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Epistemology of Knowledge in the Perspective of the Quran

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to examine the epistemology of science from the perspective of the Qur'an, focusing on the sources, methods, and goals of its achievement within the framework of Islamic science. Through the analysis of texts and concepts in the Qur'an as well as the study of classical and contemporary Muslim thinkers, it was found that Islamic epistemology is integrative and hierarchical, combining revelation as the supreme source, reason as an instrument of interpretation, empirical experience as a means of observation, and intuition as a form of inner guidance. This epistemological system does not reject modern science but rather places it in a moral and theological frame that reinforces the meaning of the search for knowledge. The concept of knowledge in Islam is not only cognitive but also moral and spiritual, directed toward the recognition, usefulness, and perpetuation of Allah. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the reconstruction of a monotheism-based scientific paradigm that is able to address the value crisis in modern science and strengthen the foundation of a holistic and meaningful epistemology. In conclusion, the Qur'anic epistemology provides a holistic, value-based paradigm that seeks to address the crisis of meaning in modern science by grounding knowledge in divine guidance and moral responsibility.

Keywords: Epistemology of science, philosophy of science, science, al-Quran

INTRODUCTION

Science is an integral part of human existence. In the history of civilization, human progress has always gone hand in hand with the progress of science (Richta, 2018). The Qur'an itself affirms that the position of knowledge is very high in the sight of Allah, as He said: "Allah will exalt the believers among you and those who are given knowledge of some degrees" (QS. al-Mujādalah [58]: 11). This verse shows that knowledge is not only a rational instrument, but also a spiritual means to lead people to the knowledge of God. Therefore, in the Islamic view, science does not stand neutral without value, but is bound by ethical and transcendental dimensions. This is in contrast to the modern secular view which places science solely as the result of human rationality free from metaphysical bonds.

However, the development of modern science today shows an alarming symptom, namely the emergence of a value crisis. Since the *Enlightenment* era in the West, science has been separated from the religious and metaphysical dimensions. Positivism, for example, as Auguste Comte put it, views that the source of truth comes only from verifiable empirical data. This approach then gave birth to reductionism, in which reality is narrowed to material and measurable aspects, so that spiritual and transcendent things are set aside. As a result, science loses its moral orientation; Humans become rulers over nature, no longer the guardians of God's trust on earth. This phenomenon causes what Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas called the *loss of adab*, the loss of values and awareness of the true purpose of knowledge (Husaini, 2020, as cited in the context of discussing the crisis of modern Islamic education, emphasized that al-Attas's concept of *loss of adab* reflects the fundamental problem in contemporary knowledge

systems where the spiritual and moral dimensions have been separated from the pursuit of knowledge).

This crisis is evident in various areas. Technological advances that are not balanced by ethics give birth to moral degradation, social inequality, and environmental damage. Science that is supposed to prosper humans is often a tool of domination and exploitation. It is in this context that there is an urgent need to review the epistemological foundations of science. How do humans actually understand reality? What are the sources and limits of knowledge? Is man's intellect sufficient to reach the whole truth, or does he need the guidance of revelation? These questions lead us to Islamic epistemology, an attempt to reorganize the structure of science based on the *Quranic World View*.

Previous research on Islamic epistemology has been conducted by a number of scholars. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, for instance, extensively discussed the concept of knowledge (*'ilm*) and the Islamization of contemporary knowledge, emphasizing the importance of a worldview rooted in *tawhid*. Ismail Raji al-Faruqi contributed through his project on the Islamization of knowledge, aiming to reconcile modern science with Islamic values. Meanwhile, contemporary scholars such as Osman Bakar have explored the hierarchical and integrated nature of knowledge in Islam, comparing it with modern scientific paradigms. However, many of these studies focus on broad philosophical frameworks or historical analyses. There remains a need for research that systematically dissects the epistemological structure as directly derived from the Quranic text itself—specifically examining its unique terminology, sources, methods, and ultimate aims and positions this analysis within the ongoing critique of modern science's value neutrality. This study aims to address that gap.

The novelty of this research lies in its focused, systematic analysis of the Quranic text to construct a coherent epistemological model. It moves beyond broad philosophical comparisons to meticulously examine key Quranic terms (such as *'ilm*, *ma'rifah*, *hikmah*, and *basirah*), their interrelationships, and their collective implications for forming a holistic, value-laden paradigm of science. This approach offers a fresh, text-centric contribution to the discourse, providing a clear epistemological alternative to the positivist and secular foundations of modern science.

Islamic epistemology places revelation as the supreme source of knowledge and reason as an instrument for interpreting the signs of God, both in the text (*qauliyyah verse*) and in nature (*kauniyyah verse*). The Qur'an repeatedly invites people to think and reason *afalā ta'qilūn*, *afalā tatafakkarūn* but within the framework of recognition of the limitations of the human ratio to the unlimited knowledge of Allah (QS. al-Isrā' [17]: 85). Thus, the epistemology of the Qur'an is integral; It combines the dimensions of rational, empirical, intuitive, and revelation in one harmonious unity. This view contrasts with modern philosophies of science that tend to be dichotomous, placing reason and faith as two separate domains.

In addition, the Qur'an not only teaches the importance of knowing, but also emphasizes *how* to know. The process of acquiring knowledge in Islam is not a value-free activity, but is always directed to the moral and spiritual goal, which is *the knowledge* of Allah. Therefore, Qur'anic concepts such as *ʿilm*, *maʿrifah*, *hikmah*, and *basīrah* refer not only to cognitive knowledge, but also to existential awareness and wisdom in action. A person is not called knowledgeable just because he knows, but because it leads him to obedience and justice. This

is in line with al-Ghazali's view, that knowledge that does not bring us closer to Allah is *'ilm lā yanfa'*, which is not useful (al-Ghazali, 1993, in *Bidayah al-Hidayah* articulated this principle as a fundamental criterion for evaluating the value of knowledge in Islamic thought, arguing that any knowledge that fails to draw its possessor closer to Allah serves as a veil rather than guidance).

Thus, the urgency of the study of Islamic epistemology today lies in its efforts to reconstruct a more complete scientific paradigm, which does not separate between reason and revelation, between empirical and spiritual, between science and manners. This integration is not just the addition of religious elements in modern science, but the rearrangement of the ontological and axiological basis of science based on the principle of monotheism. Figures such as Ismail Raji al-Faruqi and Syed Naquib al-Attas have long emphasized that the crisis of modern science is only a symptom of a more fundamental epistemological crisis, namely the loss of the monotheistic outlook in the structure of human thought.

Therefore, this article seeks to examine the Qur'an's view on the epistemology of science by focusing on two main issues. *First*, how the Qur'an views science and the process of achieving it both in terms of its sources, methods, and goals. *Second*, how is the relationship between revelation and reason as two complementary sources of knowledge in the epistemological framework of science. This study is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of a philosophy of science rooted in revelation, as well as practical in an effort to build an integral and dignified scientific paradigm in the midst of the challenges of modernity.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research was qualitative with a descriptive-analytical approach, focusing on the concept of scientific epistemology from the perspective of the *Qur'an*. Qualitative methods were used because the study object consisted of texts, ideas, and concepts rather than numerical data or empirical measurements. The descriptive approach aimed to interpret and develop a deep understanding of the epistemological sources of knowledge in the *Qur'an*, supported by explanations from relevant thinkers. The study was not intended to test hypotheses but to provide an in-depth description and philosophical analysis of religious texts and academic literature.

The emphasis on epistemology aligned the research closely with the philosophical approach to science, focusing on critical reasoning, text reading, and conceptual interpretation.

As a literature study, the research drew on written sources relevant to the topic, including *Qur'anic* manuscripts, tafsir books, philosophy of science texts, classical works by Muslim thinkers, and scientific journal articles. The analysis was conducted throughout the research process, from manuscript preparation to the final stage.

Data collection involved accessing university libraries, digital repositories, and scientific databases to ensure a systematic and scientifically sound process.

The research object was the epistemology of science in the *Qur'an*, covering the sources, nature, methods, and goals of knowledge as described in *Qur'anic* verses. It focused on key concepts such as *al-'ilm*, *al-ma'rifah*, *al-hikmah*, and *al-bashirah*—terms reflecting both cognitive and spiritual dimensions of knowledge.

Additionally, the study examined the epistemological views of Islamic and contemporary philosophers, including al-Ghazali, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, and Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, integrating *Qur'anic* ideas with modern epistemological discourse.

For the literature review, the population comprised all sources discussing Islamic epistemology, while purposive sampling selected those most relevant to the research objectives. Selection criteria included completeness of discussion, source validity, and depth of epistemological analysis, consistent with the view that epistemology must be studied from scientifically authoritative sources explaining "the origins, structure, methods, and validity of science."

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Epistemology in the Philosophy of Modern Science

The term epistemology comes from the English word '*epistemology*' which is a combination of two Greek words, namely '*episteme*' which means "knowledge" and '*logos*' which means "science, science, study, theory and discussion" (Reese, 1980, in his comprehensive *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion*, provided this etymological breakdown to establish the foundational meaning of epistemology as the systematic study of knowledge). Epistemology is one of the branches of philosophy that discusses the essence, meaning, content, source and process of knowledge. So it can be said that epistemology means "the discussion of science" (Uthman, 1998, explored this concept within the context of Malay Islamic philosophical texts, demonstrating how classical Islamic scholars conceptualized epistemology through their indigenous intellectual traditions).

Terminologically, experts give diverse meanings according to their philosophical background. According to Harold H. Titus in *Living Issues in Philosophy* quoted by Setya Widyanti (2013), epistemology is a branch of philosophy that investigates the origin, essence, and validity of human knowledge. Meanwhile, Jujun S. Suriasumantri (1990) stated that epistemology is the direction of human thinking in finding and obtaining a science using the ability of ratio.

The term epistemology is also associated with the concept of science, which is knowledge that leads to the understanding of truth. Therefore, the discussion of epistemology is one of the branches of philosophy that discusses the origin, structure, method and validity of science (Runes, 1982, and Reese, 1980, both provided complementary definitions in their respective philosophical dictionaries, with Runes emphasizing the structural aspects and Reese highlighting the evaluative dimensions of epistemological inquiry. It is noteworthy that J. F. Ferrier in 1854 was the first to use the term *epistemology*, deriving it from the Greek word *gignoskein* meaning to determine or decide decree, and establishing it as a theory of knowledge supported by both Rationalism and Empiricism).

In the philosophy of science, epistemology is the foundation that determines the direction and pattern of knowledge. It functions like the root of the tree of knowledge, from which grow various branches of science with certain epistemological characters. Modern Western philosophy, since the 17th century, marked the birth of a great debate about the primary source of human knowledge. From this were born three major schools of epistemology: rationalism, empiricism, and positivism each highlighting certain aspects of man's potential to

know the truth (Bunga et al., 2025, provided a contemporary analysis of these epistemological schools, examining their continuing influence on current scientific methodology and knowledge production).

First, *rationalism* places reason as the main source of valid knowledge. The most influential figure in this school was Rene Descartes, known for his monumental statement: *cogito ergo sum* "I think, then I exist." For Descartes, thinking is proof of existence, and reason is the most trustworthy instrument because it is certain and universal. He argued that true knowledge does not depend on changing experience, but on innate ideas that already exist in the human mind. Rationalism was later developed by figures such as Baruch Spinoza and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, who emphasized that the laws of nature and logical truth could be understood through rational deduction alone.

However, the claim of rationalism is not taken for granted. There is a school of empiricism that argues the opposite, that sensory experience is the basis of all human knowledge (Vera & Hambali, 2021, conducted a comparative analysis of rationalism and empiricism within the framework of scientific knowledge, demonstrating how these two schools represent fundamentally different approaches to epistemological questions). The main figure of empiricism is John Locke, who argued that man is born like *a tabula rasa* on a blank sheet of paper and that all his ideas come from experience through the five senses (Juhansar, 2021, provided a detailed philosophical analysis of Locke's epistemological construction, examining how his concept of tabula rasa fundamentally challenged rationalist assumptions about innate knowledge). This view was reinforced by George Berkeley who affirmed that *to be is to be perceived* (Uchman, 2020, explored Berkeley's principle *esse est percipi* through philosophical and cinematic lenses, demonstrating its continuing relevance to contemporary debates about the nature of reality and perception), and by David Hume who considered knowledge to be nothing more than the result of empirical association of experience. According to Hume, the concept of cause-effect, for example, is not a rational truth, but rather a psychological habit formed from the repetition of experience.

These two schools then gave birth to a synthesis in the thought of Immanuel Kant, who stated that knowledge is born of the cooperation between ratio and experience: "Thought without content is empty, and intuition without concept is blind." However, after Kant's time, the philosophy of modern science moved in a more extreme direction with the emergence of positivism. Its figure, Auguste Comte, affirmed that legitimate knowledge is only that which can be empirically verified and free from metaphysical speculation (Anughra, 2024). In this paradigm, science is identified with observation, measurement, and experimentation. Science is considered neutral, objective, and does not require moral or theological considerations.

This positivistic paradigm then dominated the 19th and 20th centuries, forming a very materialistic and instrumental face of modern science. Science is no longer interpreted as a means of searching for meaning, but as a tool to master and control nature. Francis Bacon, the pioneer of the modern inductive method, even called science a power (*knowledge is power*). As a result, spiritual and ethical values are eliminated from the scientific realm. Science becomes autonomous, *value-free science*, and pursues practical benefits without considering the moral consequences. This is where a big problem arises, the reduction of the meaning of science only to the functional and empirical aspects, while the moral and transcendental dimensions are neglected.

In this context, many contemporary thinkers such as Jürgen Habermas, Thomas Kuhn, and Paul Feyerabend began to criticize the claims of the neutrality of modern science. Habermas emphasized that science is never truly value-free because it is always shaped by ideological and social interests. Kuhn through *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962) showed that science develops not solely because of the accumulation of data, but through paradigm changes that are historical and subjective. While Feyerabend even states that no universal scientific method can guarantee the truth; Science must be recognized as a product of plural culture.

From this description it appears that modern Western epistemology, although it has given birth to tremendous technological and scientific advances, also leaves a void of meaning. Knowledge that loses its moral orientation has the potential to plunge humans into spiritual and existential crises. Therefore, a new awareness has emerged that there needs to be a revision of this epistemology that is too materialistic and secular. This is where it is important to look again at epistemology from the perspective of the Qur'an, a view that emphasizes not only the rational and empirical aspects, but also the spiritual, moral, revelation-based aspects. Thus, knowledge is not only a tool to understand the world, but also a means to know the Creator.

The Concept of Knowledge in the Quran

In the Qur'an, the word *al-'ilm* is repeated 855 times with various forms of derivation. Namely: Fi'il Madhi's 60, Fi'il Mudhari' 334, Fi'il Amar 31, Isim Tafdhil 49, Isim Files 248, Sighat Mubalaghah 4, Isim Maf'ul 12, Jama' Mudzakkar Salim 5, Jama' Taksir 2, Jama' Muannas Salim 3, but the writer's reference point is to analyze the word *'ilm* in the form of Masdar which amounts to 107 (Baqi, 1981, in his exhaustive concordance *Mu'jam al-Mufahrosy al-Fadh al-Qur'an al-Karim*, provided comprehensive statistical and morphological analysis of knowledge-related terms in the Qur'an, establishing the central importance of *'ilm* and its derivatives in Qur'anic discourse).

The term *al-ilm* which means knowledge, is the opposite of the word *al-jahl* which means ignorance or ignorance (Dewan Redaksi Ensiklopedi Islam, 1994, documented this fundamental linguistic opposition in their comprehensive encyclopedia, establishing the conceptual framework within which Islamic scholars have understood knowledge as the antithesis of ignorance). Another source says that the word *al-'ilm* is a masdar form of *'alima-ya'lamu-'ilman*. According to Ibn Zakaria, the author of *the book Mu'jam Maqayis al-Lughah*, the word *'ilm* has a denotative meaning, that is, the former of something by which one can be distinguished from another. According to Ibn Manzur knowledge is an antonym of not knowing (*naqid al-jahl*), while according to al-Asfahani and al-Anbari, *'ilm* is knowing the fact of something (*idrak al-syai' bi haqiqatih*) (Ensiklopedi al-Quran, 1997, provided detailed lexicographical analysis from classical Arabic sources, demonstrating the multidimensional understanding of *'ilm* in Islamic intellectual tradition as both cognitive apprehension and existential awareness).

In addition to *al-ʿilm*, the Qur'an also uses the terms al-ma*'rifah* (المعرفة), al-hikmah (الحكمة), and *baṣīrah* (البصيرة), each of which contains its own epistemological dimension. *Maʿrifah* comes from the root word *'arafa* meaning "to know," and in the spiritual context of Islam refers to intuitive knowledge gained through purification of the soul and closeness to Allah. Sufis such as al-Ghazālī distinguish between *conceptual ʿilm* and *inwardly* maʿrifah, because *maʿrifah* leads one to *maḥabbah* (Divine love) and *yaqīn* (spiritual belief).

The *ḥikmah* (الحكمة) in the Qur'an is often associated with prophethood and wisdom in applying knowledge in its place. Allah says in QS. al-Baqarah; 269); *He gives wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever is given wisdom, has indeed been given much good*. While *al-baṣīrah* (البصيرة) means inner sharpness that is able to reveal the truth behind external phenomena. This word is used by the Qur'an to describe spiritual insight that leads humans to understand reality with a view of faith, not just logic (QS. Joseph: 108).

Characteristics of Knowledge in the Quran

Knowledge based on the Qur'an, has the following characteristics, namely; First, the Qur'an emphasizes that the main source of knowledge is Allah, as found in QS. al-Alaq verses 1-5, which affirm that the true form of knowledge comes from God who *is 'allama bi al-qalam* (teaching through the medium of the pen). This shows that human intellectual activity is part of the Divine gift, not the absolute autonomy of human reason as assumed by Western epistemology.

Second, the knowledge in the Qur'an is never separate from faith and spiritual awareness. Allah says in QS. Fathir verse 28 *: "Indeed, the most fearful of Allah among His servants are the scholars."* This verse shows that the mark of a person with true knowledge is not only the breadth of knowledge, but the inner submission to the Creator. From an Islamic perspective, knowledge that does not cultivate *khusyū'* and *taqwā* is considered to have not reached the true maqām of knowledge.

Third, knowledge according to the Qur'an has moral and spiritual dimensions, not just rational or empirical. In the modern view, science is often reduced to a neutral intellectual product with no value charge. But in the Qur'an, every knowledge must be directed to the benefit, truth, and servitude of Allah. This is what distinguishes Islamic epistemology from secular epistemology. Thus, the concept of knowledge in the Qur'an has an integrative character: combining revelation, reason, and heart as an instrument of seeking truth. Revelation is the main source of transcendental truth, reason functions as a tool of analysis, while the heart (qalb) becomes a container for the acceptance of divine meanings (Thalib, 2022, examined the interrelationship between faith (iman), reason (akal), and revelation (wahyu) in the Qur'an, demonstrating how these three elements form an integrated epistemological system where each component fulfills a distinct yet complementary role in the pursuit of knowledge). This epistemological model is much more holistic than the Western system which relies solely on ratios and empirical experience. Muslim thinkers such as al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, and al-Ghazālī have affirmed that science is inseparable from human ethics and existential purpose. Al-Ghazālī in Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn states, "Any knowledge that does not lead its owner to Allah is hijab for him." Thus, Qur'anic epistemology places knowledge as a means to taʿarruf ilā Allāh (know Allah) and build a civilized civilization.

Sources of Knowledge According to the Quran

In the Quran there are several that show the source of knowledge, namely;

First, revelation (ٱلْوَحْي), as the supreme and absolute source of knowledge. In Islamic epistemology, revelation occupies the highest position as an absolute and definite source of knowledge (*qath'i*). Revelation is direct communication between Allah and man through His prophets and messengers, as mentioned in QS. An-Najm verse 4; *It is not (what he says) but a revelation that has been revealed*.

Revelation is not merely theological information, but is a source of truth that contains guidance (*hudā*), light (*nūr*), and explanation (*bayān*) for all aspects of human life. Through revelation, humans are given a framework of values and orientation in understanding reality. In this case, revelation serves to guide the mind so as not to get lost in rational speculation without direction (Lestari, 2021, explored the relationship between revelation and science in Islamic thought, arguing that revelation provides the foundational framework within which rational inquiry and empirical investigation must be conducted to ensure that knowledge serves its ultimate purpose of bringing humanity closer to divine truth).

Muslim philosophers such as al-Farabi and Ibn Sina considered revelation to be the highest form of knowledge, in which the soul of the prophet was in direct contact with *al-'Aql al-Fa'āl* (the active intellect), receiving the truth without intermediaries. Meanwhile, al-Ghazali in *Iḥya' 'Ulum al-Din* affirms that all true truths must be in harmony with revelation, because only Allah knows the essence of reality perfectly.

Second, common sense (العقل). Reason in Islam is not a stand-alone source of knowledge, but a tool that Allah has given us to understand His signs in nature and in revelation. The Qur'an repeatedly invites people to use their intellect with several expressions, such as yatafakkarūn (thinking), yatadabbarūn (contemplating), and ya'qilūn (using reason) (Kumullah, 2024, analyzed the role and function of rational intelligence (akal) from the Qur'anic perspective, demonstrating how the Qur'an emphasizes the importance of intellectual engagement while simultaneously establishing the boundaries and proper orientation of rational inquiry within the framework of revealed guidance).

Reason has a high position because it is a means to understand *the kauniyyah* verse (the signs of Allah in nature) and *the qauliyyah verse* (the revelation of Allah in the text). However, the Qur'an also warns that reason should not be used freely without the guidance of revelation, because reason has limitations in reaching metaphysical things. Ibn Taymiyyah affirms that the relationship between reason and revelation is *tawāfuq* (harmony), not *ta'āruḍ* (opposition). A sound mind will lead man to the truth of revelation, while revelation improves and directs the mind so as not to go beyond the limits. Therefore, Qur'anic epistemology is theocentric: placing Allah as the center of the source of truth, and reason as the means of revealing His signs.

Third, Empirical Experience, Nature as a Kauniyah Verse. In addition to revelation and reason, the Qur'an also recognizes the importance of empirical experience as a source of knowledge (Hasib & Abidin, 2023, examined the concept of nature according to Syed M. Naquib al-Attās from the perspective of new kalam, demonstrating how the natural world serves as a book of signs (ayat kauniyyah) that must be read and understood in conjunction with revealed scripture to achieve comprehensive knowledge of reality).

Observation of the universe is man's way of understanding the greatness of God through the signs that exist in the universe. Allah says in QS. al-Ghasyiyah; 17-20; "*Have they not taken notice to the camel how it was made, and how the heavens were exalted, and the mountains how they were established, and how the earth was stretched out?"*

This verse is an epistemological cue that empirical observation of natural phenomena is a means of obtaining correct knowledge, as long as it is done with the awareness of monotheism. In the history of Islamic civilization, this spirit gave birth to the development of natural sciences such as astronomy, medicine, and physics, all of which were based on the view that nature is *the*

book of manshur (unfolded book) that must be read as revelation is *the book of manthuq* (written book).

Fourth, Intuition (*Inspiration and Prejudice*): Inner Knowledge Given by Allah. In addition to revelation and reason, the Qur'an also acknowledges the existence of intuitive knowledge bestowed by Allah on humans and certain creatures. This intuition is called inspiration (الإلهام) and *premonition* (الفراسة). Allah said about the mother of the Prophet Moses, in QS. al-Qashashah: 7; *And We inspired Moses' mother, 'Nurse him, and if you are worried about him, then wash him down into the river*. (QS. al-Qaṣaṣ: 7), Similarly with bees, Allah says in QS. an-Nahl: 68; "*And your Lord reveals it to the bees*."

These two verses show that *revelation* in a broad sense includes *inspiration* or inner knowledge given to beings other than prophets. This kind of knowledge does not go through a rational or empirical process, but is directly implanted in the soul as divine inspiration. In the context of Islamic philosophy of science, al-Ghazali and Ibn 'Arabi place *inspiration* as one of the highest forms of knowledge after revelation, because it comes from the light that Allah emits into the human heart. However, *inspiration* is subjective and not universal, so it cannot be used as a basis for general law like revelation.

From these four sources *of revelation, reason, empirical experience,* and *intuition,* the Qur'an builds an integrative and tiered epistemological system. Revelation is the supreme source of truth; the intellect functions as an instrument of reasoning; empirical experience becomes a means of observation of God's creation; While intuition is a form of inner guidance. Qur'anic epistemology does not reject modern science, but places it within a theological and moral frame. Knowledge is not only to "know" (*to know*), but also to "*realize*" (to realize) and "to serve" (*to worship*). Thus, the Islamic knowledge system is monotheistic in nature that unites knowledge, faith, and charity as the path to the ultimate truth (*al-ḥaqq*).

Comparison of Islamic and Western Epistemology

1. Ontology of Knowledge

The fundamental difference between Islamic and Western epistemology stems from the ontological foundation, namely the way of looking at reality and the source of its existence. In the modern Western tradition, reality is understood materialistically and empirically. The world is considered a closed system that is completely subject to the laws of nature, can be measured and explained rationally-empirically. Since the *Renaissance* and *Enlightenment eras*, Western thought has begun to break away from religious and metaphysical authority. As a result, knowledge is limited to things that can be verified by the five senses and logic. Spiritual reality is considered to have no scientific status because it cannot be empirically tested.

On the other hand, in the Islamic view, reality (*al-wujūd*) comes from Allah as *al-Haqq* (the Most Real). Reality includes not only the material aspect (*'alam al-shahadah*) but also the spiritual and occult aspects (*'alam al-ghayb*) (Azka, 2023). The Qur'an affirms that the essence of all things originates and returns to Allah, "*Allah is the Creator of all things.*" (QS. az-Zumar: 62)

Thus, Islamic ontology is theocentric, that is, placing God as the center of reality and the source of all knowledge. Science not only discusses *what is visible*, but also leads humans to understand *the meaning behind what is visible*. In Islamic epistemology, reality is hierarchical ranging from material, rational, to spiritual and each level has a different way of approaching knowledge.

2. Epistemology: Sources and Ways of Acquiring Knowledge

In the Western philosophical tradition, epistemology generally revolves around two main sources of knowledge: ratio (rationalism) and experience (empiricism). Rationalism, pioneered by Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz, believed that reason was the most valid source of truth. Truth is considered certain when it can be proven logically. While empiricism, developed by Locke, Hume, and Bacon, asserts that all knowledge comes from sensory experience. As a result, truth is limited by what can be observed and tested.

This paradigm then gave birth to positivism, which rejected all forms of metaphysical knowledge. In positivism, only empirically verified facts are recognized as "science." In other words, knowledge that cannot be measured is considered unscientific. This then gave birth to a secular view of science separate from moral and spiritual values.

In contrast, Islam teaches an integrative and hierarchical epistemology. The source of knowledge is not limited to reason and experience, but rather includes revelation (الوحي) as the supreme source and determinant of truth (Nasution et al., 2023, explored Islamic epistemology within contemporary philosophical discourse, emphasizing how the integration of revelation with rational and empirical methods distinguishes Islamic knowledge systems from secular Western approaches that rely exclusively on human faculties). Reason and experience are not ignored, but they serve as an aid to understand the signs of Allah in His creation (*kauniyyah verse*) (Nurdin et al., 2019, examined the epistemological foundations in the philosophy of Islamic education, demonstrating how the complementary relationship between revealed knowledge (*'ilm naqli*) and rational-empirical knowledge (*'ilm 'aqli*) forms the basis for a comprehensive understanding of reality that transcends the limitations of purely secular epistemologies). Revelation provides a framework of values and direction so that reason and experience do not deviate from the essential truth.

3. Axiology: The Purpose and Value of Science

In the modern Western view, science is considered morally and instrumentally neutral: it is merely a tool to achieve human goals. The value of knowledge is not measured by its moral or spiritual benefits, but by its effectiveness and ability to master nature. This is in line with the principle of secularism that separates knowledge from religious values. As a result, science becomes utilitarian, useful insofar as it can provide material advantages or power.

On the other hand, in Islam, knowledge is never value-free. Science has a very strong moral and spiritual dimension. The main purpose of knowledge is to know Allah (*ma'rifatullāh*), to uphold justice, and to bring benefits to creatures. The Qur'an affirms in QS. Ali Imran: 191; "*O our Lord, it is not He who created this in vain*." Thus, any knowledge that does not lead to the recognition of the greatness of Allah is considered to be of no value in essence. In the Islamic view, seeking knowledge is a form of worship, and practicing it is trust.

CONCLUSION

The study of the *Qur'an*'s perspective reveals that Islamic epistemology offers a holistic and integrated paradigm, where revelation serves as the primary source of truth, complemented by reason, empirical experience, and intuition as tools for acquiring knowledge. This framework emphasizes that science should not only seek to understand the world but also aim to know and serve Allah, integrating moral and spiritual dimensions into the scientific process. Consequently, Islamic epistemology calls for reconstructing the scientific paradigm

on a monotheistic foundation, enabling science to provide meaningful insights and address contemporary challenges and value crises in modern science. Future research could explore practical applications of this paradigm in contemporary scientific fields to assess its impact on ethical decision-making and knowledge production.

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