Toward a Qur’anic Theory of Relativity: Epistemic Synthesis

Not Scientific Reductionism: The Qur’an is not a physics textbook. It provides epistemic orientation, not technical formulas. Qur’anic Time as Relational

- depends on context,
- differs across cosmic realms,
- links directly to motion and gravity,
- incorporates eschatological timelessness.

Human Epistemic Humility-The Qur’an highlights the limits of human temporal perception: “*You know only little.*” (Q. 17:85) Modern physics agrees: time is not as it seems.

The Qur'an establishes a cosmology that is not merely descriptive but profoundly epistemic, inviting humanity to investigate the structure, origin, and dynamics of the universe as part of fulfilling the Divine trust of knowledge-seeking. Unlike mythological cosmologies of antiquity, the Qur'anic worldview frames the cosmos (*al-'alam*) as an intelligible, law-governed, expanding, and purposeful system -an arena in which signs (*ayat*) are woven into the very fabric of physical reality. This chapter argues that Qur'anic cosmology is not a peripheral theological curiosity; rather, it forms one of the most powerful intellectual foundations for a contemporary Islamic philosophy of space sciences.

From the earliest revelations, the Qur'an draws human attention upward: "*So do they not look toward the heaven above them-how We structured it and adorned it and how it has no rifts?*" (Q. 50:6). The heavens (*al-samawat*) are repeatedly described as both ordered and dynamic, held together by gravitational equilibrium (*mizan*), operating through orbital paths (*falak, subul*), and sustained by continuous expansion (Q. 51:47). These Qur'anic motifs collectively form a proto-scientific conceptual framework that aligns with the deepest defining themes of modern astrophysics and cosmology: origin, expansion, structure formation, and cosmic order.

Yet the Qur'an's cosmology is not reducible to scientific description. It embeds cosmic observation within an ethical and theological frame. Human beings are repeatedly commanded to examine the heavens not as detached spectators but as moral agents whose search for knowledge is an aspect of vicegerency (*khilafah*) on earth. In this sense, space research is not a neutral pursuit: it is a form of *amanah*-a trust in which human intelligence and empirical capability must be used responsibly, ethically, and in harmony with the unity of Divine truth (*tawhid*).

This chapter also emphasises that Qur'anic cosmology offers an alternative epistemic paradigm to the secular scientific worldview. Rather than a fragmented, value-neutral universe governed by blind laws, the Qur'an presents a cosmos that is coherent, purposeful, and intelligible precisely because it is grounded in Divine wisdom (*hikmah*). The laws of physics become signs of meaning, not accidents of chaos. Space-time, gravity, cosmic orbits, expansion, and celestial order are thus integrated into a *tawhidic* epistemology that binds empirical observation to rational reflection and spiritual insight.

Thus, Chapter 20 develops a comprehensive Qur'an-based epistemological framework for exploring space sciences. It demonstrates how Qur'anic ontology, cosmological concepts, and epistemic directives not only anticipate major themes of contemporary astrophysics but also offer a richer, unified foundation for interpreting the universe, one in which scientific discovery and spiritual understanding converge in a single pursuit of truth.

## PART VI: SYNTHESIS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The culmination of this work brings the discourse of Islamic epistemology to its final and most critical stage - *the synthesis of Qur'anic knowledge frameworks and the formulation of future directions for research*. After reconstructing the epistemic foundations of revelation (wahy), reason ('aql), and experience (tajribah) within the tawhīdic paradigm, the present part seeks to unify these principles into a coherent philosophy of research that can guide future generations of Muslim scholars. This synthesis does not merely restate past insights; it redefines the intellectual project of Islam as a living epistemological tradition - dynamic, self-corrective, and open to continuous renewal through Qur'anic principles.

The Qur'an, as repeatedly emphasised throughout this study, stands not only as a religious scripture but also as a comprehensive epistemic charter. It provides the metaphysical ground, ethical boundaries, and methodological orientation for all forms of knowledge - from the natural sciences to the humanities and social sciences (Al-Attas, 1995; Izutsu, 2002). The reconstruction of this divine paradigm in the previous parts demonstrates that Qur'anic knowledge is both rational and revelatory, both moral and empirical, and fundamentally teleological - oriented toward the realisation of truth (*ḥaqq*) and justice (*'adl*). Thus, a Qur'anically grounded philosophy of research must rest on three interdependent pillars: *unity of truth (tawhīd)*, *moral responsibility (amanah)*, and *purposeful inquiry (niyyah)*.

This final part - *Synthesis and Future Directions* - therefore consists of two major chapters. The first, *Toward a Unified Qur'anic Philosophy of Research*, proposes an integrated model that aligns all scientific and intellectual endeavours with the ontological unity of the Creator. It explores how epistemic categories such as knowledge (*'ilm*), wisdom (*ḥikmah*), and understanding (*ma'rifah*) converge in the Qur'an to form an ethical and methodological totality. This chapter will also articulate the normative structure of inquiry - how intention, verification, and application operate as inseparable dimensions of truth-seeking.

The second chapter, *Future Prospects for Qur'anic Methodology Studies*, projects this synthesis into the intellectual future. It assesses how the Qur'an-centred paradigm may influence emerging disciplines such as artificial intelligence, environmental ethics, bioinformatics, and social justice research. It will also propose institutional and educational strategies for embedding Qur'anic epistemology into contemporary research cultures - through curriculum reform, inter-disciplinary engagement, and methodological standardisation rooted in tawhīd.

Ultimately, *Part VI* envisions a renewal of human knowledge under the divine sign - a world where inquiry reflects remembrance (*dhikr*), and where the sciences regain their moral and spiritual orientation within the harmony of divine order (*mizan*). This synthesis reclaims the Qur'an as the source of all authentic knowing and charts a way forward for a truly integrated civilisation of knowledge - one that unites revelation, reason, and experience under the light (*mur*) of divine truth.

## Chapter 21: Toward a Unified Qur'anic Philosophy of Research

The emergence of a *Qur'anic philosophy of research* signifies a paradigm shift in epistemological and methodological understanding within Islamic thought. Unlike Western philosophical traditions that separate metaphysics from empiricism, the Qur'an presents a unified worldview where knowledge (*'ilm*) and wisdom (*hikmah*) are intertwined under divine guidance. This chapter seeks to establish a coherent philosophical foundation for Qur'anic research - one that integrates ontology, epistemology, and axiology within a single divine framework. It argues that all genuine inquiry must begin with the recognition of *tawhīd* (the Oneness of God), from which flows the moral and intellectual principles guiding human investigation. By drawing on the interpretive traditions of classical exegetes and contemporary hermeneutic theorists, this section envisions a holistic model in which revelation, reason, and observation complement each other rather than compete. Ultimately, it aims to define the *Qur'anic philosophy of research* as a comprehensive system uniting faith, ethics, and rationality in the pursuit of truth.

### 21.1 From Fragmented Epistemes to a Qur'anic Whole

The modern world faces a profound epistemological crisis - a fragmentation of truth and a disconnection between the spiritual and the empirical, the moral and the scientific, the sacred and the secular. Knowledge has become an instrument of control rather than a path to wisdom. The Qur'an, however, presents an entirely different vision: a unified epistemic order in which all domains of knowledge converge upon the recognition of divine unity (*tawhīd*) and moral purpose (*hikmah*) (Al-Attas, 1995; Izutsu, 2002). The Qur'anic worldview dismantles the artificial dichotomy between revelation and reason by presenting both as complementary dimensions of divine instruction - one through *wahy* (revelation), and the other through *ayat* (signs) dispersed in creation and the self (Q. 41:53).

A Qur'anic philosophy of research must, therefore, begin with the ontological recognition that all knowledge belongs to Allah (*al-'Ilm li-Llah*). Humanity's task is not to *create* knowledge ex nihilo, but to *uncover* and *align* existing truths with divine order. The act of research, in this sense, becomes a form of *'ibadah* (worship), an epistemic servanthood rooted in humility and moral responsibility. In this framework, scientific, philosophical, and humanistic inquiries are no longer value-neutral but are directed toward the moral transformation of the self and society (Nasr, 1989).

This chapter synthesises the preceding epistemological analyses into an operative philosophy of research grounded in the Qur'an. It aims to reconstruct the purpose, method, and ethics of inquiry as integral expressions of the *tawhīd* worldview. Through a systematic exposition, it demonstrates how Qur'anic epistemology can generate a comprehensive and self-sustaining philosophy of knowledge that integrates *ontological unity*, *epistemic verification*, and *moral accountability*.

### 21.2 The Ontological Unity of Research: All Knowledge as Divine Reflection

The Qur'an describes the universe as a network of divine *ayat* - signs that speak of the Creator's will, order, and beauty (Q. 3:190-191). These signs are not silent; they are communicative realities inviting reflection (*tafakkur*) and discernment (*ta'aqqul*). A unified Qur'anic philosophy of research thus rests upon a sacred ontology where knowledge is not autonomous from the divine but mirrors His unity (*tawhīd*).



(Iqbal, 1930). Every field of study - from physics to sociology - becomes a lens through which the divine reality is partially disclosed.

This ontology transforms the epistemic motive of inquiry. Instead of pursuing knowledge for domination, profit, or curiosity alone, the Qur'an redefines the purpose of knowing as *ta'arruf* - to know Allah through His signs (Q. 51:56). This shifts research from being anthropocentric to *theocentric*, from self-centred acquisition to God-centered recognition. The cosmos, in this epistemology, is not a mechanical system but a living text authored by the Divine (Izutsu, 2002).

In this worldview, there can be no dichotomy between natural and revealed knowledge, because both derive from the same Source. Revelation provides the interpretive code, while reason deciphers the patterns embedded in nature. This complementarity allows for a holistic epistemic method: revelation guards inquiry from moral deviation, and reason extends revelation into new contexts of understanding. Together they form the *tawhīdic unity* of all research.

### 21.3 The Epistemic Purpose of Research: From Curiosity to 'Ibadah

Research in the Qur'anic paradigm is not an end in itself but a means toward moral and spiritual realisation. The Qur'an repeatedly calls humanity to "observe," "reflect," and "ponder" over creation (Q. 30:8; 45:13), but always within the consciousness of divine purpose (*niyyah*). The pursuit of knowledge divorced from ethical intention leads to arrogance (*istikbar*) and corruption (*fasad*) - epistemic diseases that the Qur'an identifies as the result of knowledge without guidance (Q. 28:77).

The Qur'anic researcher thus acts as a servant-scholar (*'abd 'alim*), whose intellectual labour is an extension of worship. Every act of discovery becomes a *dhikr* (remembrance), and every theoretical insight a step toward recognising the divine order. This sanctification of knowledge transforms the researcher's ontology - he or she becomes a moral agent within the process of knowing, responsible not only for accuracy but for righteousness (*birr*).

Therefore, the Qur'anic philosophy of research demands a *teleological epistemology*: knowledge must serve the divine ends of justice, balance (*mizan*), and harmony (*ṣalah*). All forms of inquiry, whether in the laboratory or the library, are bound by the ethical imperative of *amanah* - the trust of stewardship over creation and truth (Q. 33:72).

### 21.4 The Methodological Triad: Revelation, Reason, and Experience

A unified Qur'anic research philosophy operates through three epistemic instruments: *wahy* (revelation), *'aql* (reason), and *tajribah* (experience). These are not competing sources but cooperative dimensions of knowledge. Revelation provides absolute principles and moral orientation; reason interprets these within the contingent realities of life; and experience verifies them through observation and reflection (Nasr, 1989).

- Revelation (Wahy) establishes the metaphysical constants of reality - divine purpose, moral law, and ontological unity. It defines the ultimate truth beyond human speculation (Q. 6:115).

- Reason ('Aql) acts as the interpreter of both revelation and empirical data. The Qur'an consistently appeals to intellect as the instrument of understanding divine signs (Q. 2:164; 10:100).
- Experience (Tajribah), through empirical observation, allows knowledge to become grounded in reality. Yet, unlike modern empiricism, Qur'anic empiricism is always subordinated to moral and metaphysical truth (Q. 16:12-13).

Together, they form an epistemic circuit where truth flows from revelation to reason, from reason to experience, and back to revelation for moral verification. This cyclical model ensures that inquiry never drifts into material reductionism or moral relativism. It embodies a *tawhīdic epistemic feedback loop* that unites discovery with guidance.

## 21.5 The Ethics of Inquiry: Niyyah, Amanah, and 'Adl

The Qur'an grounds all human actions, including research, in intention (*niyyah*), trust (*amanah*), and justice ('*adl*). Without these, knowledge becomes a means of corruption rather than enlightenment. The act of inquiry must therefore begin with sincere intention - to seek truth for the sake of Allah, not for ego, fame, or profit (Q. 2:30). The researcher holds *amanah* toward both knowledge and creation - a moral duty to protect the truth from distortion and to apply it for collective benefit. Finally, '*adl* demands that research outcomes promote equity and prevent harm.

This triad of ethical principles redefines academic integrity in Qur'anic terms. The Qur'anic scholar cannot fabricate, conceal, or exploit knowledge without betraying divine trust. Thus, the Qur'an introduces a moral accountability unknown to secular science - that every misuse of knowledge is a betrayal of the divine covenant ('*ahd*).

## 21.6 Integration and Application: The Architecture of Qur'anic Research

A Qur'anic philosophy of research envisions a civilizational project where all disciplines are unified under the concept of '*ilm al-tawhīd* - knowledge of unity. It encourages the establishment of integrated institutions where the study of revelation, nature, and society is pursued as interconnected domains. In such a system, theology informs physics, ethics directs biotechnology, and economics is measured by moral balance rather than profit.

To operationalise this paradigm, Qur'anic research must develop its own methodological tools:

- Qur'anic hermeneutics (*tafsir 'ilmi*) for interpreting signs within natural and social contexts.
- Moral impact assessment to evaluate the ethical consequences of research outcomes.
- Interdisciplinary synthesis models that relate Qur'anic categories (e.g., *mizan*, *haqq*, *rahmah*) to modern disciplines.

Such structures ensure that Qur'anic epistemology becomes not merely theoretical but institutionally embodied.

## 21.7 Conclusion: The Reunification of Knowledge and Being

The Qur'anic philosophy of research restores the lost harmony between knowing and being. It transforms the scholar into a witness (*shahid*), not merely a spectator of truth. In this tawhīdic vision, the pursuit of knowledge is inseparable from the cultivation of virtue, and truth itself becomes a path to divine proximity (*qurb ila Allah*).

A unified Qur'anic research paradigm, therefore, marks the culmination of Islamic epistemological reconstruction. It presents a model where all human inquiry - scientific, philosophical, artistic, or ethical - becomes an expression of *ibadah*. Through this synthesis, humanity may once again achieve the Qur'anic ideal: “*We will show them Our signs in the horizons and in themselves until it becomes clear to them that this is the truth*” (Q. 41:53).

## Chapter 22: Future Prospects for Qur'anic Methodology Studies

As the field of Qur'anic methodology continues to evolve, there emerges an urgent need to reimagine its future direction in light of global intellectual transformations. This chapter explores the potential trajectories of *Qur'anic methodological studies* through interdisciplinary, comparative, and technological lenses. The Qur'an's call to reflection (*tafakkur*), reasoning (*ta'aqqul*), and understanding (*tadabbur*) encourages continuous renewal in methods of interpretation and application. In the contemporary academic environment, integrating Qur'anic epistemology with modern disciplines-such as linguistics, data analysis, artificial intelligence, and hermeneutics- yields a more dynamic and contextually aware scholarship. This chapter also reflects on challenges facing Qur'anic research today: fragmentation of interpretive traditions, loss of linguistic depth, and secular bias in knowledge production. Therefore, the future of Qur'anic methodological studies lies in constructing bridges between tradition and innovation, revelation and reason, ensuring that the eternal message of the Qur'an continues to illuminate the evolving human quest for understanding.

### 22.1 Re-envisioning Qur'anic Methodology in the Age of Transformation

The study of the Qur'an has always been more than an intellectual endeavour-it is a spiritual and civilizational project. From its earliest revelation, the Qur'an positioned itself as a *Kitab mubin* (a clear book) and a *furqan* (criterion between truth and falsehood) (Q. 2:185; 25:1). In its divine wisdom, it inaugurated not only a theological and ethical revolution but also a methodological one-inviting humankind to observe, reflect, reason, and inquire into creation as signs (*ayat*) of divine wisdom (Q. 3:190-191). As humanity enters an era marked by artificial intelligence, genetic engineering, and digital epistemes, the Qur'anic methodology must be reexamined, reconstructed, and re-applied to provide moral coherence and epistemological guidance.

Future Qur'anic methodological studies, therefore, face a dual task: to preserve the ontological purity of *tawhid* as the foundation of knowledge, and to translate this metaphysical unity into methodological principles capable of engaging the epistemic pluralism of the 21st century. This chapter proposes that Qur'anic methodology must evolve through *three critical movements*: the revival of *tafsir al-'alam* (interpretation of the world as a text of signs), the integration of *'ilm al-wujud* (science of being) with *'ilm al-shahadah* (empirical science), and the institutionalisation of Qur'anic-based research frameworks in contemporary academia.

### 22.2 The Qur'an as an Open Text of Infinite Inquiry

The Qur'an repeatedly calls upon human beings to think beyond the apparent and to read the world through its signs: "*We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that this is the Truth*" (Q. 41:53).

This verse, when read epistemologically, indicates that revelation itself anticipates an unfolding process of discovery-a continuous unveiling of meaning through both textual and cosmic revelation. In future Qur'anic methodology, this *openness of revelation* forms the axis of research innovation.

The Qur'an's dialogical structure-addressing believers, sceptics, and seekers alike- invites methodological pluralism without surrendering its unity of truth. Future scholarship must thus embrace *hermeneutical humility*: the recognition that each act of interpretation (*ta'wil*) opens a new layer of understanding while remaining within the orbit of divine unity (*tawhid*).

In the coming decades, Qur'anic research must transition from static exegesis (*tafsir naqli*) to *tafsir haraki*-a dynamic interpretive methodology that reads revelation in motion, contextualised within global crises such as ecological collapse, ethical confusion, and technological alienation. This transition will not replace classical exegesis but enrich it by reviving its original Qur'anic impulse: *to guide humanity toward justice, balance, and divine awareness* (Q. 57:25).

## 22.3 Reintegrating Revelation, Reason, and Reality

The future of Qur'anic methodology lies in dissolving the dichotomy between revelation and reason, alien to the Qur'an's epistemology. In numerous verses, the Qur'an integrates *'aql* (reason) with *wahy* (revelation): "*Do they not reflect upon the Qur'an? Had it been from other than Allah, they would have found within it much contradiction*" (Q. 4:82).

The Qur'anic use of *yatafakkarun*, *ya 'qilun*, and *yatadabbarun* (they reflect, they reason, they ponder) establishes rational reflection as an act of worship. Future methodologies must build upon this epistemic synthesis by employing reason not as a rival to revelation but as its interpreter within the realm of empirical and moral existence.

Contemporary Islamic scholarship can draw inspiration from classical thinkers such as Al-Farabi, Al-Ghazali, and Ibn Rushd, who integrated philosophy, logic, and theology within a Qur'anic worldview. Yet modern scholars must go further: constructing *integrated epistemological models* that harmonise divine law (*Shari'ah*), natural law, and social ethics within the unity of truth.

## 22.4 The Role of Digital and Cognitive Sciences in Qur'anic Methodology

Emerging fields such as artificial intelligence, digital hermeneutics, and cognitive linguistics present both opportunities and challenges to Qur'anic studies. On one hand, computational analysis can reveal structural, phonetic, and semantic patterns in the Qur'an that demonstrate its linguistic inimitability (*i'jaz*). On the other hand, algorithmic reasoning risks detaching text from transcendence, reducing divine revelation to mere data.

Future Qur'anic methodological research must therefore establish ethical boundaries grounded in *taqwa* (God-consciousness). Digital Qur'anic studies should not aim merely at textual mapping but at unveiling the divine logic underlying its discourse. Machine learning and artificial intelligence may serve as tools to uncover the coherence (*nazm*) of the Qur'an's structure, but interpretation must remain under the spiritual discipline of *ilm* guided by *iman*.

Integrating cognitive science may also illuminate the Qur'an's psychological depth. Its use of metaphor, rhythm, and repetition engages the human mind holistically, transforming cognition into remembrance

(*dhikr*). Future research should explore how Qur'anic recitation and reflection shape neural and moral consciousness, bridging spirituality and neuroscience under a unified tawhīdic paradigm.

## 22.5 Qur'anic Methodology as a Global Epistemic Paradigm

The Qur'an describes itself as a message for *all worlds* (*'alamin*, Q. 21:107), indicating its universal epistemic scope. Future methodological developments should position Qur'anic epistemology not as a sectarian alternative but as a universal framework of *ethical reason*.

In a fragmented world dominated by post-truth narratives, the Qur'anic methodology offers a path toward epistemic coherence. It affirms that truth (*ḥaqq*) is not socially constructed but divinely rooted: “*That is because Allah is the Truth, and what they invoke besides Him is falsehood*” (Q. 22:62).

This metaphysical grounding empowers the Qur'anic approach to engage global disciplines—science, economics, ecology, and politics—without relativism. It situates all knowledge within an ethical horizon where inquiry is an act of servitude and stewardship.

Future research institutions inspired by Qur'anic epistemology may therefore develop interdisciplinary models where revelation and rationality co-govern academic pursuit. Qur'anic philosophy of research can guide policy, technology, and education toward equilibrium (*mizan*), justice (*'adl*), and mercy (*rahmah*).

## 22.6 Toward the Institutionalisation of Qur'anic Research Paradigms

To ensure continuity, prospects must include the institutional development of *Qur'anic Research Methodology Centres* (QRMCs) across universities and research institutes. These centres would focus on:

- Epistemological Studies: Investigating the principles of knowledge in Qur'anic discourse.
- Scientific Integration: Developing frameworks that align empirical research with Qur'anic ontology.
- Ethical Technology: Establishing Qur'an-guided ethics in artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and data sciences.
- Interfaith Epistemology: Engaging other religious and philosophical systems in dialogue through the Qur'anic framework of unity and justice.

Such institutional efforts would manifest the Qur'anic injunction: “*And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided*” (Q. 3:103).

This integration marks the future horizon of Islamic scholarship, where *'ilm*, *'amal*, and *iman* converge as expressions of divine unity.

## 22.7 Conclusion: The Infinite Journey of Qur'anic Knowledge

As humanity faces existential uncertainty, the Qur'an remains an inexhaustible source of wisdom. Its methodology is not static but evolutionary, responsive to the changing conditions of human consciousness. The future of Qur'anic methodology lies in the revival of its original spirit: inquiry rooted in submission, science illuminated by faith, and philosophy guided by revelation.

In the age of complexity, the Qur'an offers simplicity-*tawhīd* as the organising principle of all knowledge. The promise of Qur'anic methodology is not merely to interpret the world but to transform it through justice, mercy, and truth. As the Qur'an proclaims: "Say, 'My Lord, increase me in knowledge'" (Q. 20:114).

Thus, the future of Qur'anic methodological studies is not an end but a journey-an endless ascent toward the divine horizon where knowledge, being, and worship converge in the unity of *al-Haqq*.

The comprehensive reconstruction of Islamic epistemology presented across this study culminates in a unified Qur'anic paradigm that reclaims *tawhīd*-Divine Oneness as both the foundation and the telos of all knowledge. From its opening revelations, the Qur'an established that knowledge (*ilm*) is not an autonomous human enterprise but a sacred trust (*amanah*) bestowed upon humankind for realising truth (*al-haqq*) and justice (*al-'adl*). The Qur'anic worldview thereby positions epistemology not as a neutral field but as a moral-spiritual act that integrates cognition, faith, and responsibility.

Throughout this research, the Qur'an has been revealed as a complete epistemic cosmos-its verses, language, and cosmological signs constituting an integrated system of meaning. Revelation (*wahy*), reason (*'aql*), and experience (*tajribah*) are not competing sources but complementary dimensions of knowing, unified within the Divine Logos. The fragmentation of modern knowledge, rooted in secular dichotomies between mind and matter, science and spirit, is countered by the Qur'an's unifying call: "He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden, and He is Knowing of all things" (Q. 57:3).

In this vision, the human intellect becomes an instrument of worship (*'ibadah*), and research becomes a form of *jihad al-'ilm*-the striving for truth in the service of creation. The Qur'anic paradigm thus transcends the limits of empirical positivism and postmodern relativism by situating all inquiry within a metaphysical order governed by Divine wisdom. Knowledge in this framework is not merely descriptive but transformative, seeking harmony (*mizan*) between humanity and the cosmos.

As contemporary civilisation enters an era of technological acceleration and moral disorientation, the Qur'an's epistemology offers a pathway from fragmentation to integration. It restores coherence by reuniting the sacred and the scientific, revelation and rationality, ethics and ontology. The future of Qur'anic methodology, as envisioned in this study, lies in the establishment of interdisciplinary frameworks that embody this *tawhīdic* synthesis, bridging cognitive science, digital analysis, environmental studies, and theology under the banner of divine unity.

Ultimately, the Qur'anic philosophy of research envisions humanity as *khali'ah* (vicegerent), entrusted to know, cultivate, and protect creation through knowledge that mirrors Divine balance. The journey of epistemological renewal, therefore, is not complete until human inquiry itself becomes an act of remembrance (*dhikr*), aligning thought and action with the Oneness of the Creator. As the Qur'an proclaims: "And above every possessor of knowledge is One who knows" (Q. 12:76).



Thus, the reconstruction of Islamic epistemology through the Qur'an is not a return to the past but a leap forward toward an integrated, compassionate, and transcendent future in which all knowledge flows toward the Source of Knowledge, *Allah al-Alim*.

## 22.8 The Qur'anic Reconstruction of Knowledge and the Future of Human Understanding

This comprehensive study has traced the intellectual and spiritual journey of reconstructing Islamic epistemology through the lens of the Qur'an. From the earliest revelations to the most contemporary scientific inquiries, the Qur'an emerges not merely as a book of religion but as a complete epistemic framework - a living discourse that integrates being (*wujud*), knowing (*ma'rifah*), and doing (*'amal*) into a unified vision of truth. The six parts of this research collectively revealed that the essence of Qur'anic epistemology lies in *tawhid* - the principle of Divine Oneness - which governs both the structure and purpose of all knowledge.

### 22.8.1 Rediscovering the Epistemological Foundations in the Qur'an

The first part established the conceptual foundation for Islamic epistemology as rooted exclusively in the Qur'an, free from post-Qur'anic accretions or sectarian interpretations. It examined the Qur'an's self-presentation as *huda* (guidance), *mur* (light), and *furqan* (criterion) - epistemic categories that define truth, illuminate understanding, and differentiate reality from illusion. In contrast to Greek rationalism or modern empiricism, the Qur'an situates knowledge within a moral and metaphysical order: all knowledge originates from Allah (*Allah al-Alim*) and must return to Him. This realisation reorients the human act of knowing from an autonomous intellectual pursuit to a divinely guided process - a sacred engagement between revelation, reason, and creation.

### 22.8.2 The Qur'an and the Architecture of Knowledge

The second part explored how the Qur'an constructs the architecture of knowledge through its use of *ayat* - signs in nature, scripture, and the self. Knowledge in the Qur'an is not limited to empirical observation or logical abstraction; it is relational, holistic, and purposeful. Human beings are invited to read the "two books" - the Book of Revelation and the Book of Creation - as parallel sources of divine communication. Through this double reading (*qira'ah*), the Qur'an establishes an epistemological symmetry between the cosmic order (*ayat al-kawniyah*) and the revealed verses (*ayat al-wahyiyah*), both leading to the recognition of Divine Unity. This stage revealed that true knowledge requires synthesis - integrating intellectual reasoning (*'aql*), moral awareness (*taqwa*), and experiential realisation (*yaqin*).

### 22.8.3 Classical Thinkers and Qur'anic Methodology

Part III analysed the intellectual contributions of classical Muslim philosophers - al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, al-Ghazali, and Ibn Rushd - through a Qur'an-centred framework. It showed how each thinker, despite their diverse methods, sought to harmonise reason and revelation within the unifying principle of *tawhid*. Al-Farabi established logic as a tool to clarify revelation; Ibn Sina reinterpreted metaphysics as the study of divine order in existence; al-Ghazali renewed the moral and spiritual dimensions of reason; and Ibn Rushd

rationally defended revelation as a system of truth accessible to both intellect and faith. The synthesis of these thinkers, viewed through Qur'anic epistemology, revealed that Islamic intellectual history is not a series of competing schools but a continuous effort to realise divine wisdom through diverse cognitive paths. This legacy offers contemporary scholarship a model for plural yet integrated inquiry under the guidance of revelation.

#### 22.8.4 Qur'anic and Modern Scientific Method: A Comparative Reconstruction

Part IV engaged in a rigorous comparison between the Qur'anic method of inquiry and the modern scientific method. The Qur'an emphasises *tahqiq* (verification), *tafakkur* (reflection), and *tadabbur* (deep contemplation) - processes that seek to uncover meaning beyond the material surface. Modern science, by contrast, prioritises *experimentum* and *falsifiability*, often divorcing knowledge from moral responsibility. This research demonstrated that while both systems value observation and reasoning, the Qur'an integrates these within a teleological framework of accountability and justice. The ethics of knowing (*akhlaq al-ma'rifah*) thus becomes central: knowledge must not be value-neutral but oriented toward righteousness (*ṣalah*), harmony (*mizan*), and the preservation of creation (*hifẓ al-kawn*). Through detailed comparative analysis, this section proposed the Qur'anic methodology as a corrective to the moral and existential vacuum of modern scientific rationality - reuniting epistemology with ontology, and fact with value.

#### 22.8.5 Qur'anic Research Methodology in Modern Disciplines

Part V advanced this reconstruction into practical domains, developing a Qur'anically informed research methodology for both natural and human sciences. It redefined the foundations of inquiry around three interdependent principles: *wahy* (revelation), *'aql* (reason), and *ayah* (sign). Within this triad, revelation provides ontological guidance, reason supplies analytical structure, and signs - both textual and natural - serve as empirical evidence of divine design. Ethical dimensions such as *niyyah* (intention), *amanah* (trust), and *'adl* (justice) were shown to be not optional moral addenda but integral methodological imperatives. Case studies in environmental ethics, bioethics, and economic justice demonstrated how the Qur'anic framework transcends disciplinary boundaries, infusing modern sciences with metaphysical purpose and ethical orientation. This section also addresses the future challenges of applying Qur'anic epistemology in technological and digital contexts, calling for a reformulation of academic research paradigms under the rubric of divine unity.

#### 22.8.6 The Unity of Truth (Tawḥid) as the Epistemic Paradigm

Part VI brought the argument to its highest synthesis, identifying *tawḥid* - the Oneness of God - as the central epistemic principle that binds all dimensions of knowledge. Within this paradigm, the multiplicity of phenomena is harmonised under a single reality: *la ilaha illa Allah*. Knowledge thus becomes both an act of worship (*'ibadah*) and a form of vicegerency (*khilafah*), wherein human beings, as stewards of creation, seek to mirror divine attributes through justice, compassion, and balance. The Qur'an's epistemology calls for the reunification of revelation, reason, and experience, transforming fragmented human disciplines into coherent reflections of divine wisdom. The future of knowledge, from this perspective, is *tawḥidic*: it seeks integration across theology, ethics, and science - not by negating modern

inquiry, but by elevating it into moral consciousness. This vision restores meaning to modernity, grounding technological progress in the sacred order of being.

### 22.8.7 Synthesis: From Fragmentation to Integration

The cumulative outcome of this study is a holistic Qur'anic epistemology that redefines the philosophy of knowledge for the modern world. It rejects the dichotomies that have divided human thought - reason vs. faith, science vs. religion, fact vs. value - and reconstructs them within the seamless unity of divine reality. The Qur'an does not abolish rational inquiry or empirical science; rather, it reclaims them within a higher horizon of purpose and accountability. By integrating cognition (*'aql*), revelation (*wahy*), and moral action (*'amal ṣaliḥ*), the Qur'an restores knowledge as an act of remembrance (*dhikr*) - a means of reuniting the human mind with its Creator.

This unified paradigm carries profound implications for the future of academia and civilisation. It calls for the emergence of a *tawḥidic university of knowledge* - an intellectual institution grounded in Qur'anic epistemology yet open to global collaboration, where disciplines communicate through the shared language of divine unity. It also urges a reevaluation of current curricula, research ethics, and knowledge production systems, to realign them with Qur'anic values of justice, balance, and truth.

### 22.8.8 Toward a Qur'anically Informed Future of Knowledge

The future of human knowledge, as envisioned in this study, depends on humanity's capacity to recover the sacred dimension of inquiry. The Qur'an invites a transformation of epistemic consciousness - from knowing for control to knowing for understanding, from consumption to stewardship, from fragmentation to integration. In this transformation, science becomes an act of humility, reason a path to devotion, and knowledge a reflection of divine mercy. The Qur'an's message, then, is not only theological but civilizational: to rebuild human thought upon the foundation of *tawḥid*, ensuring that the pursuit of knowledge serves life, justice, and the Creator.

In conclusion, the reconstruction of Islamic epistemology through the Qur'an marks not a nostalgic return to the past but a prophetic leap toward the future - a future where truth is one, knowledge is sacred, and the cosmos is read as a living sign of the Infinite. As the Qur'an declares: "*We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the Truth*" (Q. 41:53).

In that eternal unfolding of divine signs lies the true destiny of knowledge - *to know is to witness*, and to witness is to affirm the Unity of the Real.

## PART VII: QUR'ANIC EPISTEMOLOGY & MODERN RESEARCH METHODS

Modern research methodology is dominated by two broad families of inquiry-qualitative and quantitative approaches-each carrying its own philosophical assumptions about knowledge, truth, evidence, and reality. These approaches, shaped historically by Western epistemic traditions, continue to structure the academic disciplines in the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities. However, as global scholarship increasingly recognises the importance of epistemic plurality, the need to articulate non-Western, non-secular and revelation-centred epistemologies has become critical. Among these, the Qur'anic epistemic worldview offers an alternative paradigm grounded in metaphysical realism, ethical responsibility, and the unity of truth (*tawhīd*).

This chapter aims to establish a foundational dialogue between Qur'anic epistemology -as developed across the preceding parts of this manuscript -and contemporary methodological debates in academic research. It addresses a central question: How can Qur'anic concepts of knowledge, verification, and certainty serve as an epistemic framework within which qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research can be understood, evaluated, and integrated?

The Qur'anic discourse presents knowledge (علم, *ilm*) not merely as an accumulation of facts but as a holistic, moral, and spiritually oriented engagement with reality. Numerous verses position knowledge as illumination granted by God (Q. 2:32; 20:114), while the Qur'an also acknowledges the epistemic limits of human cognition- “*You have been given but little knowledge*” (Q. 17:85). This dual recognition underlies a fundamentally different ontology from secular modern methodologies, which often treat knowledge as a purely human construct or a neutral empirical outcome. In the Qur'anic worldview, knowledge originates from a transcendent source and unfolds within layers of creation, perception, and reflection.

The Qur'an articulates a dynamic structure of knowing that includes empirical observation (*nazar*, نظر), rational reflection (*tafakkur*, تفكر), textual-contextual contemplation (*tadabbur*, تدبر), remembrance and moral internalisation (*tadhakkur*, تذكر), verification (*burhan*, برهان; *bayyina*, بينة), and synthesis into wisdom (*hikmah*, حكمة). This epistemic cycle predates modern research methods by many centuries, and yet it parallels many of the fundamental commitments of contemporary inquiry, such as observation, analysis, verification, triangulation, and ethical accountability.

A significant gap exists between Qur'anic epistemology and the epistemological assumptions underlying positivism, post-positivism, interpretivism, constructivism, critical theory, and postmodernism. While modern research philosophies rely on human reasoning as the sole arbiter of truth, the Qur'an positions reasoning (عقل, *aql*) within a broader metaphysical order governed by divine truth (*al-haqq*, الحق) (Q. 10:32; 17:81). The Qur'an does not negate reason; rather, it integrates it within a hierarchy that harmonizes empirical evidence, logical argument, experiential insight, and spiritual intuition.

The methodological implications are profound. Qualitative methods prioritise subjective meaning, human experience, and interpretive engagement. These align strongly with Qur'anic commands to reflect (*yatacaffarun*) and contemplate deeply (Q. 3:191; 30:8). Quantitative methods prioritise measurement, structure, inference, and generalizability-concepts echoed in the Qur'anic language of balance (*mizan*, ميزان), proportion, measure, and calculation (*hisab*, حساب) in verses such as Q. 55:7-9 and Q. 72:8. Mixed-methods research, with its insistence on triangulating multiple forms of evidence, resonates with the Qur'anic sequence of *nazar* → *tafakkur* → *burhan* → *hikmah*.

Despite these deep resonances, mainstream methodology textbooks rarely engage with Qur'anic or Islamic epistemologies. Conversely, much contemporary Islamic scholarship discusses research methods without systematically integrating them into a Qur'anic epistemological structure. This results in a methodological gap that this Part seeks to fill. The objective is not to “Islamize” contemporary methods nor to replace them with a religious alternative, but rather to demonstrate that the Qur'an provides a meta-methodological foundation capable of guiding, grounding, and evaluating all methods of inquiry.

This Part therefore proposes a structured synthesis in which modern methods are read through a Qur'anic epistemic lens, focusing on:

- Ontology of knowledge: What is real? What is knowable? How is truth understood?
- Epistemic authority: Who/what validates knowledge-revelation, reason, experience?
- Methodological tools: How do Qur'anic categories map onto qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods?
- Ethical foundations: How do *taqwa* (تقوى), *adl* (عدل), and *amanah* (أمانة) shape research behaviour?
- Triangulation and verification: How does the Qur'an conceptualise validity?
- Applicability to contemporary sciences: How can this model reform or enrich current disciplines?

By focusing on the intersection between Qur'anic epistemology and modern methodological debates, this chapter provides a conceptual foundation for integrating traditional revelation-based approaches with contemporary research paradigms. It invites scholars across the disciplines to reconsider how research is conceptualised, conducted, and evaluated when placed within a Qur'anic framework that sees truth as unified, knowledge as morally charged, and inquiry as a sacred human responsibility.

## Chapter 23: Introduction - Qur’anic Epistemology and Modern Method Debates

### 23.1. Setting the Stage: The Need for an Epistemic Reset

Modern research methodology, whether in the natural, social, or humanities sciences, has been overwhelmingly shaped by Western intellectual history. From Enlightenment rationalism to positivist empiricism, from post-positivist falsificationism to interpretivist and constructivist critiques, the contemporary research landscape is deeply rooted in secular assumptions about the origins, nature, and limits of knowledge. These assumptions guide how knowledge is defined, how evidence is validated, how data is collected, and how truth claims are evaluated.

Yet, despite the sophistication of these methodological traditions, they share a common underlying epistemic belief: knowledge is fundamentally a human enterprise, produced through human reasoning, human experience, and human interpretation. This anthropocentric foundation contrasts sharply with the Qur’anic worldview, in which knowledge ( *ilm*, علم ) originates from God, whose truth ( *al-ḥaqq*, الحق ) is absolute, transcendent, and before human inquiry. The Qur’an repeatedly frames knowledge as a divine gift (Q. 2:31-32; 96:1-5), while also recognising the intrinsic limitations of human cognition (Q. 17:85).

The contemporary moment, characterised by epistemic fragmentation, methodological disagreements, and competing truth claims, has created an intellectual climate in which a Qur’anic epistemology is not merely desirable but necessary. As global academia increasingly acknowledges epistemic plurality and the limits of secular rationalism, there is a growing space for rethinking the foundations of research through non-Western frameworks, especially those grounded in revelation-based worldviews.

Against this backdrop, the present Part proposes an integrated structure that places Qur’anic epistemology in conversation with modern research methods. This is not an attempt to reject contemporary methodologies, nor an effort to “Islamize” them superficially. Rather, it aims to articulate a unified epistemic architecture that re-roots research within the Qur’anic conception of truth, verification, moral responsibility, and human purpose.

### 23.2. Qur’anic Epistemology: The Primacy of Revelation in Knowing

The Qur’an presents itself as *huda* (guidance), *mur* (light), *furqan* (criterion), and *bayan* (clarification), indicating that revelation (*wahy*, وحي ) is not external to epistemology but central to it. Unlike secular epistemologies, which locate the origins of knowledge in human reason and sensory data, the Qur’an grounds knowledge in divine disclosure—*God teaches man what he did not know* (Q. 96:5). This foundational principle shapes the entire Qur’anic worldview in three major ways:

### 23.2.1 Revelation defines the ontological structure of reality

Reality is not merely physical but layered: visible and invisible, material and metaphysical, temporal and eternal. This layered ontology means that valid knowledge must account for levels of existence that extend beyond empirical observation.

### 23.2.2 Human cognition is a tool, not a source

The Qur'an consistently affirms the dignity of intellect (*'aql*, عقل) while simultaneously marking its limitations. Revelation does not negate reason; it orients reason toward truth. Hence, reason functions properly only when it operates within the moral-spiritual horizon defined by revelation.

### 23.2.3 Observation, reason, and reflection are acts of worship

The Qur'an commands humans to observe the world (Q. 3:190-191), reflect on creation (Q. 30:8), and contemplate meaning (Q. 47:24). These are not merely cognitive acts but devotional ones. Knowledge is ultimately a form of gratitude and a means of recognising divine signs (*ayat*, آيات) embedded in the cosmos.

In this worldview, methodology is never value-neutral. It is embedded within a moral order where truth carries ethical weight and falsehood carries moral consequences (Q. 10:32; 17:81). The Qur'an, therefore, demands a methodology of accountability, not merely accuracy.

## 23.3 The Spectrum of Knowing in the Qur'an

The Qur'anic discourse reflects a multilayered epistemic structure that includes:

- Empirical observation (*nazar*, نظر)
- Rational analysis (*ta'aqqul*, تعقل)
- Contemplation (*tafakkur*, تفكر)
- Deep interpretive reflection (*tadabbur*, تدبر)
- Moral recollection (*tadhakkur*, تذكر)
- Verification and proof (*burhan*, برهان; *bayyina*, بينة)
- Wisdom (*hikmah*, حكمة)
- Certainty (*yaqin*, يقين)

This layered structure anticipates elements of modern qualitative and quantitative research while simultaneously transcending them by embedding them in a moral, metaphysical, and theological context. For example:

- Observation → Empirical data (quantitative)
- Interpretation → Thematic, narrative, phenomenological analysis (qualitative)
- Verification → Triangulation, falsification, corroboration
- Wisdom → The synthesis and application of knowledge
- Certainty → The highest level of epistemic realisation



Thus, Qur'anic epistemology is inherently mixed-method, though not in the contemporary sense. Rather, it integrates multiple pathways of knowing into one coherent epistemic arc.

### **23.4 The Rise of Modern Research Methodology: A Brief Survey**

To appreciate the relevance of a Qur'anic epistemic framework, it is necessary to understand the intellectual lineage of contemporary research methods.

#### **23.4.1 Positivist Roots (19th-early 20th century)**

The rise of positivism, associated with Comte, Mill, and later the Vienna Circle, positioned empirical observation and measurement as the only valid source of knowledge. Reality was treated as objective, stable, and quantifiable.

#### **23.4.2 Post-positivism (mid-20th century)**

Karl Popper's falsificationism challenged positivism by acknowledging the provisional nature of empirical knowledge. Still, truth remained a human-centred pursuit grounded in empirical logic.

#### **23.4.3 Interpretivism and Constructivism (20th century)**

Thinkers like Dilthey, Weber, Gadamer, and Berger & Luckmann argued that human experience and social reality cannot be measured like physical phenomena. Knowledge became understood as socially constructed and interpretively mediated.

#### **23.4.4 Critical theory and postmodern scepticism**

Critical theorists challenged dominant power structures and questioned objectivity, while postmodernism doubted the possibility of any universal truth. The result: epistemic fragmentation.

#### **23.4.5 Mixed-method integration (late 20th-21st century)**

Recognising the limits of purely quantitative or qualitative approaches, scholars proposed methodological pluralism. Triangulation sought greater validity by combining multiple data sources.

### **23.5. The Epistemological Tension: Human-Centred vs. Revelation-Centred Research**

While modern methodologies have matured, they remain grounded in a human-centred epistemology, where:

- truth emerges from observation and analysis,
- knowledge is a social construction,
- meaning is negotiated,
- and certainty is provisional.

Conversely, the Qur'anic perspective is revelation-centred, where:

- truth (*al-ḥaqq*) precedes human inquiry,
- knowledge is a moral trust (*amanah*),
- inquiry is a sacred duty,
- and certainty is achievable through a combination of reflection and divine guidance.

These differing epistemic commitments generate several tensions:

#### Tension 1 - Ontology

Secular science treats reality as material; the Qur'an treats it as multilayered.

#### Tension 2 - Authority

Secular research posits human reason as the arbiter of truth; Qur'anic epistemology assigns that role to divine revelation.

#### Tension 3 - Ethics

Secular methodologies claim neutrality; the Qur'an frames knowledge as morally charged and spiritually consequential.

#### Tension 4 - Purpose

Secular research often views knowledge as instrumental; Qur'anic epistemology views it as a pathway to righteousness (*ṣalāḥ*) and wisdom (*ḥikmah*).

These differences require not rejection but integration, so that contemporary methodologies can be brought into harmony with Qur'anic principles.

### 23.6. Why a Qur'anic Methodological Synthesis Is Essential

The contemporary landscape of global knowledge production stands at a moment of intellectual rupture. Scientific disciplines increasingly confront theoretical instability, ethical crises, and the limits of methodological paradigms shaped largely by post-Enlightenment secular assumptions. Social sciences face the fragmentation of truth into subjective narratives, while natural sciences wrestle with epistemic uncertainty in the face of quantum indeterminacy, cosmological puzzles, and ecological collapse. In this context, a Qur'anic methodological synthesis is not merely relevant-it is urgently necessary. The Qur'anic worldview, grounded in the unity (*tawḥid*) of truth, offers an integrated epistemic architecture that can address the fractures of contemporary research.

Three overarching global crises underscore this need: the crisis of truth, the crisis of ethics, and the crisis of purpose. Each reflects a deep structural problem in modern epistemology and directly aligns with dimensions the Qur'an explicitly addresses.

#### 23.6.1 The Crisis of Truth: Epistemic Fragmentation in Modern Knowledge

In both natural and social sciences, the modern era has witnessed what scholars refer to as “epistemic decentralisation”-the breakdown of universal truth frameworks. Postmodern thought challenged the idea

of objective truth, arguing instead that reality is constructed through language, power, and social negotiation. While such critiques exposed the biases embedded within positivist science, they also destabilised the foundations upon which knowledge itself rests.

The Qur'an, by contrast, repeatedly affirms the existence of *al-haqq*-a truth that is singular, stable, and not reducible to human perception (Q. 10:32; 17:81). Instead of denying empirical inquiry, the Qur'an embeds empirical observation within a metaphysical horizon. It affirms that the heavens and the earth are created "with truth" (*bi-l-haqq*, Q. 29:44), meaning that reality is inherently intelligible and coherent because it emanates from a divine source of order.

The Qur'anic framework, therefore, resolves the tension between objectivity and relativism. It accepts human fallibility (Q. 17:85) but anchors inquiry in a transcendent truth that does not depend on fluctuating human interpretations. Such anchoring is indispensable for contemporary research, which increasingly struggles to justify its truth-claims without external metaphysical grounding.

### 23.6.2. The Crisis of Ethics: The Need for Moral Accountability in Research

Modern research methodology, whether quantitative or qualitative, often claims neutrality. Positivism in particular relegated ethics to a secondary or external consideration, encouraging the belief that scientific findings are value-free. The consequences are visible across sectors:

- ecological exploitation justified for "development,"
- data manipulation driven by corporate or political interests,
- surveillance technologies developed without ethical limits,
- biomedical experimentation that compromises the dignity of life.

The Qur'an rejects the idea of value-neutral knowledge. Knowledge is always embedded in moral responsibility, and researchers are accountable not only to society but to God. The Qur'an repeatedly links knowledge to justice (*'adl*) (Q. 5:8), trust (*amanah*) (Q. 4:58), and God-consciousness (*taqwa*) (Q. 2:282; 96:1-5). These anchor research within a moral-spiritual horizon unavailable within secular epistemologies.

A Qur'anic methodological synthesis, therefore, restores ethics as intrinsic rather than peripheral to knowledge production. It situates research within a relational framework in which humans act as vicegerents (*khulafa'*, Q. 2:30), responsible for the well-being of creation. This moral dimension offers a corrective to the destructive tendencies of unfettered scientific and technological advancement.

### 23.6.3 The Crisis of Purpose: From Knowledge as Utility to Knowledge as Meaning

One of the defining features of modern research is its utilitarian orientation. Knowledge is pursued primarily for economic growth, technological expansion, or political advantage. Although these goals are not wrong in themselves, their dominance has led to the reduction of inquiry to productivity metrics, grant success, and institutional competition.

By contrast, the Qur'an situates knowledge within a framework of ultimate meaning. The purpose of inquiry is to recognise the signs of God (*ayat*) in the universe (Q. 3:190-191), cultivate wisdom (Q. 2:269), and fulfil the ethical responsibilities of human existence. Knowledge is thus not an instrument for domination but a pathway to spiritual and moral flourishing.

This shift from utility to meaning does not render knowledge impractical; rather, it elevates its purpose. A Qur'anic synthesis allows research to reclaim its humanistic and metaphysical dimensions, enabling disciplines to integrate existential concerns with empirical inquiry.

#### 23.6.4 Why a Qur'anic Synthesis Is a Forward-Looking Necessity

The need for Qur'anic methodological integration is often perceived as a historical or cultural project, but in reality, it is profoundly future-oriented. Three emerging trends illustrate this:

**The Rise of Multimethod and Mixed-Method Approaches:** Contemporary scholarship increasingly recognises that no single method captures the complexity of human and natural phenomena. The Qur'anic epistemology-uniting observation (*nazar*), reason (*'aql*), reflection (*tafakkur*), and verification (*tahqiq*)-offers a pre-modern but remarkably sophisticated mixed-method paradigm.

**The Recognition of Indigenous and Non-Western Epistemologies:** Global academia is opening space to methodologies rooted in local intellectual traditions. Islamic epistemology, with its rich philosophical and hermeneutic heritage, is well-positioned to contribute to this shift -provided its principles are rigorously articulated.

**The Growing Awareness of Metaphysics in Scientific Debates:** Quantum physics, cosmology, and neuroscience increasingly acknowledge that empirical data alone cannot answer fundamental questions about reality. The Qur'anic ontology, with its layered conception of existence, offers conceptual tools for interpreting these frontiers.

**The Qur'anic Synthesis as a Model for Methodological Pluralism:** A Qur'anic methodological synthesis does not reject modern methods. Instead, it:

- corrects their metaphysical gaps,
- supplements their ethical limitations,
- structures their application within a unified epistemic vision, and
- reorients research toward divine truth and human flourishing.

It allows quantitative methods to operate within a theistic conception of natural laws, and qualitative methods within a moral-spiritual analysis of meaning and experience. It also accommodates interdisciplinary approaches, where empirical and interpretive insights mutually enrich one another under the umbrella of divine truth.

**An Epistemic Imperative:** For Islam, epistemology is not an abstract philosophical inquiry but a living foundation of human purpose. The Qur'an repeatedly challenges humanity to "reflect," "observe," "understand," and "verify"-but always within a horizon defined by divine oneness, justice, and moral

accountability. Modern research methods, though valuable, cannot fully address the crises of truth, ethics, and purpose without this deeper anchoring.

A Qur'anic methodological synthesis is thus essential not merely for Muslim scholarship but for the global intellectual community seeking a coherent, ethically grounded, and metaphysically enriched framework for the future of human knowledge.

### 23.7 The Purpose of This Part of the Book

The purpose of this part of the book is to establish the intellectual foundations necessary for constructing a Qur'anic alternative to contemporary research methodology. The preceding sections have outlined the tensions, crises, and epistemic limitations present in modern qualitative and quantitative approaches. Yet critique alone is insufficient. What is required-and what this part seeks to provide-is a systematic articulation of how the Qur'an conceives knowledge, inquiry, verification, and intellectual responsibility. By clarifying these principles, this part becomes the bridge between the philosophical groundwork laid in earlier chapters and the practical methodological framework developed in the remainder of the book.

Specifically, this part aims to demonstrate that the Qur'an is not merely a source of spiritual guidance but also a coherent epistemological system with implications for how research is conducted, evaluated, and applied. It shows that Qur'anic epistemology is built on integrative principles-*wahy* (revelation), *'aql* (reason), *ayat* (signs), *taqwa* (moral consciousness), *'adl* (justice), and *amanah* (trust)-which together form a unified model of human knowing. This stands in contrast to the fragmented methodological paradigms of modern academia, where empirical, interpretive, and critical methods often operate in isolation.

By presenting the Qur'anic approach as both comprehensive and methodologically robust, this part prepares the reader to appreciate why a new synthesis is not only possible but necessary. It sets the conceptual stage for the detailed methodological proposals, discipline-specific applications, and future-oriented epistemic synthesis developed in later chapters. In doing so, it provides researchers, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, with a grounding that moves beyond inherited binaries between faith and reason, tradition and science, spiritual meaning and empirical observation.

Ultimately, the purpose of this part is to anchor the entire project of Qur'anic research methodology in its rightful epistemic soil: the conviction that knowledge is unified, purposeful, ethically bound, and oriented toward truth (*al-haqq*). Only by internalising this foundation can the subsequent methodological framework be meaningfully understood and responsibly implemented.

### 23.8. Structure of the Part

This Part consists of seven major sections:

- Introduction - Qur'anic Epistemology and Modern Debates
- The Ontology of Knowledge in the Qur'an vs. Modern Paradigms
- Qur'anic Foundations of Inquiry: Observation, Reflection, Verification

- Integrating Qur'anic Epistemology with Qualitative Research
- Integrating Qur'anic Epistemology with Quantitative Research
- Toward a Qur'anic Mixed-Method Model
- Conclusion - Toward a Revelation-Centred Methodology of the Future

Each section systematically builds toward a unified framework in which revelation, reason, and empirical investigation form a coherent whole.

### **23.9 Toward a New Era of Qur'anic Methodology**

Modern research methods have produced extraordinary scientific and social insights, but they also suffer from fragmentation, ethical instability, and metaphysical blindness. A Qur'anic epistemological framework offers a way to re-root human inquiry within a unified ontological vision and a moral-spiritual horizon.

This Introduction sets the stage for a deeper engagement-philosophical, methodological, and practical-between the Qur'anic worldview and contemporary research paradigms. By articulating how revelation, reason, experience, and ethics integrate into a coherent epistemic structure, this Part establishes the framework necessary for methodological renewal.

The Qur'an does not call humanity merely to “study” creation. It commands a profound engagement with reality that unites intellect, morality, spirituality, and purpose, forming the foundation of a holistic research methodology capable of guiding human civilisation toward truth, justice, and flourishing.

## Chapter 24 Ontology of Knowledge: Qur'an vs Modern Paradigms

### 24.1 Ontology, Truth, and the Foundations of Knowing

The question of *what exists* and *how reality is known* lies at the heart of every epistemological tradition. In the modern academy, ontology is often treated as the philosophical study of being, while epistemology is regarded as the study of knowledge and its justification. The Qur'anic worldview, however, does not separate these domains artificially. Instead, it advances an integrated structure in which *ontology grounds epistemology*, and *epistemology reveals ontology*. Knowing emerges from being because reality itself is constituted by the will, command, and signs (*ayat*) of Allah. Thus, the Qur'an establishes the principle that *truth is not merely discovered* - it is *disclosed, signified, and structured* by the Creator. Knowledge, therefore, requires both the cognitive capacity of the human being (*'aql*) and the metaphysical clarity furnished through revelation (*wahy*).

Modern knowledge paradigms, especially those influenced by post-Enlightenment rationalism and empiricism, tend to treat the universe as an autonomous physical system governed by impersonal laws. The Qur'an, by contrast, describes the cosmos as a deliberate, meaningful, and intelligible creation - a reality in which physical order reflects metaphysical purpose. The Qur'an asserts, "*Allah is the Creator of all things*" (Q. 39:62), grounding existence itself in divine intentionality. Every element of creation, from the "*heavens and the earth*" (Q. 3:190) to the "*alternation of night and day*" (Q. 2:164), functions not only as a physical phenomenon but as an epistemic sign (*ayah*) meant to guide the human intellect toward truth.

At the same time, the Qur'an rejects epistemic arrogance - the assumption that reason alone can reach certainty without metaphysical grounding. It declares: "*Of knowledge, you have been given only a little*" (Q. 17:85), indicating both the finitude of human cognition and the necessity of revealed guidance. Yet this is not an invitation to anti-intellectualism; rather, it establishes the limits within which inquiry must proceed. Modern epistemologies often assume neutrality or value-free inquiry, but the Qur'an does not recognise a separation between facts and values. Ontology is intrinsically moral. Truth carries ethical consequences because knowing is a form of responsibility (*amanah*). To misinterpret, distort, or conceal truth constitutes *ẓulm* (injustice), not merely epistemic error.

Thus, the Qur'an advances a unified ontological-epistemic model built on three foundational propositions:

- Reality is purposeful and divinely structured - nothing exists without meaning, law, or teleology.
- Knowledge is the human response to divine signs - perception, reflection, and reasoning are modes of engaging with the created order.
- Revelation is the criterion of truth - ensuring that human inquiry remains aligned with metaphysical reality.



This chapter explores these foundations by contrasting the Qur'anic ontology of knowledge with the dominant paradigms of the contemporary academy. It argues that the fragmentation of modern science - empiricism separated from metaphysics, facts separated from values, and reason isolated from purpose - has produced epistemological systems that are technically powerful yet spiritually and ethically anaemic. The Qur'an proposes an alternative: an ontology in which knowing is inseparable from being, meaning, and responsibility.

Section 24.2 examines the Qur'anic ontology of knowledge as rooted in divine reality (*al-haqq*). Section 24.3 analyses how the Qur'an constructs an integrated epistemic structure based on *ayat*, *'aql*, *fitrah*, and *wahy*. Section 24.4 contrasts this model with modern ontologies - naturalism, materialism, and methodological secularism. Section 24.5 then evaluates the consequences of these divergent models for the methods, ethics, and aims of human inquiry.

The goal is not to reject modern scientific insight but to situate it within a broader metaphysical grounding that restores unity to the act of knowing. Through this comparative analysis, the chapter demonstrates why a Qur'anic ontology of knowledge is indispensable for reconstructing an Islamic epistemological framework capable of engaging contemporary intellectual challenges without surrendering to the philosophical assumptions of modernity.

## 24.2 Ontology as the Foundation of Method

Every research methodology-whether scientific, social-scientific, philosophical, or theological- rests upon an underlying ontology. Ontology determines what “exists,” what counts as “real,” and therefore what is considered “knowable.” Modern scientific methodologies usually proceed from a naturalist or empiricist ontology in which observable, measurable, and material phenomena are the primary locus of reality (Bunge, 2018). By contrast, many qualitative research traditions assume a constructivist ontology in which reality is socially mediated and contingent on interpretation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In both cases, method follows ontology: what one believes the world to be determines how one studies it.

The Qur'an presents a fundamentally different ontology-one that cannot be reduced to naturalism, materialism, idealism, or constructivism. The Qur'anic ontology of knowledge is tawhīdic, meaning that it locates all existence within the unity, authorship, and oneness (*tawhīd*) of Allah. In this ontology, the world is not self-generated nor independent; rather, it is *ayah*-sign, symbol, and communicative medium, revealing its Creator. Knowledge is thus inseparable from ontology because the act of knowing is itself an encounter with divine signs. The Qur'an repeatedly states that creation has been established “in truth” (*bi-l-haqq*, Q. 29:44), that “to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth” (*lahu mulku al-samawati wa al-ard*, Q. 57:2), and that every phenomenon is embedded within purposeful design (*bi-qadar*, Q. 54:49).

To understand what the Qur'an means by *ilm* (knowledge), *haqq* (truth), and *yaqin* (certainty), one must first understand the Qur'anic ontology of existence. Ontology is not abstract metaphysics; it determines the methods by which knowledge is to be acquired, verified, and applied. Because modern research relies

on ontologies that often marginalise or ignore metaphysical dimensions, a methodological synthesis rooted in Qur'anic ontology offers an alternative that is both comprehensive and spiritually coherent.

This section aims to articulate the Qur'anic ontology of knowledge in a systematic form, suitable for dialogue with contemporary methodological debates. It examines foundational Qur'anic categories: divine authorship of existence, the created world as signs, the relationship between the seen and the unseen, the structure of human perception, and the ethical nature of reality. It then highlights how these ontological commitments shape the Qur'anic expectations for epistemic inquiry. In this way, Qur'anic ontology becomes the foundation for a distinct research paradigm—one not reducible to qualitative or quantitative models, but capable of engaging both from a position of epistemic integrity.

### 24.3 The Ontological Primacy of Allah (Allah) as the Source of All Knowledge

The Qur'anic ontology begins with the affirmation that Allah is the sole, ultimate reality—the Absolute (*al-Ḥaqq*, Q. 22:6), the Originator (*al-Badi'*, Q. 2:117), and the One who “teaches” all knowledge (Q. 96:4-5). This ontological foundation establishes a unique epistemic principle: all knowledge originates from Divine will and disclosure. Human beings cannot generate or own knowledge independently; they merely receive, interpret, and apply what is made available through creation and revelation. The Qur'an states: *“He created all things and is Knowing of everything.”* (Q. 6:101)

The ontological structure here is clear: creation is derivative, contingent, and dependent; divine knowledge is primary, absolute, and exhaustive. Because Allah is the Creator of both the observable and the invisible dimensions of reality, the Qur'an affirms that knowledge cannot be limited to material phenomena alone: *“He knows the unseen and the seen.”* (Q. 59:22)

Epistemology, therefore, must be grounded in an ontology that recognises both dimensions. Modern scientific ontology, which restricts knowledge to empirically detectable phenomena, contrasts sharply with this comprehensive Qur'anic vision. Even qualitative and constructivist ontologies, which emphasise interpretation and meaning, remain within human-centred conceptual frameworks that lack an anchoring metaphysical source.

By contrast, the Qur'anic ontology asserts that the unseen (*al-ghayb*) is objectively real, not metaphorical. It is part of the structure of existence, and therefore part of the structure of knowledge. The Qur'an praises the believers as those: *“who believe in the unseen (al-ghayb)...”* (Q. 2:3)

Belief in the unseen is not anti-rational; it is a recognition that reality extends beyond sensory limits. This ontological principle has direct methodological implications: valid knowledge cannot be confined to empirical data alone.

### 24.4 The Created Universe as Communicative Reality: The Ontology of Signs (Ayat)

One of the most distinctive features of Qur'anic ontology is its portrayal of the cosmos as a semiotic structure: every part of creation is an *ayah*, a sign. This framing appears hundreds of times across the

Qur'an (Izutsu, 2002). Signs are ontological markers; they point beyond themselves toward divine purpose, wisdom, and unity.

Examples include:

- Natural phenomena: *"In the alternation of night and day... are signs"* (Q. 3:190).
- Cosmological structures: *"And We built the heaven with power"* (Q. 51:47).
- Biological processes: *"And in yourselves-will you not see?"* (Q. 51:21).
- History and civilisation: *"Travel through the earth and observe..."* (Q. 30:42).

In modern scientific ontology, nature is primarily matter-energy governed by physical laws. In Qur'anic ontology, nature is a text-a system of signs requiring interpretation. This does not negate empiricism; rather, it transforms it. Observing the world is not merely sensory measurement; it is interpretive engagement with divine communication. Thus, the Qur'anic method emphasises:

- *nazar* (attentive observation),
- *tafakkur* (analytical contemplation),
- *tadabbur* (deep reflection),
- *tadhakkur* (moral remembrance),
- *taḥqiq* (verification).

These methodological categories derive directly from the Qur'anic ontology: a world composed of signs requires an interpretive method of reading those signs.

In contrast, qualitative and quantitative methods treat phenomena as data, not divine communication. Where the Qur'an sees meaning, modern methods often see only description or measurement. This ontological difference leads to divergent epistemic practices.

### 24.5 The Seen (Shahadah) and the Unseen (Ghayb): Dual-Aspect Ontology

The Qur'an distinguishes between the seen world (al-shahadah) and the unseen world (al-ghayb), not as separate realities but as two dimensions of one unified creation. This dual-aspect ontology expands the scope of knowledge beyond what is empirically accessible. Key verses: *"He is Knower of the unseen and the seen."* (Q. 59:22) *"You have been given knowledge only a little."* (Q. 17:85)

These verses underscore human cognitive limits within a vast ontological structure. No epistemology that ignores metaphysical reality can be fully adequate. Modern scientific ontology, by restricting itself to physical phenomena, deals with only one aspect of existence.

In qualitative methodology, the "unseen" might be analogised to subjective experience or tacit meaning, but this is not the Qur'anic *ghayb*. The Qur'anic unseen includes metaphysical realities (e.g., angels, divine decrees, resurrection), which cannot be constructed through social consensus or phenomenology.

Thus, a Qur'anic ontology requires a methodology capable of integrating:

- empirical observation,

- rational analysis,
- revealed knowledge,
- ethical-moral cognition,
- metaphysical awareness.

This integrated model differs fundamentally from dominant Western methodologies.

## 24.6 Human Nature (Fitrah) and the Ontology of Cognition

The Qur'an describes human beings as created with an innate disposition (*fitrah*) aligned with truth: "*the fitrah of Allah upon which He created humanity*" (Q. 30:30)

Fitrah is an ontological constant-an embedded structure within human consciousness enabling recognition of signs, perception of meaning, and responsiveness to moral truth. This differs from modern constructivist ontology, which views cognition as socially constructed rather than inherently oriented toward truth. Moreover, the Qur'an emphasises that humans possess multiple cognitive faculties:

- qalb (heart-intellect)-moral cognition (Q. 22:46)
- aql (reasoning)-rational processing (Q. 3:190)
- baṣar (sight)-sensory perception (Q. 67:23)
- sam' (hearing)-reception of discourse (Q. 2:171)

These faculties form an epistemic ecology-a multi-dimensional cognitive system operating within a divinely-designed ontological structure. Modern epistemology tends to isolate or privilege certain faculties (e.g., reason in rationalism, sense-perception in empiricism), but the Qur'anic ontology mandates integrative cognition.

Thus, the Qur'anic ontology of knowledge is inseparable from a Qur'anic anthropology of the human knower.

## 24.7 Ontology as Ethical: The Moral Structure of Reality

Unlike Western metaphysics, which often separates ontology from ethics, the Qur'an presents reality as morally configured. Truth (*ḥaqq*) and falsehood (*baṭil*) are not conceptual abstractions; they are ontological categories: "*That is because Allah is the Truth, and what they call upon besides Him is falsehood.*" (Q. 22:62)

Thus, truth and falsehood exist as objective qualities *in* reality. Knowledge, therefore, is inherently moral. One cannot isolate methodological rigour from ethical responsibility. This differs significantly from modern scientific ontology, which treats reality as value-neutral and separates fact from value.

In Qur'anic ontology, knowledge is always linked to moral accountability: "*Do not pursue that of which you do not know.*" (Q. 17:36)

This ontological moralization of knowledge has profound methodological consequences. It implies that the method cannot be purely technical; it must be ethical.

## 24.8 Implications of Qur'anic Ontology for Research Methodology

The Qur'anic ontology of knowledge generates several methodological implications:

- Multi-dimensional epistemology: Empirical observation is necessary but insufficient. Interpretation, reflection, revelation, and ethical discernment are also epistemically required.
- Integration of metaphysical and physical realities: The unseen is part of reality and thus part of the epistemic domain.
- Moral accountability embedded in method: Methodological rigour requires ethical rigour; misuse of knowledge is ontologically deviant.
- The cosmos as text: Natural phenomena must be read, not merely measured.
- Revelation as epistemic anchor: Revelation defines the limits, purposes, and hierarchies of knowledge.

The Qur'anic ontology of knowledge offers a comprehensive metaphysical foundation for a distinctive research methodology. Unlike naturalist, constructivist, or rationalist ontologies, the Qur'anic model integrates divine authorship, cosmic signification, metaphysical dimensions, human cognitive structure, and moral order. As the foundation of the new Part VII, this ontological framework prepares the ground for a rigorous, Qur'anic critique of contemporary methods and the development of a synthesised model of inquiry capable of engaging qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method approaches through a tawhīdic lens.

## Chapter 25: Modern Ontologies of Knowledge

### 25.1 Why Modern Ontologies Matter for Qur'anic Method Debates

Any meaningful dialogue between the Qur'anic research tradition and contemporary epistemological frameworks requires a careful examination of the ontological assumptions underlying modern scientific and human-scientific methods. Research methods-qualitative, quantitative, or mixed- are not neutral techniques; they are built upon specific conceptions of what exists and therefore what counts as knowledge. These conceptions are often implicit, absorbed through academic training and institutional norms rather than explicitly stated. As such, they shape inquiry long before data collection begins.

Modern epistemology has developed through a series of philosophical shifts: naturalism, empiricism, rationalism, positivism, post-positivism, interpretivism, phenomenology, constructivism, and critical theory. Each of these movements carries a distinct ontology: a claim about what constitutes reality and how human beings access it. These ontologies influence contemporary methodological practice across sciences, social sciences, humanities, and interdisciplinary fields.

For a Qur'anic research methodology to engage the modern academy meaningfully, it must understand these ontological positions, evaluate their assumptions, identify their strengths and limitations, and determine how they align or conflict with a tawhīdic epistemology. Without this critical engagement, any proposed synthesis between Qur'anic methods and modern research paradigms risks superficiality or incoherence. Thus, this section systematically analyses major modern ontologies and contrasts them with the Qur'anic worldview developed.

### 25.2 Naturalism and Materialism: The Dominant Scientific Ontology

#### 25.2.1 Core Claim

In modern science, naturalism-especially methodological naturalism is the prevailing ontological assumption: only natural, physical, and material entities are considered real, measurable, and therefore accessible to knowledge (Bunge, 2018; Ladyman & Ross, 2007).

Under this ontology:

- Reality = matter + energy.
- Knowledge = measurement + observation.
- Causation = physical and deterministic.
- Method = experimentation + mathematical modelling.

Naturalism excludes metaphysical or transcendent entities not because they are disproven but because they lie outside the scope of the method's self-imposed limits.

### 25.2.2 Consequences for Methodology

Because naturalism restricts reality to the physical:

- Empirical verification is the highest (and often only) criterion of truth.
- Cosmology, biology, physics, and neuroscience treat the universe as self-contained.
- Consciousness is explained materially (neural patterns), not metaphysically.
- Purpose, meaning, and value are considered human projections, not ontological qualities.

This directly contrasts with the Qur'anic ontology, in which: *“To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth”* (Q. 57:2) *and in which creation is intrinsically purposeful (bi-l-ḥaqq, Q. 29:44).*

### 25.2.3 Limits of Naturalist Ontology

Naturalism successfully explains material processes but fails to account for:

- abstract entities (values, ethics, meaning),
- consciousness and self-awareness,
- metaphysical realities,
- moral obligations,
- purpose in creation,
- non-empirical knowledge.

The Qur'an, by contrast, integrates all these into a unified ontology.

## 25.3 Empiricism and Positivism: “To Know Is to Measure”

### 25.3.1 Empiricist Foundations

Empiricism holds that sense perception is the primary source of knowledge (Locke, Hume). Positivism extends this view by asserting that only observable and measurable phenomena are meaningful (Comte, 1853). This ontology dominated science for centuries and still shapes quantitative research.

### 25.3.2 Ontological Commitments

Empiricism assumes:

- The external world is stable, objective, and measurable.
- Only sensory data provide reliable knowledge.
- Reality is reducible to observable components.
- Anything not empirically verifiable is epistemically irrelevant.

This conflicts with the Qur'anic recognition of:

- *al-ghayb* (unseen reality),
- metaphysical causation,
- moral ontology,



- purpose in creation.

### 25.3.3 Epistemic Strengths and Weaknesses

#### Strengths

- High reliability, replicability.
- Strong predictive power.
- Effective in natural sciences.

#### Weaknesses

- Reduction of complex realities to quantifiable variables.
- Exclusion of qualitative, phenomenological, or spiritual experiences.
- Blindness to metaphysical truths.

Empirical power does not equal epistemic totality.

## 25.4 Rationalism and Intellectualism: “To Know Is to Reason”

### 25.4.1 Rationalist Assumptions

Rationalism asserts that reason, not sensory experience, is the primary source of knowledge (Descartes; Kant's transcendental idealism).

Ontology here is mind-centred:

- The structure of thought shapes the structure of reality.
- Universal truths are accessible through logic and a priori reasoning.

### 25.4.2 Qur'anic Convergence and Divergence

The Qur'an repeatedly invites human beings to use '*aql* (reason), but:

- reason is not autonomous,
- Revelation is necessary for ultimate truths,
- metaphysical realities cannot be reached by reason alone.

*“They reflect upon the creation of the heavens and the earth...”* (Q. 3:191)

Reason is a tool, but not a source of ontology.

### 25.4.3 Limits of Rationalist Ontology

- Over-intellectualisation of reality.
- Disconnection from empirical observation.
- Inability to address moral and metaphysical truths.

Thus, rationalism alone cannot form a complete epistemology.

## 25.5 Constructivist and Interpretivist Ontologies: “Reality Is Constructed”

### 25.5.1 Core Claim

Constructivism asserts:

- Reality is not “out there”; it is constructed through social interactions.
- Different groups construct different “truths.”
- Knowledge is shaped by culture, language, and power relations.

This dominates qualitative research traditions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### 25.5.2 Ontological Implications

- Multiple realities (*relativism*).
- No single objective truth.
- Knowledge = meaning-making processes.

### 25.5.3 Qur’anic Response

The Qur’an affirms:

- A single, objective truth (*al-ḥaqq*) (Q. 10:32).
- Knowledge grounded in divine reality, not social construction.
- Reality independent of human interpretation.

While the Qur’an acknowledges differing perspectives, it does not grant them ontological equivalence.

### 25.5.4 Constructivism’s Strengths and Weaknesses

#### Strengths

- Sensitivity to context, meanings, cultures.
- Recognition of human subjectivity.

#### Weaknesses

- Relativism undermines truth claims.
- Ethics become subjective.
- Contradicts any revelation-centred ontology.

## 25.6 Critical Theory and Postmodern Ontologies: “Truth Is Power”

### 25.6.1 Ontological Commitments

Critical theory, poststructuralism, and postmodernism view:

- Truth as socially constructed by power.

- Knowledge as ideological.
- Reality as fluid, unstable, contested.

This influences research in sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies.

### 25.6.2 Qur'anic Critique

The Qur'an acknowledges unjust power structures (*ẓulm*, Q. 10:44) but insists on:

- objective truth (Q. 17:81),
- moral reality (Q. 91:7-10),
- epistemic accountability (Q. 17:36).

Postmodern denial of truth is incompatible with a Qur'anic ontology rooted in *tawḥīd* and *ḥaqq*.

## 25.7 Modern Plural Ontologies: Fragmentation of Reality

Contemporary academia is divided between multiple ontologies:

- naturalist (laboratory sciences),
- constructivist (qualitative research),
- critical (cultural studies),
- computationalist (data science),
- phenomenological (psychology),
- emergentist (complex systems).

Each discipline treats “reality” differently. Modern science is not unified; it is ontologically fragmented. This fragmentation is foreign to the Qur'an, which insists that all reality is unified under *tawḥīd*: “*He created all things and proportioned them*” (Q. 25:2).

A Qur'anic ontology, therefore, provides a unifying metaphysical foundation absent in modern paradigms.

## 25.8 Comparative Synthesis: Qur’anic vs. Modern Ontologies

| Ontology              | View of Reality      | Source of Knowledge              | Status of Metaphysics | Status of Ethics | Qur’anic Assessment     |
|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| Naturalism            | Physical-material    | Empirical observation            | Excluded              | Non-essential    | Too narrow              |
| Empiricism/Positivism | Observable phenomena | Measurement                      | Rejected              | Irrelevant       | Incomplete              |
| Rationalism           | Mental/A priori      | Reason                           | Limited               | Abstract         | Useful but limited      |
| Constructivism        | Socially constructed | Interpretation                   | Subjective            | Relative         | Contradicts <i>haqq</i> |
| Critical/Postmodern   | Power-discourse      | Deconstruction                   | Denied                | Politicized      | Rejects truth           |
| Qur’anic Ontology     | Divine creation      | Revelation + reason + experience | Essential             | Central          | Comprehensive           |

## 25.9 Why Modern Ontologies Are Insufficient for Qur’anic Methodology

Modern ontologies-whether naturalist, rationalist, constructivist, or postmodern -each illuminate an aspect of reality but fail to provide a comprehensive epistemic foundation. They either restrict reality to the material, elevate human reason above revelation, reduce truth to social construction, or deny the objective existence of truth altogether. In contrast, the Qur’anic ontology integrates:

- metaphysical and physical reality,
- signs in nature and signs in revelation,
- reason and intuition,
- empirical observation and moral accountability.

It provides a unified metaphysical structure capable of grounding a distinctive research methodology.

Chapter 26 will therefore examine how these ontological assumptions shape modern research methods and how a Qur’anic reinterpretation can address methodological gaps in contemporary qualitative and quantitative approaches.

## Chapter 26: Qur'anic Epistemology and Qualitative Research

### 26.1 Why Qualitative Research Requires a Qur'anic Reframing

Modern qualitative research emerged historically as a response to the limitations of positivist science, which often reduced human experience to measurable variables, statistical models, and predictive frameworks. In contrast, qualitative inquiry sought to recover meaning, intention, interpretation, subjectivity, and context-dimensions without which human behaviour cannot be adequately understood. Yet, despite this shift away from positivism, the methodological philosophies that underlie qualitative research remain deeply embedded in Western epistemological assumptions (Schwandt, 2015). These assumptions include the belief that meaning is socially constructed, truth is plural and relative, interpretation is human-centred, and moral evaluation is external to the research process.

A Qur'anic epistemology challenges these assumptions not by rejecting qualitative inquiry but by re-grounding it in a different ontology of truth, a different concept of interpretation, and a different conception of the human knower. The Qur'an repeatedly emphasises that human understanding emerges through reflection (*tafakkur*), deep analysis (*tadabbur*), ethical memory (*tadhakkur*), and insightful comprehension (*fiqh*)-four cognitive instruments that map remarkably well onto major currents in modern qualitative research, such as hermeneutics, grounded theory, phenomenology, and thematic analysis.

This chapter argues that qualitative research, far from being foreign to Islamic thought, aligns naturally with the Qur'anic vision of knowledge. The Qur'an demands introspection, ethical engagement, contextual interpretation, and meaning-making. It requires the researcher to cultivate moral responsibility, humility, and intellectual sincerity. It also insists on empirical attentiveness to human behaviour, social relations, natural phenomena, and historical events. All of these elements are central to qualitative inquiry.

The distinction, however, lies in epistemic grounding. Modern qualitative research often assumes that knowledge emerges exclusively from human interpretation. The Qur'an, by contrast, positions interpretation within a theocentric epistemic frame, where human inquiry is part of a larger divine architecture of meaning-an architecture structured around guidance, moral order, and ultimate accountability. Thus, qualitative interpretation is not free-floating; it is anchored in the recognition that human beings interpret signs (*ayat*) embedded in nature, society, and scripture.

#### 26.1.1 The Qur'anic View of Human Experience as Epistemic Data

Qualitative research values human experience as a primary source of data. The Qur'an goes further: it treats human experience as a divinely structured field of epistemic signs. The alternation of night and day is presented as a sign *“for a people who take heed”* (Q. 24:44). The diversity of human languages and cultures is described as *“among His signs”* (Q. 30:22). Social interactions, moral failures, historical trajectories, and psychological states are all positioned as objects of reflection.

This is not simply an invitation to observe; it is an invitation to interpret phenomena through patterns of meaning that reflect divine intentionality. Qualitative research, especially phenomenology and symbolic interactionism, seeks meaning through lived experience. The Qur'an similarly commands the believer to read the world hermeneutically, not merely empirically.

### 26.1.2 Interpretation as an Ethical Act in the Qur'an

In modern qualitative research, interpretation is often framed as a neutral human activity, free of metaphysical commitments. In the Qur'an, by contrast, interpretation is both cognitive and moral. Meaning-making requires purification of intention (ikhlas), fairness ('adl), and truthfulness (sidq). The Qur'an repeatedly warns against interpretive distortion, selective reading, or projecting one's desires onto texts and events (Q. 2:78; 4:135; 45:23).

This moral dimension does not restrict research; it elevates it. A Qur'anic qualitative methodology demands reflexivity, honesty about one's assumptions, and accountability for interpretive claims. These are core values in modern qualitative inquiry as well, but the Qur'an grounds them in a higher ethical and metaphysical purpose.

### 26.1.3 Why This Chapter is Needed

Most existing literature on Islamic research methodology either merely applies Western qualitative frameworks to Muslim contexts or repeats classical jurisprudential methodologies without interfacing with contemporary research philosophy. This chapter seeks to fill this gap by:

- Identifying the Qur'anic cognitive instruments that parallel qualitative methods.
- Demonstrating how Qur'anic epistemology justifies and strengthens qualitative inquiry.
- Showing how qualitative methodologies can be reconstructed using Qur'anic hermeneutical principles.
- Establishing an integrated framework for future Muslim researchers that is academically rigorous and scripturally grounded.

Thus, this chapter contributes a new methodological paradigm: Qur'anic Qualitative Epistemology (QQE), rooted in divine ontology, ethical interpretation, and human experience as sign-structured reality.

## 26.2 The Qur'anic Cognitive Instruments of Qualitative Inquiry

The Qur'an identifies several cognitive instruments that together constitute an epistemic framework remarkably aligned with qualitative inquiry. These are tafakkur, tadabbur, tadhakkur, and fiqh. Each conveys a specific mode of meaning-making and interpretive engagement.

### 26.2.1 Tafakkur (Analytical Reflection)

Tafakkur appears in multiple Qur'anic contexts as an exhortation to analyse, infer, and critically reflect. Those "who reflect (yatafakkarun)" are praised for engaging in a form of reasoning that moves beyond surface observation (Q. 3:191). The verse describes individuals who contemplate creation, cosmic order, and divine purpose. This is not passive contemplation; it is an active, interpretive, inferential process.

Qualitative methods such as grounded theory coding, analytic memoing, and thematic interpretation operate on similar principles: they seek patterns, connections, and conceptual structures emerging from observed data. Tafakkur thus establishes a Qur'anic precedent for inductive and interpretive reasoning.

### 26.2.2 Tadabbur (Deep Reflection on Texts)

Tadabbur is specifically linked to engagement with the Qur'anic text. The command: "*Do they not deeply reflect (yatadabbarun) on the Qur'an?*" (Q. 47:24) frames interpretation as a process requiring depth, patience, contextual awareness, and analytical rigour.

Modern qualitative hermeneutics emphasises similar skills: familiarity with context, sensitivity to linguistic nuance, iterative reading, and interpretive humility. Tadabbur integrates these elements within a theocentric framework in which textual meaning is neither arbitrary nor purely constructed but emerges through disciplined reflection guided by moral integrity and openness to divine guidance.

### 26.2.3 Tadhakkur (Ethical-Experiential Remembering)

Tadhakkur is a cognitive-moral process through which the interpreter recalls moral truths and experiences them existentially. The Qur'an states that God "*makes the signs clear for a people who remember*" (Q. 24:44). This form of recollection is experiential, similar to phenomenological reflection in qualitative research. It requires the interpreter to place themselves within the field of meaning and retrieve lessons from experience.

Thus, tadhakkur forms the Qur'anic foundation for phenomenology, narrative analysis, and experience-based interpretation.

### 26.2.4 Fiqh (Deep Understanding and Discernment)

While later Islamic thought used *fiqh* to refer to jurisprudence, the Qur'anic usage is broader. It refers to a deep comprehension of realities-social, moral, spiritual, and empirical. The Qur'an expresses concern that certain communities "*do not understand (yafqahun)*" (Q. 9:122). Here, *fiqh* is not legal reasoning but interpretive insight grounded in ethical cognition. Fiqh, therefore, corresponds to:

- qualitative interpretive analysis,
- discernment of patterns,
- meaning reconstruction, and
- understanding complex human and social phenomena.

It is the Qur'anic counterpart to hermeneutical depth.

## 26.3 Qur'anic Hermeneutics and the Foundations of Qualitative Interpretation

Hermeneutics, broadly understood as the theory and method of interpretation, is central to qualitative research. Whether in phenomenology, grounded theory, symbolic interactionism, or ethnography, the act of interpretation lies at the heart of qualitative inquiry. The Qur'an, although revealed in a pre-modern context, contains a remarkably sophisticated hermeneutical structure, one that resonates strongly with



modern interpretive methodologies while providing a theocentrically grounded epistemological framework.

This section demonstrates how Qur'anic hermeneutics forms an interpretive model that can guide qualitative research in the social sciences, humanities, and applied disciplines. It argues that the Qur'an:

- Presents interpretation as a moral epistemic act.
- Establishes multi-level meaning structures analogous to qualitative depth analysis.
- Insists on contextual, linguistic, and purposive reading, core elements of responsible qualitative interpretation.
- Requires reflexivity, humility, and awareness of cognitive bias principles foundational in modern qualitative scholarship.
- Frames the world itself as an interpretable field of signs (ayat), thereby extending hermeneutics beyond textual analysis to social and natural phenomena.

### 26.3.1 The Qur'anic Hermeneutical Imperative

The Qur'an does not merely allow interpretation; it commands it. The clearest articulation appears in Qur'an: *"Do they not deeply reflect (yatadabbarun) upon the Qur'an?"* (Q. 47:24)

This verse establishes tadabbur as a religious obligation-one that demands careful analysis, contextual engagement, and intellectual humility. The Qur'an negates superficial reading and calls for a deeper methodological process. Qualitative research exhibits the same demand: its methods reject surface-level description and require immersion, pattern recognition, iterative coding, and multi-layered interpretation (Schwandt, 2015).

Thus, the Qur'anic imperative of tadabbur parallels the methodological imperative of qualitative inquiry: go beyond what is immediately visible, seek meaning, and reconstruct the interpretive structure embedded within phenomena.

### 26.3.2 Interpretation as an Ethical Responsibility

Unlike most modern hermeneutical models, which frame interpretation as an intellectually autonomous act, the Qur'an positions interpretation within an ethical horizon. Misinterpretation is not merely a methodological error; it is a moral failure rooted in bias, desire, or intellectual injustice. The Qur'an describes individuals who distort meaning due to internal inclinations: *"Have you seen the one who takes his desire as his god?"* (Q. 45:23)

This verse can be read as a warning against cognitive distortion-the projection of one's impulses onto the data or text. The Qur'an repeatedly commands fairness ('adl), honesty (ṣidq), and freedom from bias (hawa) in all judgments, including epistemic judgments. This aspect resonates deeply with qualitative research's emphasis on reflexivity, that is, awareness of the researcher's positionality, assumptions, and interpretive tendencies (Finlay, 2012).

In Qur'anic terms, reflexivity becomes an ethical discipline:

- intention must be purified (ikhlas),
- interpretation must be fair (qist),
- bias must be controlled, and
- conclusions must follow evidence rather than desire.

Thus, Qur'anic hermeneutics integrates moral accountability into the interpretive process—a dimension often missing in secular qualitative methodology but essential for ensuring intellectual integrity.

### 26.3.3 The Multilayered Structure of Qur'anic Meaning

The Qur'an presents itself as a text containing layers of meaning accessible through graduated levels of analysis. For example: *“These are the clear signs of the Book.”* (Q. 15:1) *“A Book whose verses are perfected and then explained.”* (Q. 11:1)

The Qur'anic claim of being “explained” (*fussilat*) suggests a structured architecture of meaning. The classical Islamic concept of *zahir* (surface meaning) and *batin* (depth meaning) aligns with modern hermeneutical distinctions between:

- description vs. interpretation,
- first-order vs. second-order constructs,
- manifest vs. latent meaning,
- emic vs. etic analysis.

In qualitative research, multilayered analysis is foundational (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The Qur'anic hermeneutical model thus anticipates contemporary interpretive approaches: it acknowledges that meaning emerges progressively, requiring patience, rigour, and structural analysis.

### 26.3.4 Contextual Interpretation: The Qur'an's Internal Instruction

The Qur'an itself instructs readers to interpret verses contextually: *“He is the One who sent down to you the Book. In it are verses that are clear... and others that are open to interpretation. Those with deviance in their hearts follow the ambiguous parts...”* (Q. 3:7)

This verse provides several methodological principles:

- Not all data types are equal; clear (*muḥkam*) and complex (*mutashabih*) data require different interpretive tools.
- Methodological irresponsibility is possible, following ambiguity without methodological discipline.
- Interpretation requires grounding in foundational principles, starting from what is “clear” and interpreting the ambiguous through the clear.

This structure parallels qualitative coding frameworks:

- open coding → identifying varied data

- axial coding → linking emerging categories
- selective coding → synthesising data into a grounded framework.

Just as ambiguous data must be interpreted through clearer patterns, qualitative research requires grounding emergent themes within stable analytic structures.

### 26.3.5 Language, Semantics, and the Qur'an as Interpretive Matrix

Language is central to qualitative research. The Qur'an emphasises linguistic precision: *"We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an so that you may understand."* (Q. 12:2)

This implies:

- semantic awareness,
- rhetorical analysis,
- attention to lexical nuance,
- syntactic structures, and
- discourse patterns.

Qualitative methods centred on discourse analysis (Gee, 2014) and linguistic ethnography align directly with this Qur'anic emphasis. The Qur'an does not merely convey meanings; it shapes interpretive consciousness through metaphor, parable, narrative, argumentation, and dialogical engagement-all major tools of qualitative inquiry.

### 26.3.6 Reality as Text: The Qur'anic Expansion of Hermeneutics

A distinguishing feature of Qur'anic hermeneutics is its expansion of interpretive work beyond the scriptural text to the world itself. The Qur'an repeatedly describes natural phenomena, historical events, and human social patterns as "signs (ayat)." For example: *"In the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day are signs for those who reflect."* (Q. 3:190-191)

Here, the natural world becomes a hermeneutical field. Qualitative research does the same when it treats social behaviour, narratives, and experiences as data to be interpreted rather than quantified. Thus, Qur'anic hermeneutics implies:

- phenomenology (interpreting experience),
- ethnography (interpreting social patterns),
- case study analysis (interpreting specific events),
- grounded theory (deriving conceptual structures from observed signs).

In this sense, qualitative research finds strong support in the Qur'an, which frames the cosmos as an object of interpretive inquiry.

### 26.3.7 Hermeneutical Reflexivity in the Qur'an

Modern qualitative research demands reflexivity: the researcher must examine their assumptions, biases, and interpretive position (Finlay, 2012). The Qur'an's emphasis on self-scrutiny (nafs) parallels this requirement. The verse: *"Rather, each person is a witness against himself."* (Q. 75:14) establishes self-awareness as a prerequisite for truthful knowledge. Reflexivity in Qur'anic hermeneutics entails:

- recognising personal desires that distort interpretation,
- maintaining intellectual humility,
- acknowledging the limitations of human perception (Q. 17:85),
- aligning interpretation with moral integrity.

Thus, Qur'anic hermeneutics embeds reflexivity in its epistemic process centuries before modern qualitative research formalised it.

### 26.3.8 The Hermeneutics of Purpose (Maqaṣid) and Qualitative Analysis

The Qur'an repeatedly frames verses as revealed "for a purpose"-guidance, reflection, moral clarity, justice (Q. 6:98; 39:27). This purposive orientation is analogous to qualitative methodologies that emphasise:

- research purpose,
- thematic relevance,
- meaningful interpretation,
- linking findings to human values.

Qualitative analysis asks: What is the underlying pattern, purpose, or meaning?

The Qur'an's hermeneutics ask: What is the moral, ontological, or existential purpose behind this sign?

Thus, a Qur'anic hermeneutic enriches qualitative inquiry by grounding it in a deeper purposive analysis.

### 26.3.9 Integration: A Qur'anic Model for Qualitative Interpretation

Bringing the above threads together, a Qur'anic hermeneutic for qualitative research can be summarised through seven interpretive principles:

- Ontological grounding: Truth is real and discoverable (Q. 2:147).
- Ethical interpretation: Interpretation requires justice, humility, and sincerity (Q. 4:135).
- Contextual analysis: Verses and phenomena must be interpreted with attention to their relational context (Q. 3:7).
- Linguistic precision: Words matter; meanings must be sought carefully (Q. 12:2).
- Hermeneutics of signs: The world is a field of interpretable ayat (Q. 3:191).
- Reflexivity and self-awareness: Interpretation requires inner honesty (Q. 75:14).
- Purpose and moral meaning: Interpretation must uncover moral purpose (Q. 39:27).

These seven Qur'anic principles form a comprehensive hermeneutical framework that supports, enriches, and transforms qualitative research.

## 26.4 Qur'anic Foundations for Qualitative Method Construction

Qualitative research in its modern academic form emerged long after the Qur'anic revelation; however, the Qur'an provides foundational epistemic structures that align closely with qualitative methodologies. This section argues that qualitative method construction can be deeply informed by the Qur'an because the Qur'an:

- establishes interpretive, inductive, and experiential pathways to knowledge;
- frames knowledge generation as grounded in signs (ayat), processes, and narratives;
- emphasises human cognitive instruments such as tafakkur (reflection), tadabbur (deep contemplation), tadhakkur (moral recall), and fiqh (insightful understanding);
- provides a structured, ethically anchored methodological matrix; and
- integrates the subjective, moral, historical, and experiential dimensions of knowledge.

Thus, Qur'anic epistemology not only aligns with qualitative research but also offers a richer foundation for constructing qualitative methods rooted in moral responsibility, contextual reasoning, and interpretive depth.

### 26.4.1 The Qur'an as a Thematic and Narrative Model for Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative research relies heavily on *narratives*, *themes*, and *patterns* for interpretation. The Qur'an employs exactly these structures. It offers:

- narrative sequences (qisās),
- thematic clusters (e.g., justice, mercy, creation, signs),
- recurring metaphors,
- dialogical forms, and
- case-based moral illustrations.

For example, the Qur'an's reiteration of creation signs-sky, earth, water, night, day, mountains- forms a rich thematic corpus that invites interpretive synthesis (Q. 3:190-191; 30:20-27). These repeated motifs function analogously to qualitative *codes* that must be categorised, refined, and interpreted. The Qur'an itself encourages theme-building: “*Thus, we explain the signs in various ways so that they may reflect.*” (Q. 6:65)

The phrase *nuṣarrifu al-ayat*-“We diversify/explain the signs in various ways”-indicates that the Qur'an consciously constructs meaning by presenting phenomena in different narrative contexts. This is similar to the qualitative practice of triangulation and comparative coding (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Thus, the qualitative method construction grounded in the Qur'an should adopt:

- thematic clustering,
- repeated pattern identification,

- narrative comparison, and
- interpretive synthesis.

### 26.4.2 Signs (Ayat) as Units of Meaning: The Qur'anic Data Structure

In qualitative research, the basic unit of analysis is the *meaning unit* or *significant statement*. In Qur'anic epistemology, the primary unit of meaning is the ayah, a sign pointing toward deeper meaning. The Qur'an uses ayah in three overlapping senses:

- textual signs - verses of revelation
- cosmic signs - phenomena in nature
- historical/social signs - events from past communities

This triadic structure forms a multi-source data system. Thus, the Qur'anic qualitative method must recognise that meaningful data are not limited to text; they include:

- human experience,
- natural observation,
- social interaction,
- and history.

This framework anticipates modern qualitative triangulation strategies by suggesting a multi-field interpretive method.

### 26.4.3 Inductive Methodology (Istinbat): A Qur'anic Epistemic Tool

The Qur'an refers to a form of inductive reasoning-*istinbat*: “*Had they referred it to the Messenger and those grounded in knowledge, they would have extracted (yastanbiṭū) its meaning.*” (Q. 4:83)

Istinbat implies:

- extracting patterns,
- deriving meaning from diffuse indicators,
- inferring a conceptual structure.

These are precisely the operations of qualitative analysis: coding, categorising, and thematising data (Charmaz, 2014). Thus, constructing qualitative methods on Qur'anic principles requires the researcher to:

- gather diverse signs;
- examine their relationships;
- derive latent meaning;
- synthesise the findings into a coherent framework.

This Qur'anic approach strongly resembles grounded theory methodology.

#### 26.4.4 Reflection (Tafakkur) as Analytical Interpretation

Reflection (*tafakkur*) is explicitly connected to empirical and experiential data in the Qur'an: "*They reflect upon the creation of the heavens and the earth.*" (Q. 3:191)

This verse illustrates several interpretive moves:

- observation of phenomena,
- comparison of structures,
- questioning for deeper meaning,
- integration of spiritual, moral, and empirical implications.

Qualitative method construction grounded in tafakkur entails:

- iterative inquiry,
- constant comparison,
- interpretive sensitivity,
- openness to emergent meaning.

The Qur'an links tafakkur to existential awareness and cognitive growth, suggesting that qualitative interpretation should cultivate *transformation* and *self-understanding* rather than remain merely descriptive.

#### 26.4.5 Deep Interpretation (Tadabbur): The Qur'anic Model of Layered Inquiry

Tadabbur implies penetrating beneath the surface meaning. The Qur'an clearly commands it: "*Do they not deeply reflect on the Qur'an?*" (Q. 47:24)

In methodological terms, tadabbur includes:

- structural analysis of discourse,
- contextual reconstruction,
- intertextual comparison,
- linguistic-semantic scrutiny,
- purposive interpretation.

This resembles advanced qualitative methods, such as:

- hermeneutic phenomenology,
- thematic hermeneutics,
- Ricoeurian depth interpretation,
- critical discourse analysis.

Thus, tadabbur forms the core interpretive tool for constructing Qur'an-based qualitative methods.



### 26.4.6 Remembering (Tadhakkur): Moral and Experiential Knowledge

Tadhakkur connects interpretation to moral awareness: *“Indeed, in that are signs for people who remember (yatadhakkarun).”* (Q. 24:44)

In qualitative methodology, this maps onto:

- experiential reflection,
- ethical sensitivity,
- personal-communal memory,
- socio-historical awareness.

Tadhakkur ensures that qualitative method construction integrates morality and experience, preventing value-neutral interpretation.

### 26.4.7 Insight (Fiqh) as Deep Socio-Analytical Understanding

Although often associated with jurisprudence today, fiqh in the Qur'an means deep comprehension (Q. 9:122). It involves:

- analytical understanding,
- contextual reasoning,
- situational sensitivity,
- inferential judgment.

Fiqh is the Qur'anic analogue to:

- interpretive analysis,
- sociological insight,
- ethnographic understanding,
- phenomenological intuition.

Thus, qualitative methods within a Qur'anic paradigm must pursue fiqh-meaningful, contextually grounded comprehension.

### 26.4.8 Integrative Methodological Model: Four Qur'anic Cognitive Processes

The Qur'anic epistemic model combines four cognitive processes:

- Tafakkur - analytical reflection
- Tadabbur - deep structural interpretation
- Tadhakkur - moral-experiential awareness
- Fiqh - contextualised understanding

Together, these form a comprehensive qualitative method. They align with modern methodologies as follows:

| <b>Qur’anic Process</b> | <b>Qualitative Equivalent</b>         | <b>Function</b>                         |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Tafakkur                | Analytical coding/pattern recognition | Identifies initial meaning units        |
| Tadabbur                | Hermeneutic analysis                  | Reveals deeper structural meaning       |
| Tadhakkur               | Reflexive interpretation              | Integrates moral & experiential context |
| Fiqh                    | Theorisation / conceptual integration | Builds grounded frameworks              |

Thus, the Qur’an provides a methodologically coherent interpretive system.

### 26.4.9 Context, Purpose, and Meaning: The Qur’anic Analytical Triad

Qur’anic hermeneutics emphasises three requirements for understanding:

- Context (siyaq) - relating the part to the whole (Q. 3:7)
- Purpose (maqṣad) - interpreting within the verse’s functional objective (Q. 39:27)
- Moral meaning (ḥikmah) - extracting ethical significance (Q. 16:90)

Modern qualitative research similarly demands:

- contextual reconstruction,
- purposive analysis,
- meaningful interpretation.

Thus, Qur’anic methodology naturally aligns with qualitative theory-building.

### 26.4.10 Constructing a Qur’an-Based Qualitative Method

Drawing on the components above, a Qur’anic qualitative method may proceed through the following steps:

- Step 1: Data Immersion: Reading, listening, observing, and gathering signs (ayat).
- Step 2: First-Level Reflection (Tafakkur): Identifying recurring patterns, themes, and anomalies.
- Step 3: Structural Interpretation (Tadabbur): Uncovering deeper layers, cross-referencing meanings.
- Step 4: Reflexive and Ethical Interpretation (Tadhakkur): Checking biases, moral implications, and experiential resonance.
- Step 5: Conceptual Integration (Fiqh): Synthesising insights into a conceptual or theoretical model.
- Step 6: Communicating Findings: Presenting interpretations with clarity, fairness, and moral responsibility (Q. 4:135).

This framework reflects a Qur'an-based hermeneutical philosophy that can guide qualitative research across disciplines.

## 26.5 Comparative Positioning: Qur'anic Qualitative Epistemology and Modern Qualitative Paradigms

Modern qualitative research is not a single unified paradigm but a constellation of interpretive traditions-phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, hermeneutics, narrative inquiry, constructivism, post-structuralism, critical theory, and others. What these traditions share is a commitment to understanding meaning from within human experience, context, and language. Although these frameworks vary epistemologically, they converge on several foundational assumptions: knowledge is contextual; interpretation is unavoidable; human subjectivity is not a threat but a resource; and meaning emerges through engagement rather than detached measurement (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

The Qur'an, presented as divine revelation (wahy) and as a timeless source of guidance for all people, articulates an epistemic orientation that aligns with and, in many respects, anticipates the central principles of qualitative inquiry. Rather than depending on any external historical chronology, the Qur'an grounds its authority in its own self-description as a book of signs (ayat), guidance (huda), and clarification (bayan) for those who seek truth (Q. 2:185; 16:89). Within this internal epistemic framework, the Qur'an places profound emphasis on textual contemplation (tadabbur), analytical reasoning (tafakkur), moral-experiential remembrance (tadhakkur), and deep understanding (fiqh).

These four epistemic instruments collectively constitute a coherent interpretive methodology-one that is qualitative in its very essence. Thus, the Qur'an does not merely contain qualitative elements; it establishes a complete qualitative paradigm. In this sense, the Qur'anic interpretive process both converges with and transcends contemporary qualitative theories. This section examines these intersections and distinctions, highlighting how modern qualitative paradigms can be enriched through a Qur'an-centred epistemological lens.

### 26.5.1 Convergence in Epistemic Orientation

Experience and Meaning as Knowledge Sources: Modern qualitative traditions treat human experience as an epistemic site, whether through phenomenology (van Manen, 2016), ethnography (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019), or narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2013). The Qur'an similarly foregrounds experience as a source of knowledge: "*Travel through the earth and observe...*" (Q. 29:20)

Here, *siri fi al-ard* ("journey through the earth") is an injunction to engage empirically with the world. Experiential immersion leads to knowledge, aligning with qualitative fieldwork principles. Likewise, the Qur'an repeatedly states: "*Indeed, in this are signs for a people who reflect.*" (Q. 30:21; Q. 16:12)

Experience generates signs (ayat), and signs require interpretation. Thus, both the Qur'an and qualitative research emphasise experiential knowledge as an indispensable epistemic mode.

**Reflexivity and Self-Understanding:** Modern qualitative methodology regards reflexivity as central: researchers must examine their assumptions, positionality, and interpretive lenses (Finlay, 2012). The Qur'an frames reflexivity as a moral and cognitive imperative: *"Rather, the human being is a witness over himself."* (Q. 75:14)

This view establishes reflexivity not merely as a methodological requirement but as an ethical duty. Qur'anic *tadhakkur* -moral self-remembrance-parallels reflexive methodology by integrating cognition with moral awareness.

**Contextual and Holistic Interpretation:** Qualitative research emphasises context, environment, history, culture, and temporality. The Qur'an similarly situates meaning in context (siyaq): *"He revealed the Book, fully detailed."* (Q. 6:114)

The Qur'an frequently requires contextual interpretation-for example, correlating the stories of previous nations with current behaviour. This demonstrates a holistic interpretive framework akin to hermeneutics and interpretive phenomenology.

### 26.5.2 Qur'anic Epistemology within the Landscape of Modern Qualitative Paradigms

**Hermeneutics and Qur'anic Tadabbur:** Hermeneutics is the art of interpretation, emphasising layered meaning, textual depth, and dialogical understanding (Gadamer, 1989). Qur'anic *tadabbur* is a parallel process: *"Do they not deeply reflect (yatadabbarun) on the Qur'an?"* (Q. 47:24)

Both approaches assume that texts have multiple layers requiring sustained contemplation. Yet, Qur'anic hermeneutics differs by grounding interpretation in divine intentionality (maqṣad), providing a teleological anchor absent in secular hermeneutics. Meaning is not open-ended but directional, toward truth, justice, and ethical transformation.

**Phenomenology and Qur'anic Experiential Knowing:** Phenomenology centres on lived experience and seeks to *"return to the things themselves"* (Husserl, 1970). Qur'anic phenomenology appears in its emphasis on observing natural processes-birth, death, rain, growth, day-night cycles- as invitations to understanding (Q. 24:43; 30:24).

Here, the Qur'an does not treat phenomena merely descriptively but as epistemic events imbued with meaning. The Qur'an thus expands phenomenology from an experiential method toward an interpretive-theological model.

**Grounded Theory and Qur'anic Inductive Reasoning (Istinbat):** Grounded theory constructs knowledge inductively from data patterns (Charmaz, 2014). Qur'anic *istinbat* (Q. 4:83) similarly refers to extracting meaning by connecting dispersed indicators. The Qur'an thus models:

- constant comparison,
- pattern recognition,
- theory formation based on signs.

This conceptual relationship suggests that Qur'anic methodology can serve as an ethical-theological precursor to grounded theory.

Critical Theory and Qur'anic Ethical Critique: Critical theory challenges structures of injustice, power, and oppression (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011). The Qur'an explicitly employs an ethical-critical lens when discussing inequity, exploitation, and tyranny (Q. 28:4; 16:90). The Qur'an, therefore, aligns with the emancipatory purpose of critical qualitative research, but anchors critique in the moral universe of tawhīd-divine unity-rather than class struggle or socio-political ideology.

### 26.5.3 Divergence: Where Qur'anic and Modern Qualitative Paradigms Part Ways

While there is significant resonance, some points of divergence remain.

Ontological Grounding: Modern qualitative paradigms largely assume a human-centred epistemology. Even constructivist models treat meaning as co-produced between researcher and participant. The Qur'an diverges fundamentally by grounding knowledge in divine revelation (waḥy): *"He taught humanity what they did not know."* (Q. 96:5)

Thus, Qur'anic qualitative epistemology is not merely humanistic but theocentric.

Ethical Objectivity vs. Ethical Relativism: Modern qualitative ethics often prioritise procedural neutrality. The Qur'an grounds all interpretation in unwavering ethical principles-justice, truthfulness, honesty, humility (Q. 4:135; 5:8). Thus, moral relativism is incompatible with Qur'anic methodology.

Teleology of Knowledge: In modern paradigms, knowledge's purpose varies-explanation, description, critique, or understanding. In the Qur'an, knowledge is teleological: *"...so that you may understand, remember, and become mindful."* (Q. 2:73; 24:44)

Knowledge is directed toward:

- transformation,
- moral purification,
- justice,
- establishing human flourishing.

This orientation exceeds the descriptive tendency of some qualitative schools.

### 26.5.4 Integrative Possibilities: Toward a Qur'anically-Informed Qualitative Paradigm

Given these convergences and divergences, the Qur'an offers a unique epistemic contribution. A Qur'anically-informed qualitative paradigm would:

- Integrate inductive interpretation with divine guidance- balancing data-driven insights with moral teleology.
- Centre ethical responsibility- interpretation as moral action, not neutral reporting.

- Elevate reflexivity from technique to spiritual practice- aligning self-examination with ethical accountability.
- Fuse experiential, textual, and cosmic signs- widening qualitative “data” beyond human narratives alone.
- Combine contextual insight with transcendental purpose- producing meaning that is both situated and universal.

This paradigm would enhance modern qualitative methodologies by integrating ethics, ontology, and epistemic purpose.

### **26.5.5 The Qur'an's Methodological Contributions to Qualitative Research**

Depth and Aperture in Interpretation: Qur'anic tadabbur expands interpretation beyond hermeneutics by combining:

- rational inquiry,
- moral reflection,
- spiritual awareness.

Multi-Source Data Ecology: The Qur'an treats nature, history, social life, and revelation as parallel meaning systems. This suggests a multi-source qualitative method embracing:

- textual data,
- observational data,
- experiential insight,
- socio-historical interpretation.

Teleological Coding: Themes in the Qur'an are not merely descriptive but purposeful (Maqasid). This can transform:

- thematic analysis
- grounded theory
- narrative inquiry

into purpose-oriented qualitative research.

### **26.5.6 Positioning Qur'anic Qualitative Epistemology in the Field**

This comparative analysis demonstrates that the Qur'an provides a sophisticated, ethically grounded qualitative epistemology that aligns with major qualitative paradigms yet transcends them through its divine ontology, ethical teleology, and integrated interpretive system. While modern qualitative methods offer analytical tools, the Qur'an contributes a deeper philosophical structure: knowledge as sign-recognition, ethical transformation, and purposeful reflection.

A Qur'anically-informed qualitative paradigm thus strengthens contemporary qualitative research by restoring moral accountability, expanding interpretive horizons, and reuniting empirical, experiential, and spiritual dimensions of knowing.

## 26.6 Constructing a Qur'an-Based Qualitative Research Framework

Constructing a qualitative research framework grounded in the Qur'an requires more than borrowing techniques from existing social-science methodologies. Rather, it demands a full reconstruction of qualitative inquiry from within the Qur'an's own epistemic architecture, conceptual vocabulary, and hermeneutic logic. The goal is not merely to "Islamize" existing methods, but to derive a genuinely Qur'anic paradigm of qualitative interpretation-rooted in *ayat*, guided by *tafakkur* (analytical reasoning), deepened through *tadabbur* (structured reflection), embodied through *tadhakkur* (moral remembrance), and culminating in *fiqh* (deep understanding). These epistemic acts are not parallel to modern qualitative concepts; they are the Qur'anic foundations of interpretation itself.

A Qur'an-based qualitative framework must therefore rely on three fundamental premises:

- Ontology of Signs (Ayat): Reality-textual, natural, historical-is composed of meaningful signs requiring interpretation (Q. 41:53; 51:20-21).
- Hermeneutics of Reflection: Human faculties (*'aql*, *qalb*, *basar*, *Fu'ad*) are divinely oriented toward discovering meaning through reflection (Q. 22:46; 67:23).
- Ethics of Interpretation: Knowledge must be pursued with sincerity, justice, humility, and moral responsibility (Q. 17:36; 5:8; 49:6).

Any qualitative method derived from the Qur'an must integrate these core epistemic, hermeneutic, and ethical foundations. The following sections outline a Qur'an-based framework for qualitative research that is conceptually robust, methodologically rigorous, and epistemologically coherent.

### 26.6.1 Foundational Epistemic Principles

The World as Text - Ontology of Signs: In qualitative inquiry, the researcher treats social behaviour, speech, texts, and culture as meaning-bearing. The Qur'an, however, universalises this principle: *all* created reality is signified meaning-*ayat* (Q. 45:3-6; 10:101). Human experience is fundamentally interpretive because the cosmos itself is an interpretive field. Thus, Qur'anic qualitative methodology begins from an ontological claim: meaning is embedded in reality by divine intent.

Interpretation as Worship: The Qur'an frames reflection not merely as an intellectual task but as an act of devotion. *Tafakkur*, *tadabbur*, and *tadhakkur* are repeatedly attached to descriptions of the righteous or the people of understanding (*ulu al-albab*) (Q. 3:190-191; 38:29). Interpretation becomes a spiritual discipline involving moral purification, intellectual honesty, and existential humility.

Ethical and Epistemic Responsibility: The Qur'an repeatedly prohibits knowledge claims that lack evidence, certainty, or methodological rigour: "*Do not pursue that of which you do not know.*" (Q. 17:36)



This establishes an ethical code for qualitative research:

- avoid conjecture (*ẓann*)
- verify reports (Q. 49:6)
- maintain justice (Q. 4:135; 5:8)
- uphold trustfulness (*amanah*) (Q. 23:8)

Thus, a Qur'anic qualitative framework is inseparable from ethical virtue.

### 26.6.2 The Four Qur'anic Instruments of Qualitative Inquiry

A Qur'an-based qualitative framework requires formalising four key epistemic acts as methodological procedures:

**Tafakkur (تفكر): Analytical Reflection:** *Tafakkur* represents a structured intellectual process of breaking down phenomena, examining relationships, identifying patterns, and evaluating implications. This aligns with qualitative techniques such as:

- coding
- thematic analysis
- pattern recognition
- conceptual abstraction

The Qur'an invites such analysis in verses urging humans to reflect upon creation, society, and moral consequences (Q. 30:8; 3:191).

**Tadabbur (تدبر): Deep Structural Interpretation:** *Tadabbur* refers to following something "to its end," suggesting:

- contextual reading
- structural engagement
- multi-layered interpretation
- longitudinal analysis

In modern terms, *tadabbur* corresponds to hermeneutics: interpreting meaning by examining structure, sequence, context, and coherence (Q. 47:24; 4:82).

**Tadhakkur (تذكر): Moral-Experiential Internalisation:** *Tadhakkur* links qualitative data with ethical consciousness. It involves:

- reflexivity
- experiential integration
- examining one's moral assumptions
- connecting empirical findings to ethical insight

The Qur'an describes *tadhakkur* as the awakening of moral memory (Q. 24:44).

Fiqh (فقه): Deep Understanding of Meaning: This is the culmination of the process-achieving depth, synthesis, and wisdom, not mere description (Q. 9:122). In modern qualitative language, *fiqh* parallels:

- grounded theory
- theoretical explanation
- interpretive synthesis

Thus, a Qur'an-based qualitative method integrates epistemic, hermeneutic, and ethical dimensions.

### 26.6.3 A Qur'anic Qualitative Research Process Model

A Qur'an-based qualitative framework unfolds in the following stages, each grounded in Qur'anic epistemology.

Stage 1: Encountering the Sign (Idrak al-Ayah): The researcher encounters a phenomenon-textual, social, natural-framed as a sign requiring interpretation (Q. 41:53).

Stage 2: Observational Engagement (Nazar): The Qur'an emphasises observation as the beginning of knowing (Q. 88:17-20; 29:20).

Stage 3: Analytical Reflection (Tafakkur): The raw material is analysed, broken down, and thoughtfully examined (Q. 30:8; 3:191).

Stage 4: Contextual-Structural Reflection (Tadabbur): Meaning is interpreted within structural, thematic, and contextual layers (Q. 47:24).

Stage 5: Reflexive Moral Integration (Tadhakkur): The researcher reflects on ethical implications and personal positionality (Q. 24:44).

Stage 6: Theory Formation (Fiqh): Deep understanding and conceptual synthesis emerge (Q. 9:122).

Stage 7: Verification (Tahqiq): Claims must be substantiated with evidence, avoiding conjecture (Q. 17:36; 49:6).

Stage 8: Ethical Commitment ('Adl, Amanah): Research must be conducted and presented with integrity (Q. 5:8; 23:8).

This model mirrors qualitative traditions but remains uniquely Qur'anic.

### 26.6.4 Distinctive Features of Qur'anic Qualitative Methodology

Integration of Epistemology, Ethics, and Spirituality: Unlike modern qualitative frameworks, the Qur'an rejects any separation between knowing, being, and doing. Interpretation is simultaneously intellectual, ethical, and spiritual.

Non-Reductionist Ontology: The Qur'an frames meaning as multidimensional: physical, metaphysical, moral, historical, and symbolic layers coexist.

Hermeneutics Rooted in Revelation: Interpretation is not self-generated but guided by divine discourse. The researcher is accountable to *haqq* (truth), not subjective preference.

Emphasis on Internal Transformation: Qualitative inquiry must transform not only knowledge but the knower.

### 26.6.5 Toward a Qur'anic Qualitative Methodology (Synthesis)

The Qur'an-based qualitative framework can be summarised in five methodological commitments:

- Ontology of Meaning: All phenomena are signs requiring interpretation.
- Hermeneutics of Reflection: *Tafakkur*, *tadabbur*, *tadhakkur*, and *fiqh* form the epistemic cycle.
- Ethics of Truth-Seeking: Avoid conjecture; verify evidence; uphold fairness.
- Holistic Integration: Interpretation connects empirical data with moral consciousness.
- Transformative Knowledge: True understanding produces wisdom (*hikmah*) and action (*'amal*).

This consolidates the Qur'an's interpretive paradigm into a coherent qualitative methodology capable of guiding research across disciplines.

## 26.7 Toward a Fully Formulated Qur'anic Qualitative Research Method

Developing a fully formulated qualitative research method from the Qur'an requires bringing together the insights derived from *tafakkur*, *tadabbur*, *tadhakkur*, and *fiqh*, and translating them into a coherent operational framework. Modern qualitative methodologies-such as grounded theory, phenomenology, ethnography, narrative analysis, and hermeneutics-operate through systematic procedures of observation, interpretation, contextualization, and theory-building. The Qur'an, however, provides a deeper, more foundational structure in which qualitative inquiry is not merely a technique but a moral, spiritual, and epistemic act.

A Qur'anic qualitative research method must therefore be holistic, ethical, reflexive, interpretive, evidence-based, and transformative. This section synthesises these principles into a structured methodology that can be applied in contemporary research while remaining fully faithful to Qur'anic epistemology.

### 26.7.1 Foundational Premises of the Qur'anic Qualitative Method

A Qur'an-based qualitative method must rest upon the following epistemic premises:

Reality is Composed of Signs (Ayat): The Qur'an repeatedly describes the world, scripture, human experience, and history as *ayat*-signs that require interpretation (Q. 41:53; 51:20-21). This establishes a fundamental principle: qualitative meaning is inherent, not constructed. Human inquiry uncovers, discerns, and interprets these signs.

Human Faculties are Designed for Interpretation: The Qur'an explicitly links knowing (*'ilm*) to sensory perception (*basar*), hearing (*sam'*), and inner comprehension (*Fu'ad*) (Q. 67:23; 16:78). This aligns with qualitative research's reliance on lived experience, observation, interpretation, and reflexivity.

Interpretation Must Be Ethical: The Qur'an warns against interpretation guided by conjecture (*ẓann*) or without evidence (Q. 17:36). Thus, qualitative analysis must be grounded in verifiable meaning and methodological discipline.

Interpretation Must Lead to Wisdom (*Hikmah*): The endpoint of qualitative research in a Qur'anic paradigm is not only understanding but *ḥikmah*-synthesised insight that enables action (Q. 2:269).

### 26.7.2 The Qur'anic Qualitative Method: Eight Procedural Stages

The Qur'anic research cycle consists of eight stages. Together, they form a replicable qualitative methodology.

Stage 1: Encountering the Sign (*Muqabalat al-Ayah*):

*Equivalent Modern Functions:*

- identifying the research problem
- initial data contact
- experiential noticing

Every qualitative project begins with an encounter with a text, event, community, phenomenon, or question. The Qur'an frames this moment as meeting an *ayah*- a meaningful "sign" embedded in reality (Q. 45:3-6). This reframes research as a sacred engagement with meaning.

Stage 2: Thick Observation (*Nazar al-Taḥqiq*):

*Equivalent Modern Functions:*

- thick description
- phenomenological observation
- ethnographic noticing

The Qur'an commands humans to "look," "observe," and "consider" the phenomena around them (Q. 88:17-20; 29:20). This indicates a primary methodological step: careful, disciplined, non-judgmental observation.

Stage 3: Analytical Reflection (*Tafakkur*):

*Equivalent Modern Functions:*

- coding
- thematic analysis
- pattern recognition

The Qur'an repeatedly urges humans to contemplate creation, society, and moral consequences (Q. 3:191). This stage involves identifying emerging patterns, initial themes, and conceptual relationships.

Stage 4: Structural-Contextual Interpretation (Tadabbur):

*Equivalent Modern Functions:*

- hermeneutics
- discourse analysis
- contextual interpretation

*Tadabbur* involves following the deeper implications of a matter, reading beyond surface meanings, and understanding structure, coherence, and relational contexts (Q. 47:24; 4:82). It formalises the interpretive step of qualitative inquiry.

Stage 5: Reflexive Moral Integration (Tadhakkur):

*Equivalent Modern Functions:*

- reflexivity
- positionality
- ethical interpretation

*Tadhakkur* requires the researcher to integrate interpretation with ethical consciousness (Q. 24:44). No qualitative analysis is complete without confronting personal bias, moral implications, and the researcher's own role.

Stage 6: Deep Understanding (Fiqh al-Ma'na):

*Equivalent Modern Functions:*

- grounded theory
- interpretive phenomenology
- conceptual theory-building

The Qur'an uses *fiqh* not to denote jurisprudence alone, but deep comprehension (Q. 9:122). At this stage, meaning is synthesised into explanatory insight.

Stage 7: Verification (Tahqiq / Bayyina): Equivalent Modern Functions:

- triangulation
- validity checking
- credibility assessment

The Qur'an insists on verification and evidence-based reasoning (Q. 49:6; 17:36). In qualitative terms, this means:

- comparing multiple data sources
- validating interpretations
- revisiting earlier assumptions

Verification is a moral imperative.

Stage 8: Ethical Communication and Application (*Amanah* / *'Adl* / *Balagh*): Equivalent Modern Functions:

- reporting
- presenting findings
- ethical application

The Qur'an's emphasis on justice (*'adl*), trust (*amanah*), and clear communication (*Balagh mubin*) (Q. 5:8; 23:8; 16:35) establishes that qualitative results must be:

- truthful
- transparent
- ethically communicated
- socially beneficial

Thus, the Qur'anic qualitative method is not complete until knowledge is responsibly shared.

### 26.7.3 Procedural Flowchart of the Qur'anic Qualitative Method



This constitutes a full Qur'an-derived qualitative cycle.

### 26.7.4 Core Methodological Principles Embedded in the Qur'anic Cycle

Principle 1: Epistemic Humility (*Tawaḍu'*): The Qur'an criticises arrogance as a barrier to knowledge (Q. 2:34; 7:146). The qualitative researcher must adopt humility toward both participants and the phenomenon.

Principle 2: Moral Accountability (*Mas'uliyah*): Knowledge in the Qur'an is a trust, not a commodity (Q. 23:8). Qualitative research must be guided by sincerity of intention (*niyyah*) and justice.

Principle 3: Holistic Integration: Knowledge emerges from the integration of:

- empirical observation
- reflection
- ethical self-awareness
- spiritual accountability

Principle 4: Transformative Potential: The end of qualitative inquiry in the Qur'an is not information but moral transformation and societal benefit (Q. 13:11).

### 26.7.5 A Fully Formulated Qur'anic Qualitative Method (Summary)

A Qur'an-derived qualitative method includes:

Ontology: Reality is composed of meaningful signs intentionally created for interpretation.

Epistemology: Knowledge arises through sensory perception, reflection, interpretation, and moral consciousness.

Method: A systematic eight-stage cycle rooted in *nazar*, *tafakkur*, *tadabbur*, *tadhakkur*, *fiqh*, and *tahqiq*.

Ethics: Research requires sincerity, justice, humility, trust, and avoidance of bias or conjecture.

Purpose: Knowledge must benefit humanity and lead to wisdom (*hikmah*), not exploitation.

### 26.7.6 Toward a Distinct Qur'anic Qualitative Paradigm

A Qur'an-based qualitative framework does not simply add Islamic terminology to existing methods. Instead, it reconstructs qualitative research from the ground up with a fully integrated:

- ontology (sign-based reality)
- epistemology (reflective-ethical cognition)
- method (eight-stage interpretive cycle)
- ethics (justice and trust)
- purpose (wisdom and transformation)

This establishes a distinct paradigm that can enrich global qualitative methodology.



## Chapter 27: Qur'anic Epistemology and Quantitative Research

### 27.1 Why the Quantitative Method Must Be Reconstructed from a Qur'anic Epistemology

Quantitative research is foundational to contemporary scientific inquiry. It shapes disciplines ranging from physics, biology, economics, psychology, and public health to data science and artificial intelligence. Yet the quantitative method as practised today rests upon distinct philosophical assumptions-materialism, empiricism, operationalism, and statistical abstraction- that are historically shaped by European epistemological trajectories. These assumptions often remain implicit, but they structure the logic of measurement, the meaning of evidence, and the purpose of knowledge generation.

The Qur'an, however, offers a radically different epistemic foundation-one grounded in purposeful creation (*haqq*), order (*qadar*), measure (*Miqdar*), balance (*mizan*), and truthfulness (*sidq*). Rather than rejecting empirical method, the Qur'an affirms disciplined observation, verification, ordered measurement, and logical inference-but integrates them into a richer moral and ontological framework.

Thus, this chapter develops a Qur'an-based philosophy, ethics, and methodology of quantitative inquiry. It does not merely "Islamize" statistics or add Qur'anic verses as decorative justification. Instead, it reconstructs the quantitative sciences from the ontology and epistemology of the Qur'an, demonstrating how measurement, enumeration, proportionality, and empirical reasoning emerge from divine intentionality, cosmic order, and human responsibility.

### 27.2 Qur'anic Ontology of Order, Measure, and Number

#### 27.2.1 The Universe as a Measured and Ordered System

The Qur'an repeatedly describes the cosmos using the language of intentional measurement:

- *"Indeed, We created everything according to qadar (precise measure)." (Q. 54:49)*
- *"He raised the heaven and established the mizan (balance)." (Q. 55:7-9)*
- *"The sun and the moon move by precise calculation (Ḥusban)." (Q. 55:5)*

These verses establish the ontology of measurement as a divine attribute. The quantitative aspects of reality-ratios, patterns, symmetries, cycles, and proportions-are not accidental or emergent but intentionally embedded into the fabric of creation. Thus, the Qur'an affirms that numerical order is:

- real,
- knowable,
- reliable,
- intentionally designed,

- epistemically meaningful.

This stands in contrast to modern materialist paradigms, which often treat mathematics as a human construct, statistical regularity as a probabilistic illusion, and natural order as an accidental emergent outcome.

### 27.2.2 Counting and Enumeration as Qur'anic Epistemic Tools

The Qur'an repeatedly calls humans to enumerate:

- *"So that you may know the number of years and calculation."* (Q. 10:5)
- *"The number of months with God is twelve..."* (Q. 9:36)
- *"We have numbered everything in a clear record."* (Q. 36:12)

This establishes enumeration, classification, and numerical tracking as divinely sanctioned epistemic practices. Quantification is not reductive in the Qur'anic worldview; it is a tool for uncovering the precision of creation.

### 27.2.3 Measurement as Justice: The Ethical Foundation of Quantitative Method

The Qur'an strongly links measurement with justice:

- *"Give full measure and weight in justice."* (Q. 6:152)
- *"Do not defraud the balance."* (Q. 55:9)
- *"Woe to those who give less in measure and weight."* (Q. 83:1-3)

Here, measurement is not merely a technical procedure but an ethical responsibility. Quantitative analysis must therefore be:

- Honest
- Accurate
- Unbiased
- Transparent
- fair

This establishes an ethical foundation absent in many modern quantitative practices, where data manipulation, selective reporting, and misleading statistics undermine public trust.

## 27.3 Epistemological Meaning of Measurement in the Qur'an

### 27.3.1 Measurement as Discovery, Not Construction

In the Qur'an, *qadar* and *mizan* are pre-existing structures of the universe. Measurement in scientific inquiry, therefore, discovers the divine ordering rather than constructing or projecting it. This rejects epistemic relativism and supports realism: numerical truth corresponds to real features of the world.

### 27.3.2 Quantitative Data as Signs (Ayat)

Every quantitative pattern-rates of biological reproduction, planetary orbits, statistical stability, and fractal geometry-represents an *ayat* that points to underlying wisdom. Thus, scientific data are not value-neutral; they are meaning-bearing signs.

### 27.3.3 Objectivity in the Qur'anic Framework

Objectivity in modern science is often treated as emotional neutrality. But the Qur'an defines objectivity differently:

- Avoid distortion (Q. 4:135)
- Seek truth even against self-interest (Q. 5:8)
- Verify evidence (Q. 49:6)

Quantitative objectivity, therefore, means:

moral integrity + methodological rigor + transparency.

## 27.4 Qur'anic Concepts Relevant to Quantitative Method

### 27.4.1 'Adl - Accuracy, Balance, and Precision

Accuracy is a Qur'anic command (Q. 6:152). It applies directly to:

- Measurement
- statistical estimation
- data reporting

### 27.4.2 Bayyina - Clear Evidence

The Qur'an repeatedly demands clear evidence (Q. 2:111; 4:174). Quantitative research satisfies this through:

- descriptive statistics
- reliability assessments
- inferential analysis

### 27.4.3 Tathabbut - Verification and Checking

Verification is commanded explicitly (Q. 49:6). This supports:

- data validation
- replication
- cross-checking
- peer review

#### 27.4.4 *Kitab* - Structure, Order, and Recording

Scientific data storage aligns with *Kitab*, the ordered record of reality (Q. 36:12; 78:29). Data integrity becomes a divine trust.

#### 27.4.5 *Šidq* - Truthfulness in Reporting

Truth in reporting is required (Q. 9:119). This prohibits:

- p-hacking
- selective reporting
- data manipulation

### 27.5 Statistical Reasoning and the Qur'anic Logic of Patterns

#### 27.5.1 Regularity and Probability

The Qur'an describes stable natural cycles (Q. 36:38-40), implying the existence of empirical regularity, the foundation of probability theory.

#### 27.5.2 Inductive Reasoning

The Qur'an encourages examining patterns across cases:

- “*Travel through the earth and see...*” (Q. 29:20)
- “*Reflect on what happened to...*” (Q. 30:9)

This mirrors the logic of statistical inference.

#### 27.5.3 Big Data and the Divine Record

The Qur'an describes a vast informational system:

- “*Nothing is excluded from the Book.*” (Q. 6:38)
- “*Every atom's weight will be accounted for...*” (Q. 99:7-8)

This maps onto big-data epistemology, where quantitative knowledge accumulates into large-scale patterns.

### 27.6 Constructing a Qur'an-Based Quantitative Research Method

This section presents a complete eight-stage Qur'anic quantitative method.

Stage 1: Problem Identification (Encountering the Sign): Every research problem begins with observing an *ayah* (Q. 41:53; 51:20-21). The Qur'an encourages noticing anomalies, patterns, and social conditions.

Stage 2: Conceptual Clarification (Tafakkur)

- Define variables
- Explore conceptual relationships

- Identify measurable dimensions

Stage 3: Operationalisation (Qadar / Miqdar): Variables must be measurable in accordance with divine patterns of measure (Q. 54:49). Thus, operational definitions must reflect real ontological structures, not arbitrary constructs.

Stage 4: Data Collection (Nazar / Istiqra'): The Qur'an commands empirical observation (Q. 6:11; 29:20). Data collection must be:

- Systematic
- Accurate
- ethical

Stage 5: Analysis (Mizan): Analysis corresponds to balance, evaluation, and comparison (Q. 55:7-9). Quantitative analysis includes:

- descriptive statistics
- inferential models
- measurements of variance
- structural modelling

Stage 6: Verification (Tathabbut): Qur'anic verification (Q. 49:6) maps to:

- statistical validation
- cross-validation
- error checking
- replication

Stage 7: Interpretation (Fiqh al-Nata'ij): Interpretation moves from numerical patterns to meaningful insight (Q. 9:122). Here, qualitative and quantitative epistemology converge.

Stage 8: Ethical Application ('Adl / Amanah / Balagh): Knowledge must empower justice (Q. 5:8), responsibility (Q. 23:8), and ethical communication (Q. 16:35).

## 27.7 Ethical Framework for Quantitative Research in the Qur'an

Ethical pillars include:

- Truthfulness (Ṣidq)
- Non-manipulation of data ('Adl)
- Transparency (Bayan)
- Correction of error (Iṣlah)
- Public good (Maṣlaḥa)
- Avoidance of harm (La Ḍarar)

These principles exceed contemporary research ethics codes and make quantitative research an act of *'ibadah* (worship through moral responsibility).

## 27.8 Integrating Qur'anic Quantitative Method with Modern Scientific Practice

This section shows how Qur'anic quantitative epistemology enriches scientific fields:

- Physics: measurement, constants, cosmic balance
- Biology: proportionality in natural systems
- Public Health: epidemiological verification
- Economics: anti-fraud measurement principles
- Environmental Science: planetary stewardship

The Qur'an provides a philosophical foundation for data integrity, statistical wisdom, and ethical scientific progress.

## Chapter 28: Mixed-Methods & the Qur'anic Triangulation Model

### 28.1 Why Mixed-Methods Requires a Qur'anic Epistemic Foundation

Modern mixed-methods research (MMR) has emerged as a methodological bridge intended to reconcile the interpretive depth of qualitative inquiry with the measurable precision of quantitative analysis. Yet contemporary MMR remains shaped by Western philosophical traditions-pragmatism, post-positivism, critical realism, and constructivism-which define what counts as “integration,” “triangulation,” or “validity.” These philosophical frames often overlook deeper metaphysical questions:

- What is the nature of knowledge?
- What is the ontological meaning of data (qualitative or quantitative)?
- What constitutes a reliable interpretation?
- What is the purpose of combining methods?

The Qur'an provides explicit conceptual resources that anticipate the logic of mixed-methods long before modern method debates. The Qur'an treats reality as multilayered and knowable through multiple interlinked epistemic processes-perception, measurement, reflection, remembrance, verification, comparison, and moral discernment (Q. 2:164; 3:190-191; 6:11; 30:8-9; 39:21).

Thus, the Qur'an implicitly endorses a triangulated epistemology, bringing together:

- Qualitative meaning (*tadabbur*, *tafakkur*, *tadhakkur*);
- Quantitative order and measurement (*qadar*, *mizan*, *hisab*);
- Ethical actualisation and value-orientation (*ṣidq*, *'adl*, *amanah*).

Modern MMR captures part of this structure but lacks the Qur'anic ontological depth and moral architecture. The Qur'an integrates methods not for technique alone but for discovering truth, achieving justice, and fulfilling human responsibility (Q. 4:135; 5:8; 17:36).

This chapter reconstructs mixed-methods research through a Qur'anic paradigm, introducing the Qur'anic Triangulation Model (QTM), a methodological framework unifying qualitative and quantitative epistemologies under the ontology of *ayat* and the ethics of *'adl*, *tathabbut*, and *amanah*.

### 28.2 Qur'anic Foundations for a Triangulated Epistemology

#### 28.2.1 Multiplicity of Signs (Ayat) as the Basis of Multi-Modal Knowledge

The Qur'an repeatedly presents nature, society, history, and scripture as diverse sets of signs requiring different modes of analysis:

- Natural ayat: cosmology, biology, environment (Q. 2:164; 30:20-25).
- Historical ayat: civilizational cycles (Q. 29:20; 30:9).



- Moral ayat: conscience, justice, virtue (Q. 91:7-10).
- Scriptural ayat: text, meaning, structure (Q. 3:7; 47:24).

Each category corresponds to epistemic tasks:

| Type of Ayah     | Required Epistemic Approach                  |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Natural signs    | Empirical observation, measurement           |
| Historical signs | Comparative analysis, pattern identification |
| Moral signs      | Reflective interpretation, evaluation        |
| Scriptural signs | Hermeneutics, linguistic analysis            |

Thus, a single method cannot exhaust the meaning of ayat. The Qur’an obligates multiple methodological orientations-qualitative, quantitative, analytical, interpretive, and ethical.

28.2.2 Integrating Cognitive Instruments: ‘Aql, Tafakkur, Tadabbur, and Tathabbut

The Qur’an defines multiple cognitive processes:

- Tafakkur (analytical reflection; Q. 3:191)
- Tadabbur (deep textual reflection; Q. 47:24)
- Tadhakkur (moral remembrance; Q. 24:44)
- Tathabbut (verification; Q. 49:6)
- Aql (reason; Q. 2:242; 10:100)

These correspond to modern MMR components:

| Qur’anic Term | Methodological Parallel        |
|---------------|--------------------------------|
| Tafakkur      | Qualitative analytic coding    |
| Tadabbur      | Hermeneutic interpretation     |
| Tathabbut     | Quantitative validity checking |
| ‘Aql          | Integrative reasoning          |
| Tadhakkur     | Ethical evaluation             |

Thus, the Qur'an provides an epistemic architecture enabling multi-strand research logic.

28.2.3 Triangulation as Qur’anic Verification

Classical triangulation aims to:

- validate findings
- cross-check evidence
- reduce bias
- integrate multiple data sources

The Qur'an institutionalises a similar process:

- Cross-checking reports (Q. 49:6)
- Comparing multiple signs (Q. 2:164)
- Evaluating perspectives (Q. 39:18) - *“those who listen to all views and follow the best”*
- Historical comparisons (Q. 29:20; 40:21)
- Balancing evidence (Q. 55:7-9)

This is precisely the logic of modern triangulation, integrating multiple forms of evidence to reach a more robust truth.

## 28.3 Mixed-Methods in Modern Research: Philosophical Debates and Qur'anic Interventions

### 28.3.1 Post-Positivism and Its Limitations

Post-positivism emphasises:

- Objectivity
- hypothesis testing
- statistical inference

But it often reduces:

- meaning of measurement
- human experience to variables
- social complexity in models

The Qur'an intervenes by affirming the reality of qualitative meaning beyond numbers:

- *“Do they not reflect?”* (Q. 30:8)
- *“Do they not ponder the Qur'an?”* (Q. 4:82)

Measurement alone is insufficient.

### 28.3.2 Constructivism and Relativism

Constructivists argue that reality is made, not discovered. But the Qur'an teaches an objective reality with moral grounding:

- *“Truth has come, and falsehood has vanished.”* (Q. 17:81)

- “Created with truth.” (Q. 16:3)

Meaning is discovered, not invented.

### 28.3.3 Pragmatism and Method Integration

Pragmatists (e.g., Creswell, Tashakkori & Teddlie) justify mixed-methods by usefulness. However, pragmatism lacks:

- moral grounding
- ontological clarity
- epistemic purpose

The Qur'an provides a value-driven, truth-driven integrative philosophy, not merely a pragmatic one.

## 28.4 Developing the Qur'anic Mixed-Methods Triangulation Model (QTM)

### 28.4.1 The Three Realms of Knowledge in the Qur'an

The Qur'an distinguishes:

- Signs in the horizons (*ayat fi l-afaq*; Q. 41:53) → empirical, measurable
- Signs within the self (*ayat fi anfusikum*; Q. 51:20-21) → experiential, qualitative
- Signs in revelation (*ayat al-Kitab*; Q. 3:7) → textual, interpretive

Mixed-methods must therefore integrate:

- empirical data
- experiential meaning
- textual reasoning

This yields a three-dimensional triangulation.

### 28.4.2 Structural Components of QTM

Empirical Strand (E-Strand): Measures observable phenomena. Grounded in: *hisab, mizan, qadar* (Q. 55:5-9; 54:49)

Qualitative Strand (Q-Strand): Explores meaning, intention, value. Grounded in: *tafakkur, tadabbur, tadhakkur* (Q. 47:24; 30:8)

Ethical-Ontological Strand (O-Strand): Evaluates moral consequences and truth alignment. Grounded in: *'adl, shidq, amanah* (Q. 4:135; 17:36)

### 28.4.3 Integration Phase: Mizan-Based Synthesis

The Qur'an describes the balance (*mizan*) as a universal principle (Q. 55:7-9). In methodology, *mizan* becomes:

- cross-checking qualitative and quantitative findings
- identifying convergences and contradictions
- interpreting tensions
- ethically evaluating conclusions
- constructing unified insight

This creates a balanced, triangulated interpretation that prevents methodological imbalance.

#### **28.4.4 QTM Research Cycle**

- Observation of ayat (problem identification)
- Qualitative sense-making (Q-Strand)
- Quantitative measurement (E-Strand)
- Verification and balance (Mizan phase)
- Ethical evaluation (O-Strand)
- Unified interpretation
- Application in real-world contexts

This is a hermeneutic-empirical-ethical loop, grounded in Qur'anic epistemology.

### **28.5 Applications of QTM Across Disciplines**

#### **28.5.1 Social Sciences**

- Mixed household surveys (quantitative) + narrative interviews (qualitative)
- Qur'anic ethical evaluation of policies

#### **28.5.1 Health Sciences**

- Epidemiological measurement
- Patient experience narratives
- Moral responsibility in public health (Q. 2:195)

#### **28.5.1 Environmental Research**

- Ecological data + community perceptions
- Qur'anic stewardship ethics (Q. 6:141; 30:41)

#### **28.5.4 Psychology**

- Behavioral data + inner-self reflections (Q. 91:7-10)

#### **28.5.5 Economics and Finance**

- Statistical indicators + ethical justice analysis (Q. 55:7-9; 4:135)

The Qur'anic triangulation model ensures empirical validity, interpretive depth, and moral grounding.

## 28.6 Ethical Integrity in Mixed-Methods: The Qur'anic Perspective

The Qur'an establishes non-negotiable ethical commitments:

- Truthfulness (Q. 9:119)
- Avoiding distortion (Q. 4:135)
- Verification (Q. 49:6)
- Accountability (Q. 99:7-8)

Thus, mixed-methods ethics includes:

- preventing selective reporting
- avoiding data manipulation
- integrating findings honestly
- representing participants responsibly

## 28.7 Mixed-Methods as Qur'anic Cognitive Integration

Mixed methods is not merely a technique; it is an epistemic attitude rooted in the Qur'an's multi-layered view of reality. Modern methodology divides knowledge into categories; the Qur'an reunites them under *tawhid*, where empirical measurement, qualitative meaning, and moral truth form a single coherent epistemology. The Qur'anic Triangulation Model (QTM) demonstrates:

- qualitative depth through *tadabbur* and *tafakkur*
- quantitative precision through *qadar* and *mizan*
- ethical grounding through *'adl*, *ṣidq*, *amanah*

Thus, Qur'anic epistemology offers the most comprehensive foundation for mixed-methods research, surpassing pragmatism, post-positivism, or constructivism. This chapter establishes mixed methods as a Qur'anic obligation for any domain where reality's complexity cannot be reduced to a single mode of knowing.

## Chapter 29: Qur'anic Methodology as a Meta-Methodology

### 29.1 Qur'anic Methodology Beyond Method

Modern methodological systems-qualitative, quantitative, mixed-methods, historical, philosophical, hermeneutic, and computational -each present themselves as structured tools for generating knowledge. Yet all such approaches rest on deeper meta-methodological assumptions: what counts as knowledge, how truth is verified, what constitutes evidence, and how meaning is constructed. These foundational issues are not technical but epistemic, ethical, and ontological.

The Qur'an operates at precisely this deeper level. It does not merely propose *methods*; it articulates the conditions, purposes, and limits of all methods, functioning as a meta-methodology, a framework that governs how all other epistemic systems ought to operate. The Qur'an provides the overarching architecture for:

- the ontology of reality (Q. 6:59; 24:35);
- the sources of knowing-perception, reason, revelation (Q. 16:78; 17:36; 96:1-5);
- the criteria of truth-verification (*tathabbut*), coherence (*la ikhtilaf*), alignment with moral reality (*haqq*) (Q. 49:6; 4:82; 17:81);
- the purpose of knowledge-justice, wisdom, human stewardship (Q. 4:135; 16:90; 2:30).

Whereas qualitative and quantitative methodologies operate within specific investigative domains, the Qur'an defines the overarching logic by which all inquiry is evaluated, making it a methodology above methodologies, hence, a meta-methodology. This chapter develops that argument across five dimensions:

- Qur'anic ontology of knowledge: how knowledge is structured within reality.
- Epistemic foundations: cognitive, ethical, and metaphysical principles.
- Meta-methodological criteria: universality, coherence, verification, and moral accountability.
- Regulation and critique of human methods: the Qur'an's correction of empirical, speculative, and rhetorical excesses.
- Integrative synthesis: how Qur'anic methodology governs qualitative, quantitative, historical, legal, and scientific methods.

The Qur'an does not offer a narrow "Islamic method," but rather a meta-theoretical framework enabling the evaluation and integration of all methods. This chapter shows that Qur'anic methodology:

- transcends disciplinary boundaries;
- integrates empirical and interpretive pathways;
- establishes ethical constraints on knowledge;
- functions as a universal epistemic architecture.

In doing so, the Qur'an becomes not simply an object of research but a regulator of research logic itself.

## 29.2 The Qur'an as Meta-Epistemic Framework

### 29.2.1 Meta-Methodology vs. Methodology

A methodology provides:

- procedures
- techniques
- rules of evidence
- analytic pathways

A meta-methodology provides:

- the ontological conditions for knowledge
- the epistemic justification of methods
- the ethical boundaries of inquiry
- the purpose and value of investigation

Modern philosophy describes such meta-systems as “theories of method” (Kant), “conditions of possible knowledge” (Husserl), or “paradigms” (Kuhn). But no modern system integrates ontology, epistemology, ethics, and purpose in a unified structure-something the Qur'an accomplishes explicitly.

### 29.2.2 The Qur'an as a Comprehensive Epistemic Architecture

The Qur'an regulates knowing at all levels:

Ontological - What is real?

Qur'an 6:59 describes the “keys of the unseen,” grounding reality in the divine act of knowing. Q. 22:6 declares, “That is because God is the Truth (*al-Haqq*),” linking ontology and epistemology.

Epistemic - How is truth known?

Qur'an 17:36 warns against speaking without knowledge, establishing epistemic discipline. Q. 49:6 mandates *tathabbut*, verification-anticipating modern reliability protocols.

Ethical - What is permissible in knowing?

Qur'an 4:135 and Q. 5:8 command justice and non-distortion of evidence. Q. 2:283 grounds research ethics in *amanah* (trust).

Teleological - Why seek knowledge?

Human beings are created to know, reflect, and steward (Q. 2:30; 96:1-5; 67:2).

Thus, the Qur'an performs the work of what contemporary scholars would call an overarching research paradigm.



### 29.2.3 The Qur'an's Multi-Level Epistemology

The Qur'an names multiple domains of knowledge:

- empirical (Q. 22:46; 29:20);
- rational (Q. 10:100; 6:151-153);
- moral (Q. 91:7-10);
- spiritual (Q. 24:35; 39:9);
- revelatory (Q. 3:7; 5:44).

Because human inquiry touches all these domains, no single method can be sufficient. Thus, the Qur'an legitimises:

- measurement (*qadar, hisab*);
- observation and travel (*siri fi l-ard*);
- reflective interpretation (*tafakkur, tadabbur*);
- comparative reasoning (Q. 39:18);
- narrative-historical evaluation (Q. 12:111).

The Qur'an functions as a meta-methodology by coordinating input from all epistemic sources under one unified framework of truth (*ḥaqq*).

### 29.2.4 Qur'anic Meta-Principles of Inquiry

Four major meta-principles shape the Qur'an's epistemic logic:

Tawḥid (Unity of Truth): Truth cannot contradict truth. Q. 4:82: *"If it were from other than God, you would find much discrepancy."*

Ḥaqq (Objective, Real Truth): Truth is not constructed but discovered. Q. 17:81: *"Truth has come, falsehood has vanished."*

Adl (Justice) as Epistemic Integrity: Knowledge must serve justice. Q. 4:135: truth must be spoken *"even against yourselves."*

Mizan (Balance): All evidence must be weighed. Q. 55:7-9: The universe is created with balance.

These principles operate not at the methodological level but at the meta-methodological foundation, shaping all methods.

## 29.3 Qur'anic Regulation of Empirical and Rational Methods

This section explores how the Qur'an critiques, expands, and regulates the limits of empirical science, rational philosophy, and human conjecture, thus functioning as a meta-methodology.

### 29.3.1 Qur'anic Commands for Empirical Inquiry

The Qur'an repeatedly instructs believers to observe, investigate, and explore:

- *“Travel through the earth and see...”* (Q. 29:20; 30:9).
- *“Do they not look at the sky above them?”* (Q. 50:6).
- *“In the creation of the heavens and the earth... are signs for the possessors of understanding.”* (Q. 3:190-191).

These verses establish:

- empirical observation
- pattern recognition
- causal reasoning
- historical comparison

Thus, the Qur'an authorises empirical methodology.

### 29.3.2 Qur'anic Critique of Empiricism as Exclusive Method

The Qur'an rejects empiricism as a totalizing epistemology. Qur'an 2:55 shows that not all truth is visible. Q. 12:76 shows hidden knowledge. Q. 31:34 lists domains inaccessible to empirical science. Thus, empirical knowledge is:

- necessary
- insufficient
- validated through verification
- ethically constrained

The Qur'an provides the scope and limits of empiricism-meta-methodology.

### 29.3.3 Regulation of Rational Inquiry

Reason (*'aql*) is repeatedly invoked:

- Q. 2:242; 10:24; 5:100 - *“so that you may understand.”*
- Q. 29:43 - *“Only those of knowledge understand them.”*

Yet reason is also warned:

- against speculation (*ẓann*; Q. 53:28),
- against arrogance (Q. 96:6-7),
- against constructing reality without evidence (Q. 17:36),
- against rejecting truth due to bias (Q. 2:87; 6:25).

The Qur'an balances rationality and humility, producing a meta-rational structure.

### 29.3.4 Speech, Evidence, and the Epistemic Ethics of Testimony

The Qur'an establishes rigorous rules for claims:

- *“Bring your proof if you are truthful.”* (Q. 2:111)
- *“Verify information.”* (Q. 49:6)
- *“Do not mix truth with falsehood.”* (Q. 2:42)

This anticipates modern standards of:

- evidence-based reasoning
- source reliability
- argument validity
- burden-of-proof protocols

Thus, the Qur'an regulates rhetorical, legal, journalistic, and scholarly discourse at the meta-level.

## Chapter 30: Toward an Islamically Integrated Research Paradigm

### 30.1 Completing the Epistemic Circle

Every intellectual tradition has sought a framework that unifies the purposes of knowledge, the methods of discovery, and the moral responsibility that accompanies human inquiry. Modern research paradigms—whether empirical, rationalist, interpretive, or mixed—tend to fragment knowledge into specialised disciplines, each governed by its own assumptions about reality, knowing, ethics, and purpose. By contrast, the Qur'an offers a unified epistemic worldview grounded in *tawhīd* (توحيد), the oneness of God, and extending from metaphysics to methodology, from ontology to ethics, and from knowledge acquisition to social transformation.

This book has reconstructed a comprehensive research paradigm derived exclusively from the Qur'an. The journey began with *ilm* (knowledge), proceeded through the cognitive instruments of the intellect (*'aql*, عقل), reflection (*tafakkur*, تفكر), deep textual contemplation (*tadabbur*, تدبر), and moral remembrance (*tadhakkur*, تذكر), and culminated in the integration of revelation and reason. Subsequent parts explored empirical foundations (*nazar*, نظر; *sair*, سير), validation (*burhan*, برهان; *bayyina*, بينة), synthesis (*hikmah*, حكمة), application (*'amal*, عمل), transmission (*da'wah*, دعوة), and preservation (*dhikr*, ذكر; *Kitab*, كتاب). Later chapters addressed contemporary reconstruction, the unity of truth, and the cosmological dimensions of Qur'anic knowledge.

This conclusion aims to synthesise the entire epistemic architecture into a single coherent paradigm—a Qur'anically grounded meta-methodology capable of informing contemporary research across all disciplines. This paradigm is not a substitute for scientific or social-scientific methods; rather, it offers a philosophical, ethical, and epistemic foundation upon which all valid methods must stand. Central Qur'anic themes that guide this synthesis include:

- Tawhīd as the unity of truth and coherence of reality: “*Had there been gods besides God, both the heavens and the earth would have been ruined.*” (Q. 21:22) “*God sets forth a parable of a slave belonging to several masters... versus one belonging to a single master—are they equal?*” (Q. 39:29)
- Yaqin (certainty) as the completion of epistemology “*You shall surely know with certainty ('ilm al-yaqin)... then you shall see with the eye of certainty ('ayn al-yaqin)... and then you shall know with the truth of certainty (haqq al-yaqin).*” (Q. 102:5-7)
- The entire epistemic cycle of *'ilm* → *'aql* → *yaqin* → *hikmah*, representing the ascent from knowledge to insight, from insight to certainty, and from certainty to wisdom.

Together, these constitute the philosophical and methodological core of an Islamically integrated paradigm of research.

## 30.2 The Ontological Unity of Truth (Tawḥid) as Epistemic Foundation

*Tawḥid* is not merely a theological doctrine; it is an ontological and epistemological principle. The Qur'an presents reality as a unified, coherent, purposeful creation governed by a single divine source. This ontological unity necessitates epistemic unity: all true knowledge, empirical, rational, ethical, or revealed, must ultimately converge.

Modern epistemology often operates within a pluralistic or fragmented worldview. Scientific realism, empirical positivism, hermeneutic interpretivism, post-structural scepticism, and phenomenological subjectivism describe different “worlds” of knowing. By contrast, the Qur'an asserts that truth (*ḥaqq*, حق) is singular, coherent, and non-contradictory (Q. 4:82). Implications for Research

- Different disciplines study different aspects of the same unified reality.
- Contradictions indicate either methodological limitation or interpretive error.
- Interdisciplinarity is not optional but demanded by the structure of reality.
- Knowledge must be integrated rather than siloed.

Tawḥid gives research a philosophical grounding absent from secular methodologies, avoiding the fragmentation that characterises modern academia (Nasr, 1993; Leaman, 2006).

## 30.3 The Epistemic Ascent: From ‘Ilm to ‘Aql to Yaqin to Ḥikmah

Across the Qur'anic discourse, knowledge follows a *hierarchical epistemic progression*:

### 30.3.1 ‘Ilm (Knowledge) - The Foundation

The Qur'an repeatedly affirms the value of *‘ilm*-understanding facts, signs, and meanings: “Say: Are those who know equal to those who do not?” (Q. 39:9)

This includes:

- empirical observations
- historical lessons
- textual knowledge
- rational judgments

### 30.3.2 ‘Aql (Reason) - The Organ of Understanding

Reason (‘*aql*) is the instrument by which knowledge is interpreted: “Do they not reason?” (Q. 2:44, 6:50, 36:68)

The Qur'an rejects blind imitation (*taqlid*), intellectual stagnation, and unverified belief.

### 30.3.3 Yaqin (Certainty) - The Completion of Knowing

Yaqin represents epistemic finality, where knowledge becomes so evident that doubt is no longer possible (Q. 102:5-7). Three ascending levels:

- 'Ilm al-yaqin - knowledge by inference
- 'Ayn al-yaqin - knowledge by direct witnessing
- Haqq al-yaqin - truth in its realised essence

Yaqin is what modern epistemology lacks: a category of *ultimate grounding* for knowledge.

### 30.3.4 Hikmah (Wisdom) - The Integration of Knowledge, Reason, and Certainty

Wisdom (*hikmah*) in the Qur'an is the synthesis of:

- true knowledge
- sound reasoning
- moral insight
- lived certainty

It represents the Qur'an's highest epistemic ideal (Q. 2:269).

Implications: Research in this paradigm is not merely informational but transformational, guiding personal and social flourishing.

### 30.3.5 The Qur'anic Research Cycle: Empirical, Rational, Moral, and Spiritual Dimensions

The Qur'an presents research as a multi-stage cycle:

- Observation (nazar, نظر)
- Travel/Experience (sair fi al-ard, سير في الأرض)
- Reflection (tafakkur, تفكر)
- Deep textual analysis (tadabbur, تدبر)
- Moral remembrance (tadhakkur, تذكر)
- Verification (tathabbut, تثبت)
- Integration (hikmah, حكمة)
- Application ('amal, عمل)
- Transmission (da'wah/Tabligh)
- Preservation (dhikr, Kitab)

This cycle distinguishes Qur'anic epistemology from secular scientific methodology in several ways:

- It unites empiricism and spirituality: Observation is linked with moral insight (Q. 22:46).
- It integrates knowledge and ethics: Claims must be morally accountable (Q. 4:135).
- It elevates reflection as a key epistemic act: Tafakkur appears more than 18 times as a command.
- It rejects epistemic speculation: “Do not pursue that of which you do not know.” (Q. 17:36)
- It assigns meaning to knowledge: Knowledge without purpose or benefit is epistemologically invalid.

### 30.4 Reconciling Modern Methods Under Qur'anic Meta-Methodology

Modern methods-qualitative, quantitative, mixed, computational- contain partial truths but lack a unifying epistemic criterion. Qualitative research resonates with:

- Tafakkur
- Tadabbur
- hermeneutic reflection
- context-sensitive interpretation

Quantitative research resonates with:

- numerical signs (Q. 65:12)
- order and balance (Q. 55:7-9)
- empirical verification

Mixed methods resonate with:

- triangulation (bayyina, between rational and empirical)
- multi-dimensional signs
- epistemic complementarities

The Qur'an, therefore, functions as a meta-methodology: it does not replace methods but evaluates them according to its meta-criteria of coherence, truth, ethics, benefit, and unity.

### 30.5 The Qur'anic Criteria for Evaluating All Knowledge Systems

A Qur'anic research paradigm evaluates all knowledge through the following criteria:

- Truth-conformity (al-ḥaqq)
- Verification (tathabbut)
- Coherence (lā ikhtilaf)
- Moral integrity (‘adl, amanah)
- Purpose and benefit (ṣalaḥ, huda)
- Unity of truth (tawḥid)

These meta-criteria exceed the epistemic limitations of modern empiricism and provide a universal standard applicable across scientific, social scientific, philosophical, and theological domains.

### 30.6 Yaqin as the Apex of Qur'anic Epistemology

The Qur'an's epistemology is not satisfied with the probability-driven model of modern science. Rather, it aims for:

- certainty grounded in truth



- certainty confirmed by evidence
- certainty realised existentially

This addresses a major shortcoming of modern epistemology. Probability, by definition, can never reach certainty; the Qur'an elevates knowledge beyond the probabilistic limits of empirical science without rejecting empirical inquiry. The three stages of yaqin correspond to the three dimensions of research:

| Stage of Yaqin Modern Parallel Qur'anic Function |                      |                           |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| 'Ilm al-yaqin                                    | Inference            | Theoretical reasoning     |
| 'Ayn al-yaqin                                    | Observation          | Empirical confirmation    |
| Ḥaqq al-yaqin                                    | Internal realization | Lived ethical integration |

Thus, the Qur'anic paradigm completes what modern science begins.

### 30.7 The Future of Islamic Epistemology: Toward an Integrated Model of Global Research

The Qur'anic paradigm, when fully developed, offers:

- A unified worldview-integrating science, theology, and ethics.
- A meta-methodology-governing modern research methods.
- A moral compass-regulating the use and dissemination of knowledge.
- An ontology of unity-grounding all inquiry in a non-fragmented view of reality.
- A model for interdisciplinary integration-breaking down silos in academia.
- A transformative vision-shaping human civilisation through wisdom.

### 30.8 Toward a Qur'anically Integrated Research Civilisation

The Qur'an provides not merely an epistemology but a civilizational philosophy of knowledge. It envisions knowledge as:

- worship ('ibadah)
- service (khidmah)
- trust (amanah)
- guidance (huda)
- wisdom (hikmah)

In this worldview, the pursuit of knowledge is an act of devotion, the application of knowledge is an act of moral responsibility, and the transmission of knowledge is an act of stewardship.

The Qur'anic epistemology developed throughout this book, beginning with the foundations of *'ilm*, progressing through cognitive instruments, empirical engagement, verification, synthesis, and culminating

in the unity of truth, presents a holistic research paradigm that can reshape contemporary academic practice.

The end of this manuscript is thus not a conclusion but an invitation: To build an authentically Qur'anic research civilisation grounded in *tawḥid*, driven by certainty, and oriented toward wisdom.

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## Appendices

### Appendix I: Glossary of Qur’anic Epistemological Terms

This glossary offers a reference guide to key epistemological and methodological concepts as found in the Qur’an. Each term includes transliteration, Qur’anic usage, and interpretive notes drawn from classical and modern exegetical traditions.

| Arabic Term      | Transliteration                           | Conceptual Definition and Qur’anic Context                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ‘Ilm (علم)       | <i>Knowledge</i>                          | The most foundational epistemic term encompasses divine, prophetic, and human knowledge. The Qur’an distinguishes between <i>‘ilm al-yaqin</i> (knowledge of certainty) and <i>‘ayn al-yaqin</i> (vision of certainty), implying progressive cognition (Q 102:5-7). |
| ‘Aql (عقل)       | <i>Intellect / Reason</i>                 | Rational faculty enabling moral discernment and reflection upon revelation. The Qur’an repeatedly commands: “ <i>Afala ta’qilun?</i> ” (“Will you not reason?”) (Q. 2:44; 36:62).                                                                                   |
| Hikmah (حكمة)    | <i>Wisdom</i>                             | The synthesis of knowledge and action is frequently associated with divine guidance (Q. 2:269). Wisdom in Qur’anic epistemology signifies the applied realisation of knowledge through moral insight.                                                               |
| Tafakkur (تفكر)  | <i>Reflection</i>                         | Reflective reasoning on divine signs in creation (Q 3:191). It denotes cognitive contemplation, not merely speculative philosophy.                                                                                                                                  |
| Tadabbur (تدبر)  | <i>Contemplation / Deep consideration</i> | A method of interpretive reflection used to penetrate the inner meanings of Qur’anic revelation (Q. 47:24). Tadabbur forms a core part of hermeneutic methodology.                                                                                                  |
| Tadhakkur (تذكر) | <i>Remembrance / Recollection</i>         | Recollection of divine truths already embedded in the human <i>fiṭrah</i> (natural disposition). It is epistemologically linked to moral consciousness (Q. 87:9-10).                                                                                                |
| Basirah (بصيرة)  | <i>Insight / Spiritual perception</i>     | An epistemic vision beyond empirical observation, associated with prophetic consciousness (Q. 12:108).                                                                                                                                                              |

| Arabic Term                       | Transliteration                       | Conceptual Definition and Qur'anic Context                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Ḥaqq (حق)</b>                  | <i>Truth / Reality</i>                | The ontological and epistemic absolute, used in contrast with <i>baṭil</i> (falsehood). Knowledge in Qur'anic discourse seeks alignment with <i>ḥaqq</i> (Q. 17:81). |
| <b>Fiṭrah (فطرة)</b>              | <i>Primordial nature</i>              | The innate cognitive and moral disposition through which humans recognise truth (Q. 30:30).                                                                          |
| <b>Bayyinah (بينة)</b>            | <i>Clear evidence / Proof</i>         | A manifest proof, often scriptural or rational, serving as epistemic validation (Q. 98:1).                                                                           |
| <b>Ḥujjah (حجة)</b>               | <i>Argument / Proof</i>               | The logical justification of belief or action, as used in dialectical Qur'anic reasoning (Q. 6:149).                                                                 |
| <b>‘Ilm al-Yaqin (علم اليقين)</b> | <i>Knowledge of certainty</i>         | Conceptual stage of intellectual certainty achieved through divine knowledge (Q. 102:5).                                                                             |
| <b>‘Ayn al-Yaqin (عين اليقين)</b> | <i>Vision of certainty</i>            | Experiential realisation of truth, transcending abstract knowledge (Q. 102:7).                                                                                       |
| <b>Ḥaqq al-Yaqin (حق اليقين)</b>  | <i>Truth of certainty</i>             | The final stage of absolute certainty, where the knower is unified with the known truth (Q. 56:95).                                                                  |
| <b>Amanah (أمانة)</b>             | <i>Trust / Moral responsibility</i>   | Refers to the human responsibility to carry divine knowledge ethically (Q. 33:72).                                                                                   |
| <b>Tawḥid (توحيد)</b>             | <i>Oneness / Unification</i>          | The unifying epistemological principle: all true knowledge leads to recognition of the One God.                                                                      |
| <b>Ayah (آية)</b>                 | <i>Sign / Symbol</i>                  | Both the verses of revelation and the phenomena of the universe serve as epistemic indicators of divine reality (Q. 41:53).                                          |
| <b>Kitab (كتاب)</b>               | <i>Book / Divine record</i>           | A metaphor for divine order and revelation -epistemic source of absolute guidance (Q. 2:2).                                                                          |
| <b>‘Ilm Ladunnī (علم لدني)</b>    | <i>Knowledge from Divine Presence</i> | Intuitive, non-discursive knowledge granted by God directly (Q. 18:65).                                                                                              |

| Arabic Term           | Transliteration                   | Conceptual Definition and Qur’anic Context                                              |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Tawfīq</b> (توفيق) | <i>Divine alignment / Success</i> | The confluence of human effort with divine guidance in attaining correct understanding. |

This glossary reflects the integrative nature of Qur’anic epistemology, wherein cognition, revelation, and morality are inseparable.

## Appendix II: Verse Concordance for Epistemic and Ethical Concepts

This concordance highlights selected Qur’anic verses foundational to epistemology, categorised by concept. Each entry provides the Arabic term, thematic domain, and key reference.

| Conceptual Domain           | Term              | Key Verses            | Epistemic Function                                               |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Knowledge</b>            | ‘Ilm              | Q. 2:32; 20:114; 96:5 | Establishes that knowledge is divine, revealed, and progressive. |
| <b>Reason</b>               | ‘Aql              | Q. 2:44; 8:22; 67:10  | Encourages rational reflection as an act of faith.               |
| <b>Reflection</b>           | Tafakkur          | Q. 3:191; 13:3        | Connects reflection with signs in creation.                      |
| <b>Wisdom</b>               | Hikmah            | Q. 2:269; 31:12       | Defines wisdom as a divine gift rooted in morality.              |
| <b>Certainty</b>            | Yaqin             | Q. 15:99; 56:95       | Describes the degrees of certainty in faith and cognition.       |
| <b>Truth</b>                | Ḥaqq              | Q. 17:81; 10:32       | The epistemic endpoint and measure of reality.                   |
| <b>Proof</b>                | Bayyinah / Ḥujjah | Q. 98:1; 6:149        | Establishes evidentiary standards in belief and law.             |
| <b>Faith and Knowledge</b>  | Iman wa ‘Ilm      | Q. 3:18; 35:28        | Shows interplay between faith and understanding.                 |
| <b>Ethical Epistemology</b> | Amanah / ‘Adl     | Q. 33:72; 16:90       | Frames knowledge as a moral trust requiring justice.             |
| <b>Signs and Revelation</b> | Ayah / Kitab      | Q. 41:53; 2:2         | Positions revelation and nature as parallel sources of truth.    |

This table provides the researcher with an organised reference system linking epistemic concepts to Qur’anic verses, enabling thematic exegesis (*tafsir Mawḍu‘ī*) and content analysis.

## Appendix III: Visual Frameworks and Flowcharts

The Qur’anic methodology of knowledge can be visualised as an interconnected framework involving divine revelation, human cognition, and moral application. The following conceptual models summarise this epistemic structure.

### A. Hierarchical Framework of Qur’anic Knowledge

**Divine Source → Revelation → Rational Reflection → Moral Action → Certainty**

**Description:**

- **Divine Source (Allah)** - Origin of all truth (*al-Haqq*).
- **Revelation (Wahy)** - Transmission of divine knowledge via prophets.
- **Rational Reflection (‘Aql, Tafakkur)** - Intellectual engagement with revelation and creation.
- **Moral Action (‘Amal Ṣaliḥ)** - Application of knowledge within ethical boundaries.
- **Certainty (Yaqin)** - Culmination of epistemic journey, uniting cognition with faith.

### B. Circular Model of Knowledge Derivation

**Revelation → Reflection → Verification → Transformation → Return to Revelation**

This model captures the iterative hermeneutic process of understanding the Qur’an, emphasising that knowledge is not static but cyclically renewed through ethical experience and interpretive engagement.

### C. Triadic Model of Qur’anic Epistemology

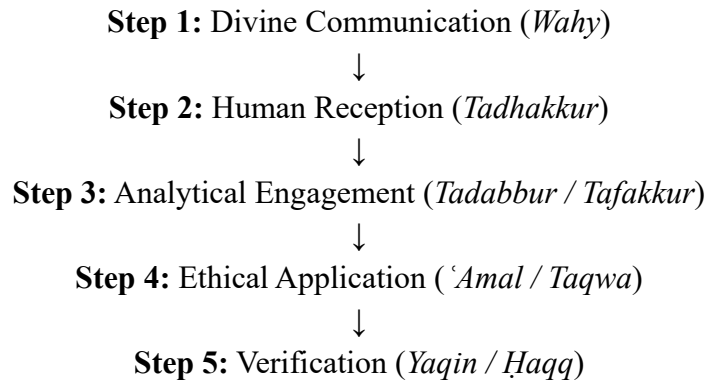
| Revelatory Dimension | Rational Dimension          | Moral Dimension           |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Wahy (Revelation)    | ‘Aql (Intellect)            | Taqwa (God-consciousness) |
| Source of Truth      | Instrument of Understanding | Ethical Regulator         |
| Transcendent         | Analytical                  | Transformative            |

**Interpretation:**

The triadic structure reflects the Qur’an’s holistic epistemology: truth is realised only when revelation, reason, and ethics operate harmoniously.



## D. Flowchart: From Revelation to Application



This flow illustrates that the Qur'anic model of inquiry is simultaneously **theological**, **rational**, and **ethical**, leading to holistic knowledge rather than fragmented empiricism.

## Appendix IV: Research Methodological Protocol (Detailed Hermeneutic Process)

This appendix presents a comprehensive protocol for conducting Qur'an-centred research methodology grounded in epistemic, hermeneutic, and ethical principles derived from the Qur'an itself. It is tailored for scholars who seek to operationalise an integrative epistemology of revelation (*wahy*), reason (*'aql*) and experience (*tajribah*) in their inquiries. The protocol emphasises the unity of knowing, reflection, verification and application within the Qur'anic paradigm. The following sections detail the foundational principles, stage-by-stage hermeneutic process, tools and instruments, validation criteria, and the practical workflow for carrying out Qur'an-based research.

### A. Foundational Principle: Knowledge as Trust (*Amanah*)

At the heart of the Qur'anic research process lies the principle that knowledge (*'ilm*) is a trust (*amanah*) bestowed upon human beings (Q. 33:72). The Qur'an frames cognition not merely as information gathering but as a moral and ontological responsibility. Accordingly, the researcher begins with the awareness that any investigation into the signs (*ayat*) of Allah is both intellectual and devotional. This trust carries three interdependent commitments: purity of intention (*niyyah*), intellectual sincerity (*sidq*) and ethical accountability (*'adl*) (Q. 2:30-31; Q. 96:1-5).

Thus, the methodological protocol is not a neutral technique but a disciplined way of seeing, thinking, and acting. It underscores that the act of inquiry cannot be detached from reflective submission (*tadhakkur*) and moral integrity. The methodological stance moves beyond secular models of "value-neutral" research to an integrated epistemology where cognition is linked with worship (*'ibadah*) and stewardship (*khilafah*).

### B. Stage-by-Stage Hermeneutic Process

The following six stages outline a structured approach to Qur'an-centred research, from thematic identification to ethical application and feedback.

#### Stage 1: Thematic Identification (*Tahdid al-Mawdu'*)

- Select the conceptual domain or issue for investigation (e.g., *hikmah*, *yaqin*, *mizan*).
- Use digital and classical concordances (e.g., al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li-Alfaz al-Qur'an) to compile all relevant occurrences of the term.
- Establish the scope of inquiry: Are you focusing on lexical occurrence, thematic distribution, or the functional role of the term in Qur'anic discourse?
- Preliminary research questions might include: What is the root meaning of the term? How does the term function in different contexts? What moral or epistemic implication does it carry?

#### Stage 2: Linguistic & Semantic Analysis (*Tahlil al-Lughawi*)

- Examine the triliteral root and its derivatives; consult classical lexicons (e.g., Lisan al-'Arab, Mufradat al-Qur'an).

- Analyse the term's morphological forms and syntactic positions across verses; note variations in meaning, nuance and usage.
- Evaluate semantic fields and interdisciplinary usage: Does the term appear in theological, legal, ethical or cosmological contexts?
- This linguistic foundation ensures fidelity to the Qur'an's internal language system rather than importing external philosophical categories.

### **Stage 3: Contextual Exegesis (*Asbab al-Nuzul & Siyaq*)**

- Investigate the historical circumstances of revelation (*Asbab al-Nuzul*) where applicable to the verses under study.
- Examine the immediate textual context (surah and surrounding ayat) for coherence of meaning and rhetorical structure.
- Use intra-Qur'anic cross-referencing: identify related verses and examine how the conceptual term functions across different contexts (Qur'an coherence - *nazm*).
- The focus is on the Qur'an as a self-referential and cohesive discourse in which revelation and context are integrated (Q. 4:82).

### **Stage 4: Comparative Thematic Interpretation (*Tafsir Mawdu'i*)**

- Group the collected verses thematically (e.g., epistemic, ethical, ontological clusters).
- Compare how the conceptual term interacts with other key terms (e.g., *'aql*, *ḥaqq*, *taqwa*) to uncover patterns and structural relations.
- Apply a typological analysis: does the term appear in narrative form, legal command, exhortation, or cosmogonic statement?
- This stage builds the researcher's interpretive synthesis, bridging linguistic detail with thematic coherence and moral import.

### **Stage 5: Verification & Ethical Evaluation (*Tahqiq al-Maqṣad al-Akhlaqī*)**

- Confirm that the interpretive outcomes align with the moral, spiritual and epistemic goals of the Qur'an. Questions to ask: Are conclusions consistent with justice (*'adl*), mercy (*rahmah*) and balance (*mizan*)? (Q. 16:90)
- Assess the researcher's own intention and bias: Have personal ideological or disciplinary commitments influenced interpretation in ways that conflict with Qur'anic integrity?
- Evaluate application: How will the findings affect practice, policy or discipline? Knowledge divorced from action is condemned (Q. 28:78).
- The verification process affirms that research is not merely descriptive but normative - oriented toward righteousness and service.

### **Stage 6: Integration & Feedback (*Tadbir wa 'Amal*)**

- Translate insights into contemporary disciplinary frameworks: natural sciences, social sciences, humanities. Align with Qur’anic categories rather than secular paradigms.
- Map how the findings can shape curricula, institutional policy or interdisciplinary frameworks rooted in *tawhīd*.
- Establish a feedback loop: reflection on how newly acquired knowledge changes the researcher’s worldview; further inquiry arises from ethical action and lived experience (Q. 51:20-21).
- Document limitations and propose further questions for ongoing research, acknowledging that knowledge is provisional and open to refinement under divine guidance.

C. Instruments, Sources & Data Management

- **Primary Source:** The Qur’an (critical Arabic text), using recognised editions with verse numbering and root lexicon mapping.
- **Secondary Sources:** Lexicons (Lisan al-‘Arab, Mufradat al-Qur’an), classical tafsir works (e.g., al-Ṭabari, Ibn Kathir), modern hermeneutic studies (e.g., Al-Shawabka & Sharma, 2020; Ridwan & Rona, 2024)
- **Analytical Tools:** Content-analysis software for semantic mapping, concordance databases, and conceptual ontology tools (e.g., OWL frameworks applied to Qur’an concepts)
- **Data Management:** Maintain a systematic log of verses, roots, contexts, themes, interpretive notes, ethical implications and application pathways. Use version control to track evolving interpretations.

D. Validation Criteria: Four-fold Check

| Criterion                                             | Description                                         | Research Checkpoint                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>Qur’anic Coherence (Tanasuq)</b>                   | Internal consistency with Qur’anic discourse        | Cross-check across multiple verses            |
| <b>Linguistic Authenticity (Ṣiḥḥat al-Lughah)</b>     | Fidelity to Arabic root meaning & syntax            | Use lexicon & morphology analysis             |
| <b>Ethical Integrity (Akhlaqiyyah)</b>                | Alignment with Qur’anic values of justice & mercy   | Review intention & implications               |
| <b>Rational Compatibility (Ma‘quliyyah ‘Aqli yah)</b> | Interpretive reasonableness, avoiding contradiction | Present the logical structure of the argument |

## E. Practical Workflow & Implementation

- **Concept Selection:** Choose the term or phenomenon (e.g., *taqwa*, *yaqin*).
- **Verse Extraction:** Use concordance tools to compile all occurrences.
- **Lexical Analysis:** Study root meanings, derivative forms, and use in classical sources.
- **Contextual Mapping:** Document surah, position, authorial context and possible Asbab al-Nuzul.
- **Thematic Clustering:** Organise verses into conceptual clusters and identify patterns.
- **Interpretive Synthesis:** Write an integrative essay linking linguistic, contextual and thematic findings, referencing Qur'an and hermeneutic literature.
- **Ethical Evaluation:** Reflect on intention, bias, social relevance, and application potential.
- **Integration:** Propose how findings inform research methodology, discipline practice or educational frameworks.
- **Feedback Loop:** Monitor the impact of findings on the researcher's worldview and practice; identify further questions.
- **Documentation & Publication:** Draft article or chapter, provide full citations, transparency of data and method, and subject to peer review within the Qur'an-based epistemic community.

## F. Notes on Ethical Responsibility

- Researchers must remain aware of the ontological ground that all knowledge belongs to Allah (*al-'Ilm Li-Llah*). The aim is not merely intellectual achievement but moral transformation and service.
- Avoid disciplinary arrogance and reductionism: knowledge that ignores its ethical dimension is analogous to the Qur'anic critique of those who accumulate *'ilm* without *taqwa*. (Q 30:7)
- Promote knowledge for collective benefit (*mā'ūnah*), ecological stewardship, social justice and human dignity.

This protocol provides a rigorous, ethically grounded and Qur'an-centred approach to research methodology. It honours the Qur'anic vision of knowledge as integrative - combining language, context, reason and ethics within the unity of *tawhīd*. By following this protocol, researchers can transform inquiry into an act of worship, bridge the gap between revelation and reason, and contribute to the renewal of knowledge grounded in divine truth.

## Definition of Qur'anic terminology

### A. Epistemology & Knowledge

#### A.1 'Ilm (علم) - Knowledge

**Qur'anic Definition:** 'Ilm in the Qur'an denotes God-granted, objective, and accountable knowledge that corresponds to reality (*haqq*) and obligates moral responsibility. It is not mere information, but knowledge that distinguishes truth from conjecture and guides action.

**Key Qur'anic Evidence:**

- “*And do not pursue that of which you have no 'ilm.*” (Q. 17:36)
- “*Allah will raise those who believe among you and those who were given 'ilm in degrees.*” (Q. 58:11)
- “*Only those of His servants who possess 'ilm truly fear Allah.*” (Q. 35:28)

**Epistemic Implication:** 'Ilm is verifiable, ethical, and purposive knowledge, inseparable from responsibility (*taklif*) and reverence (*khashyah*).

#### A.2 Yaqin (يقين) - Certainty

**Qur'anic Definition:** Yaqin signifies unshakable epistemic certainty attained through truth-aligned knowledge, perception, and realisation. It represents the culmination of the knowing process, not its beginning.

**Key Qur'anic Evidence:**

- “*You will surely know with 'ilm al-Yaqin.*” (Q. 102:5)
- “*Then you will surely see it with 'ayn al-Yaqin.*” (Q. 102:7)
- “*Indeed, this is the haqq al-Yaqin.*” (Q. 56:95)
- “*And worship your Lord until there comes to you al-Yaqin.*” (Q. 15:99)

**Epistemic Implication:** Yaqin is epistemic completion, where knowledge transforms into existential certainty and embodied truth.

#### A.3 Ma'rifah (معرفة) - Recognitive Knowledge

**Qur'anic Definition:** Ma'rifah denotes recognition-based knowledge arising from direct encounter with signs (*ayat*), marked by acknowledgement rather than mere cognition.

**Key Qur'anic Evidence (root 'r-f):**

- “*They recognise the favour of Allah, yet they deny it.*” (Q. 16:83)
- “*You will surely recognise them by their mark.*” (Q. 2:273)
- “*Each has a direction he recognises.*” (Q. 2:148)

Epistemic Implication: Ma'rifah is experiential and discernment-based, bridging perception and acknowledgement, and often contrasted with willful denial.

#### A.4 Hikmah (حكمة) - Wisdom

Qur'anic Definition: Hikmah is the ability to apply knowledge rightly, aligning understanding with justice, purpose, and moral balance. It represents knowledge in action.

Key Qur'anic Evidence:

- *“He grants hikmah to whom He wills, and whoever is granted hikmah has indeed been given abundant good.”* (Q. 2:269)
- *“Call to the way of your Lord with hikmah.”* (Q. 16:125)
- *“And Allah taught him the Book and the hikmah.”* (Q. 4:113)

Epistemic Implication: Hikmah is teleological intelligence-knowledge governed by purpose, justice, and ethical discernment.

#### A.5 Baṣīrah (بصيرة) - Inner Insight

Qur'anic Definition: Baṣīrah denotes clarified inner vision-the capacity to perceive truth beyond surface appearances through enlightened consciousness.

Key Qur'anic Evidence:

- *“This is my path: I call to Allah upon Baṣīrah.”* (Q. 12:108)
- *“Clear insights (baṣa'ir) have come to you from your Lord.”* (Q. 6:104)

Epistemic Implication: Baṣīrah represents illuminated perception, integrating reason, conscience, and guidance.

#### A.6 Nur (نور) - Epistemic Light

Qur'anic Definition: Nur signifies divinely bestowed illumination that enables true understanding, discernment, and guidance. It is both epistemic and moral light.

Key Qur'anic Evidence:

- *“Allah is the Nur of the heavens and the earth.”* (Q. 24:35)
- *“So believe in Allah, His Messenger, and the Nur which We sent down.”* (Q. 64:8)
- *“Is one who was dead and We gave him life and made for him a Nur by which he walks among people...”* (Q. 6:122)

Epistemic Implication: Nur is the enabling condition of true knowledge, without which cognition remains fragmented and misdirected.

### Concluding Epistemic Synthesis



In Qur'anic epistemology:

‘Ilm provides grounding →

Ma‘rifah enables recognition →

Baṣirah clarifies perception →

Ḥikmah governs application →

Yaqin completes certainty →

Nur illuminates the entire process.

This forms a coherent, ethically anchored epistemic system derived directly from the Qur'an itself.

## B. Cognitive Processes in the Qur'an

### B.1 ‘Aql (عقل) - Reasoning Capacity

**Qur'anic Definition:** ‘Aql in the Qur'an refers to the moral-rational capacity to bind, restrain, and correctly judge reality. It is not an abstract faculty but an active process of ethical reasoning that prevents deviation from truth.

**Key Qur'anic Evidence:**

- “Will you not use reason?” (Q. 2:44)
- “Thus Allah makes clear His signs so that you may reason.” (Q. 2:242)
- “They have hearts with which they do not reason.” (Q. 7:179)

**Epistemic Implication:** ‘Aql is evaluative and normative, inseparable from moral accountability.

### B.2 Tafakkur (تفكر) - Analytical Reflection

**Qur'anic Definition:** Tafakkur denotes systematic reflection upon observable phenomena to discern patterns, purposes, and signs of truth.

**Key Qur'anic Evidence:**

- “They reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth.” (Q. 3:191)
- “Thus, we explain the signs for a people who reflect.” (Q. 30:21)

**Epistemic Implication:** Tafakkur corresponds to analytical inquiry, foundational for empirical and qualitative reasoning.

### B.3 Tadabbur (تدبر) - Deep Textual Contemplation

**Qur'anic Definition:** Tadabbur is deliberate, layered reflection on revealed discourse, aiming to uncover meaning, consequence, and guidance.

**Key Qur'anic Evidence:**

- “Do they not reflect deeply upon the Qur'an?” (Q. 47:24)
- “A blessed Book We sent down so that they may reflect deeply upon its verses.” (Q. 38:29)

Epistemic Implication: Tadabbur forms the hermeneutic core of Qur'anic interpretation.

#### B.4 Tadhakkur (تذكر) - Moral-Experiential Remembering

Qur'anic Definition: Tadhakkur refers to ethical recollection and internalisation of truth, transforming knowledge into lived awareness.

Key Qur'anic Evidence:

- *“Indeed, in that are signs for people who remember.”* (Q. 24:44)
- *“The reminder benefits the believers.”* (Q. 51:55)

Epistemic Implication: Tadhakkur links knowledge with moral consciousness and transformation.

#### B.5 Fiqh (فقه) - Deep Comprehension

Qur'anic Definition: Fiqh signifies penetrative understanding of meanings, intentions, and implications, especially in matters of guidance and conduct.

Key Qur'anic Evidence:

- *“Why does not a group from every community go forth to gain understanding in the religion?”* (Q. 9:122)
- *“They have hearts with which they do not understand.”* (Q. 7:179)

Epistemic Implication: Fiqh represents context-sensitive, applied understanding, beyond surface cognition.

#### B.6 Fahm (فهم) - Discernment of Meaning

Qur'anic Definition: Fahm refers to grasping meaning accurately, especially in judgment and interpretation.

Key Qur'anic Evidence:

- *“We gave Solomon understanding of it.”* (Q. 21:79)

Epistemic Implication: Fahm is clarity of comprehension, foundational to correct judgment.

### C. Revelation and Epistemic Signs

#### C.1 Wahy (وحي) - Revelation

Qur'anic Definition: Wahy is direct, divinely initiated communication conveying guidance, truth, and epistemic authority beyond human construction.

Key Qur'anic Evidence:

- *“It is not for a human that Allah should speak to him except by wahy.”* (Q. 42:51)

- *“Indeed, We revealed to you as We revealed to those before you.”* (Q. 4:163)

Epistemic Implication: Wahy constitutes the primary and corrective source of knowledge.

## C.2 Ayah / Ayat (آية / آيات) - Sign(s)

Qur'anic Definition: Ayah denotes a sign that points beyond itself, whether textual, cosmic, historical, or moral.

Key Qur'anic Evidence:

- *“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves.”* (Q. 41:53)
- *“Indeed, in that are signs for people who reason.”* (Q. 30:24)

Epistemic Implication: Ayat forms the interface between ontology and epistemology.

## C.3 Bayan (بيان) - Clarifying Expression

Qur'anic Definition: Bayan refers to clarity of articulation and differentiation, enabling comprehension and judgment.

Key Qur'anic Evidence:

- *“The Most Merciful taught the Qur'an... and taught him Bayan.”* (Q. 55:1–4)
- *“This is a clear explanation for mankind.”* (Q. 3:138)

Epistemic Implication: Bayan ensures intelligibility and communicative transparency of knowledge.

## C.4 Kitab (كتاب) - Written, Structured Knowledge

Qur'anic Definition: Kitab signifies codified, preserved, and authoritative knowledge, whether revealed or recorded.

Key Qur'anic Evidence:

- *“That is the Book in which there is no doubt.”* (Q. 2:2)
- *“Everything We have enumerated in a clear Book.”* (Q. 36:12)

Epistemic Implication: Kitab represents epistemic stability and continuity.

## C.5 Dhikr (ذكر) - Remembrance and Preservation

Qur'anic Definition: Dhikr denotes preserved reminder and living consciousness of truth, ensuring continuity across time.

Key Qur'anic Evidence:

- *“Indeed, We have sent down the Dhikr, and surely We will preserve it.”* (Q. 15:9)
- *“This is a reminder for the worlds.”* (Q. 38:87)

Epistemic Implication: Dhikr safeguards epistemic memory and moral orientation.

## Integrative Qur'anic Cognitive Model (Summary)

Wahy provides origin →  
 Ayah mediates meaning →  
 Bayan clarifies →  
 'Aql evaluates →  
 Tafakkur / Tadabbur analyse →  
 Fiqh / Fahm comprehend →  
 Tadhakkur / Dhikr internalise →  
 Kitab preserves.

This constitutes a complete Qur'anic cognitive–epistemological system, independent of extra-scriptural sources.

## D. Ethics & Responsibility in the Qur'an

### D.1 Amanah (أمانة) - Trust and Moral Responsibility

**Qur'anic Definition:** Amanah denotes a divinely entrusted responsibility-moral, epistemic, and practical-that requires faithful fulfilment without betrayal.

**Key Qur'anic Evidence:**

- *“Indeed, We offered the trust to the heavens, the earth, and the mountains, but they declined to bear it... and the human bore it.”* (Q. 33:72)
- *“Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due.”* (Q. 4:58)

**Ethical Implication:** Amanah grounds human accountability in knowledge, action, and stewardship.

### D.2 'Adl (عدل) - Justice as Moral Equilibrium

**Qur'anic Definition:** 'Adl signifies upright justice and fairness, requiring impartial judgment and ethical balance.

**Key Qur'anic Evidence:**

- *“Indeed, Allah commands justice and excellence.”* (Q. 16:90)
- *“Be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah.”* (Q. 4:135)

**Ethical Implication:** 'Adl is the normative axis of ethical judgment.

### D.3 Qist (قسط) - Measured Justice and Equity

**Qur'anic Definition:** Qist refers to precise, measured justice, emphasising equity and fairness in social dealings.

**Key Qur'anic Evidence:**

- “Allah loves those who act justly.” (Q. 5:42)
- “Establish weight in justice and do not make deficient the balance.” (Q. 55:9)

Ethical Implication: Qist operationalises justice in measurable social practices.

#### **D.4 Taqwa (تقوى) - God-Conscious Ethical Awareness**

Qur'anic Definition: Taqwa denotes protective moral consciousness, guiding behaviour through awareness of divine accountability.

Key Qur'anic Evidence:

- “O humanity, worship your Lord... so that you may attain Taqwa.” (Q. 2:21)
- “Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most mindful.” (Q. 49:13)

Ethical Implication: Taqwa is the inner regulator of ethical conduct.

#### **D.5 Zulm (ظلم) - Injustice and Misplacement**

Qur'anic Definition: Zulm signifies placing things outside their rightful order, resulting in injustice toward self, others, or truth.

Key Qur'anic Evidence:

- “Indeed, injustice is great wrongdoing.” (Q. 31:13)
- “Allah does not love the wrongdoers.” (Q. 3:57)

Ethical Implication: Zulm represents epistemic and moral distortion.

#### **D.6 Kibr (كبر) - Arrogance and Epistemic Pride**

Qur'anic Definition: Kibr denotes arrogant self-exaltation, leading to rejection of truth despite awareness.

Key Qur'anic Evidence:

- “He refused and was arrogant.” (Q. 2:34)
- “Indeed, Allah does not love the arrogant.” (Q. 16:23)

Ethical Implication: Kibr blocks ethical learning and submission to truth.

### **E. Action & Purpose in the Qur'an**

#### **E.1 'Amal (عمل) - Intentional Action**

Qur'anic Definition: 'Amal refers to conscious, accountable action arising from belief and knowledge.

Key Qur'anic Evidence:

- “Whoever does righteous deeds, male or female...” (Q. 16:97)
- “Each will be recompensed for what they did.” (Q. 45:22)

Purposeful Implication: ‘Amal completes the epistemic–ethical cycle.

## E.2 Ṣaliḥ (صالح) - Soundness and Rectitude

Qur’anic Definition: Ṣaliḥ describes actions or states that are sound, constructive, and morally aligned with divine guidance.

Key Qur’anic Evidence:

- “*Those who believe and do righteous deeds.*” (Q. 103:3)
- “*He will amend their condition.*” (Q. 47:2)

Purposeful Implication: Ṣaliḥ ensures beneficial transformation of reality.

## E.3 Khilafah (خلافة) - Vicegerency and Stewardship

Qur’anic Definition: Khilafah signifies human stewardship on earth, acting responsibly within divine trust.

Key Qur’anic Evidence:

- “*Indeed, I will place a vicegerent on earth.*” (Q. 2:30)
- “*He made you successors upon the earth.*” (Q. 6:165)

Purposeful Implication: Khilafah frames ethical responsibility in governance and knowledge use.

## E.4 ‘Ibadah (عبادة) - Worship as Total Submission

Qur’anic Definition: ‘Ibadah denotes comprehensive devotion, encompassing belief, action, and obedience.

Key Qur’anic Evidence:

- “*I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me.*” (Q. 51:56)
- “*Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him.*” (Q. 4:36)

Purposeful Implication: ‘Ibadah integrates knowledge, ethics, and action.

## F. Ontology & Unity in the Qur’an

### F.1 Tawḥīd (توحيد) - Divine Unity

Qur’anic Definition: Tawḥīd affirms the oneness of Allah, unifying existence, truth, and knowledge.

Key Qur’anic Evidence:

- “*Your God is One God.*” (Q. 2:163)
- “*If there were other gods, they would have been ruined.*” (Q. 21:22)

Ontological Implication: Tawḥīd establishes the unity of truth and coherence of reality.

### F.1 Ḥaqq (حق) - Truth and Right

Qur'anic Definition: Ḥaqq denotes that which is real, just, and enduring, grounded in divine reality.

Key Qur'anic Evidence:

- *“That is because Allah is the Truth.”* (Q. 22:6)
- *“Truth has come, and falsehood has vanished.”* (Q. 17:81)

Ontological Implication: Ḥaqq is the criterion of validity.

### F.2 Baṭil (باطل) - Falsehood and Voidness

Qur'anic Definition: Baṭil signifies that which lacks reality, justice, or permanence.

Key Qur'anic Evidence:

- *“Falsehood is ever bound to perish.”* (Q. 17:81)
- *“Do not mix truth with falsehood.”* (Q. 2:42)

Ontological Implication: Baṭil represents epistemic collapse.

### F.3 Mizan (ميزان) - Balance and Measure

Qur'anic Definition: Mizan denotes cosmic and moral balance, governing justice in creation and conduct.

Key Qur'anic Evidence:

- *“He set up the balance.”* (Q. 55:7)
- *“So that you may not transgress the balance.”* (Q. 55:8)

Ontological Implication: Mizan sustains order and justice in reality.

### F.4 Sunan (سنن) - Divine Patterns and Laws

Qur'anic Definition: Sunan refers to consistent divine patterns governing history and nature.

Key Qur'anic Evidence:

- *“You will never find change in the way of Allah.”* (Q. 33:62)
- *“Such is the way of Allah with those who passed before.”* (Q. 35:43)

Ontological Implication: Sunan grounds predictability and moral causality in the universe.



### **Integrative Ethical–Ontological Model (Qur'anic)**

Tawḥid grounds reality →

Ḥaqq / Baṭil distinguish truth →

Mizan / Sunan order existence →

Amanah / Khilafah assign responsibility →

Taqwa / 'Adl / Qisṭ regulate ethics →

'Amal Ṣaliḥ / 'Ibadah realise purpose →

Ẓulm / Kibr mark deviation.