

Reason and Revelation in Islamic Epistemology: A Hierarchical–Integrative Reconstruction

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DOI : <https://doi.org/10.47625/fitua.v7i1.1213>

Article	Abstract
<p>Article History : Received : Dec, 16, 2025 Reviewed: March, 16, 2026 Accepted : May, 07, 2026 Published : May, 21, 2026</p> <p>Keywords: <i>Islamic epistemology; Islamic intellectual tradition; reason; revelation, theology</i></p>	<p>This article examines the epistemological relationship between human reason (<i>aql</i>) and revelation in Islamic thought, addressing the ongoing tension between rational autonomy and textual authority in contemporary interpretations. While existing studies often treat reason and revelation in isolation or as competing sources of knowledge, this study seeks to clarify how classical Islamic intellectual traditions conceptualize their relationship in an integrated and systematic manner. The study aims to analyze how major disciplines—particularly <i>kal m</i> (theology), <i>u l al-fiqh</i> (legal theory), Qur’anic exegesis (<i>tafs r</i>), and Islamic philosophy (<i>falsafah</i>)—define the function, scope, and limits of reason in relation to revelation. To achieve this, the research employs a qualitative library-based method, drawing on primary classical texts and supported by contemporary scholarly literature. The findings demonstrate that reason is consistently regarded as an essential epistemic instrument that enables moral responsibility, interpretive reasoning, and doctrinal articulation. However, its operation is normatively bounded, especially in matters related to metaphysics, the unseen, and definitive (<i>qa</i>) texts. This study contributes to the field of Islamic epistemology by proposing a hierarchical–integrative model in which reason functions as a necessary yet subordinate instrument under the normative authority of revelation.</p>

INTRODUCTION

Within the Islamic intellectual tradition, the relationship between reason and revelation has long been a central epistemological debate. Reason (‘*aql*) and revelation (*nash*) are two epistemological instruments that complement each other in building an Islamic knowledge system. Revelation, as the source of divine truth, is the foundation of Islamic teachings and laws; Meanwhile, reason functions as a human tool to understand, interpret, and implement the content of revelation in the context of an ever-changing life. The dialectical relationship between the two cannot be separated from the Islamic intellectual tradition, because reason is an instrument that allows humans to grasp the meaning of sacred texts and translate them into meaningful social praxis (Hidayat & Rijal, 2024; Ma’mun, 2022)

In the thought of classical scholars such as al-Ghazali, Ibn Taymiyyah, al-Farabi, and al-Razi, reason occupies an important position in the Islamic scientific system. Al-Ghazali emphasized that sound intellect is a means for humans to gain knowledge and achieve happiness in this world and the hereafter (Maryati & Wahyuningsih, 2020). For al-Ghazali, reason not only functions as the ability to think rationally, but also as a tool to understand moral values and spiritual truths that come from revelation (Hafiz & Walidin, 2024). On the contrary, al-Razi emphasizes the role of reason as a means of understanding theological truth and explaining belief in Allah, although he is aware of the limitations of reason in penetrating transcendental realms (Romdhon & Masruchin, 2023). Al-Farabi constructs a hierarchical theory of intellect that explains different levels of human cognition, in which the active intellect serves as the source of knowledge actualization, while the highest level of intellect is oriented toward the divine (Humaedah & Almubarak, 2021; Suntoro, 2022). This philosophical framework

highlights the central role of reason in the process of acquiring knowledge and approaching ultimate truth.

From a theological perspective, a similar integrative position is articulated by Ibn Taymiyyah, who asserts that there is no contradiction between reason and revelation; rather, both originate from the same divine source and therefore necessarily correspond to one another (Sutoyib & Soleh, 2024). This view reinforces the idea that reason functions as a mediating instrument that connects human understanding to revelation, rather than as an autonomous or independent source of truth. In the context of Islamic education, this epistemological harmony forms the foundation of an integrative approach in which rational inquiry is continuously guided by normative religious values.

Historically, Islamic philosophy has contributed greatly to the thought of the relationship between reason and revelation, especially through Ibn Sina and al-Farabi. Ibn Sina emphasized that revelation is a source of divine knowledge that needs to be analyzed with reason so that it can be properly internalized in human life (Adabiyah, 2017; S. Prasetia, 2023). According to him, reason and revelation are not contradictory, because they both expand the horizons of human knowledge. Meanwhile, al-Farabi is of the view that ideal education must integrate reason and revelation in order to form ethical human moral and intellectual character (Erdriani et al., 2024; Madyan, 2025). The thoughts of these two figures became the foundation for Islamic epistemology that rejected the dichotomy between rationality and spirituality.

In ushul fiqh, the role of reason is clearly seen through *ijtihad* methods such as *qiyas*, *istihsan*, and *maslahah mursalah*. These methods show how reason is used to develop Islamic law in the face of new problems that are not explicitly mentioned in the nash (Aminuddin et al., 2024; Muhajirin, 2022). *Qiyas* uses logical analogies to draw the law from similar cases, while *istihsan* and *maslahah mursalah* allow rational reasoning by considering the benefits of the ummah (Yanti, 2022). This thought shows that Islam values the role of reason in maintaining the relevance of law to the changing times, while still being grounded in the principle of revelation.

Nevertheless, there are certain limits to the use of reason to understand revelation. In matters of *qat'iyy*, such as supernatural things and *mahdhah* worship, reason does not have the authority to interpret rationally because the territory has been expressly regulated by revelation (Dhestiana, 2020; Wirman, 2019). On the other hand, in the case of *zanni*, reason plays an important role in understanding contextual meaning and applying sharia values in social life (Husni, 2022). Thus, reason has a dual function: as a rational instrument in interpreting texts, and as a moral means in directing man to divine truth.

In the contemporary world, the discourse on the integration of reason and revelation has been strengthened again through the thought of Ismail Raji al-Faruqi and Fazlur Rahman. Al-Faruqi introduced the concept of *tawhid al-'ilm* (unity of knowledge) to overcome the dichotomy between religious science and general science, while Fazlur Rahman emphasized the importance of a dual hermeneutic approach in order for the interpretation of nash to be relevant to the modern context (Abdussamad, 2015; Madyan, 2025). Both show that reason still has a central role in understanding revelation contextually and oriented towards the benefit of the people.

In the study of tafsir, reason is used to understand *the verses kauniyyah* (about nature) and *mutasyabihat* (verses that do not have a definite meaning). Tafsir *bi al-ra'yi* and *bi al-dirayah* affirm the role of reason as long as interpretation is carried out according to the rules of language and the principles of tafsir (Algifari, 2024; Nurdin & Sidik, 2022). Scholars such as al-Razi and al-Tabari recognize the need for reason in understanding empirical reality and natural phenomena as signs of Allah's greatness (Suardi & Nurhidayah, 2023), noting that reason does not go beyond the limits of the true meaning of revelation (Faruq et al., 2024).

Accordingly, this article offers a novel contribution to the study of Islamic epistemology by systematically reconstructing the relationship between reason (*aql*) and revelation (*wa y*) as a hierarchical yet integrative epistemological framework. While numerous previous studies have examined reason and revelation separately or through apologetic and polemical binaries, limited attention has been given to how classical Muslim scholars across *kal m, u l al-fiqh*, and Islamic

philosophy developed a coherent model that simultaneously affirms rational inquiry and revelational authority. Existing scholarship also tends to emphasize doctrinal disputes between rationalist and traditionalist schools without sufficiently explaining their shared epistemic assumptions, methodological intersections, and practical implications for knowledge production.

In response to this gap, the present study synthesizes theological, philosophical, and legal perspectives to demonstrate how reason functions as an indispensable epistemic instrument under the normative guidance of revelation. The primary objective of this article is therefore to clarify the epistemological status, scope, and limits of reason within Islamic knowledge systems while highlighting the internal coherence and adaptability of the Islamic intellectual tradition. By doing so, the article proposes a conceptually integrated model of Islamic epistemology that remains faithful to classical scholarship while offering analytical relevance for contemporary debates on religion, science, and ethics.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative, library-based research design to examine the epistemological role of human reason (*aql*) in Islamic thought, with particular attention to its functions, limits, and relationship with revelation (*wa y*). A qualitative approach is appropriate because the subject matter is conceptual, normative, and interpretive rather than empirical or statistical. The objective is not to measure social behavior, but to reconstruct how Islamic intellectual traditions have theorized the place of reason within systems of religious knowledge.

The research is structured as a normative–conceptual inquiry grounded in textual analysis. It proceeds inductively through close engagement with primary sources, allowing broader epistemological patterns to emerge from the internal logic of the texts themselves rather than from externally imposed theoretical categories. This design is consistent with the article’s aim to formulate a hierarchical–integrative model of the relationship between reason and revelation.

Primary data consist of classical Islamic texts that explicitly discuss reason within major intellectual domains, particularly *kal m* (theology), *u l al-fiqh* (legal theory), Qur’anic exegesis (*tafs r*), and Islamic philosophy (*falsafah*). Representative authors include al-Ghaz l, Ibn Taymiyyah, al-F r b , Ibn S n , Fakhr al-D n al-R z , al-Sh ib , and other scholars whose works address the epistemic authority, scope, and limits of rational inquiry. These sources were selected because they represent diverse yet influential approaches to the interaction between intellect and revelation.

Secondary data were drawn from recent peer-reviewed journal articles, edited volumes, and academic monographs on Islamic epistemology, rationality, hermeneutics, and contemporary debates on religion and knowledge. Priority was given to publications from the last decade in order to situate the discussion within current scholarship and identify modern reinterpretations of classical debates.

Data collection was conducted through systematic literature identification using keywords such as *reason and revelation*, *Islamic epistemology*, *aql*, *wa y*, *rationality in Islam*, and related terms. Sources were included when they directly addressed the epistemological function, hierarchy, or limitation of reason in Islamic thought. Materials with only incidental or descriptive references to reason were excluded.

The analysis combines qualitative textual interpretation with thematic-conceptual synthesis. Textual analysis was used to examine how reason is defined, justified, and applied across disciplines, including its role in theology, legal reasoning, ethics, and scriptural interpretation. Comparative reading was then undertaken to identify convergences and differences among scholars and schools of thought.

The findings were organized into four major themes: (1) the epistemic necessity of reason, (2) the moral and legal functions of rationality, (3) the metaphysical and normative limits of reason, and (4) the hierarchical yet complementary relationship between reason and revelation. Through this interpretive synthesis, the study reconstructs an integrated epistemological framework that reflects both continuity and diversity within the Islamic intellectual tradition.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Position of Reason in Islam

In Islam, reason occupies a central epistemological position as one of the greatest endowments granted by Allah to human beings. It constitutes the basis of moral responsibility (*taklif*), since only through the faculty of reason can individuals comprehend divine commands and prohibitions (Husni, 2022). In this sense, reason functions not merely as a cognitive capacity, but as a necessary condition for religious accountability and ethical agency.

The Qur'an explicitly affirms this epistemic role by repeatedly (inviting) human beings to engage in rational reflection (*ta'addul*) and contemplation (*tafakkur*). For instance, Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]:164 presents a series of cosmological signs—such as the creation of the heavens and the earth, the alternation of night and day, and the order of natural phenomena—as objects of rational reflection for “a people who use reason” (*li-qawmin ya'qilun*). Similarly, Q.S. Yunus [10]:100 emphasizes that understanding and belief are contingent upon the proper use of intellect, implying that faith is not opposed to reason but grounded in it.

In al-Ghazali's view, reason has two main functions: first, as a tool to understand empirical reality; second, as a means to reveal the inner meaning of revelation (Maryati & Wahyuningsih, 2020). However, reason cannot stand on its own without the guidance of revelation. It is like a light that needs a lamp so that it does not get lost. Without revelation, the intellect can fall into epistemological errors and produce misleading thoughts (Hafiz & Walidin, 2024). Therefore, al-Ghazali rejects the extreme rationalist view that places reason as the source of absolute truth, as it potentially denies the role of revelation.

This view is consistent with the epistemological position of Ibn Taymiyyah, who firmly asserted that there is no real contradiction between reason and revelation. In his *Dar Ta'aruf al-Aql wa al-Naql*, he argues that both revelation and reason originate from the same divine source—Allah—and therefore must ultimately be in harmony (Sutoyib & Soleh, 2024).

This principle carries important methodological implications. It means that any apparent contradiction between reason and *nash* is not intrinsic, but arises either from a misinterpretation of the revealed text or from faulty reasoning. Consequently, Ibn Taymiyyah rejects both extreme rationalism, which subordinates revelation to speculative reasoning, and rigid textualism, which dismisses the interpretive role of reason altogether.

Within this framework, reason functions as an interpretive and clarificatory instrument: it is employed to explain the meanings of revelation, resolve ambiguities, and relate scriptural teachings to empirical and social realities. However, this role remains bounded by the authority of definitive (*qat'i*) texts, which cannot be overridden by rational speculation. In this way, Ibn Taymiyyah establishes a balanced epistemological model in which reason operates actively, yet normatively, under the guidance of revelation.

Buya Hamka also emphasized the importance of the function of reason in the Islamic philosophy of life. According to him, reason is an instrument for weighing good and bad, as well as being the basis for ethics and morals in social life (Kasmuri, 2023). However, Hamka reminded that reason should not be used to interpret teachings that are *ta'abbudi* such as mahdhah worship, because these things are beyond the reach of human ratios.

In the framework of Islamic philosophy, the position of reason is not only seen from the theological side, but also from a metaphysical and pedagogical perspective. Ibn Sina, for example, affirms that reason is the main instrument for acquiring correct knowledge through an ever-evolving intellectual process (S. Prasetya, 2023). Reason allows humans to recognize the laws of cause and effect in the universe, which ultimately leads them to the recognition of the greatness of Allah (Adabiyah, 2017). This view shows that reason functions not only in the realm of law and theology, but also in the development of science.

In the context of education, al-Farabi's thought places reason as the core of the process of forming a civilized human being. According to him, education must develop intellectual potential so that students are able to achieve virtue and wisdom (Erdriani et al., 2024; Humaedah & Almubarak,

2021). Thus, Islamic education is not only oriented to the transfer of knowledge, but also to the formation of rational character based on revelation.

Such a high position of reason makes Islam a rational religion and open to knowledge. However, Islam also affirms that rationality must be subject to revelation, so as not to slip into moral relativism or epistemological secularism. In other words, Islam rejects absolute rationalism that negates revelation, just as it rejects rigid textualism that denies the function of reason.

Based on the framework of classical *uḥl al-fiqh* scholarship, the relationship between reason and *nash* in Islam can be broadly classified into three interrelated forms: (1) reason as subordinate to *nash*, (2) reason as an instrument for understanding *nash*, and (3) reason as an interpretive agent in engaging with *zann* (probabilistic) texts. This classification reflects the epistemological hierarchy articulated by scholars such as al-Shāhibī, al-Juwaynī, and Ibn Rushd, who consistently emphasized the normative primacy of revelation alongside the functional necessity of reason. In matters that are *qaḍī* (definitive), such as the pillars of faith, the pillars of Islam, and acts of *maʿāh* worship, reason is required to submit fully to revelation. This is because revelation operates at a transcendent level beyond the full reach of human rationality. In such cases, reason does not possess the authority to alter or reinterpret divinely established rulings. For example, the procedures of prayer, zakat, and fasting are not subject to rational modification, but must be accepted as expressions of obedience to divine command (Dhestiana, 2020; Wirman, 2019).

In this realm, reason functions to interpret the meanings contained in revelation, both linguistically, contextually, and philosophically. An example is the use of reason in understanding *kauniyyah* verses that talk about natural phenomena and life (Algifari, 2024; Syam et al., 2023). Through reason, man can uncover the broader meaning of these verses and relate them to scientific knowledge. Similarly, in *ushul fiqh*, reason is used to perform *qiyas*, *istihsan*, and *maslahah mursalah* as a method of establishing Islamic law that is adaptive to social changes (Aminuddin et al., 2024; Yanti, 2022). This shows that reason is a dynamic means of understanding the relevance of revelation to empirical reality.

In *the area of zanni* (relative), such as the problem of muamalah, social, and society, the intellect has a broader role in interpreting *the nash*. The *verses of mutasyabihat*, for example, provide space for different interpretations that require a rational and contextual approach (Faruq et al., 2024; Suardi & Nurhidayah, 2023). In this case, scholars use reason to interpret the symbolic and metaphorical meaning of the text, as long as it does not contradict the basic principles of sharia. The Ash'ariyyah school, for example, emphasizes the balance between reason and revelation with the principle of *tawaqquf*—stopping at the limits that the intellect can reach and leaving the rest to Allah (Adryan & Santalia, 2022).

The classification shows that Islam does not place reason and revelation in opposite positions, but in hierarchical and synergistic relations. Revelation becomes a normative guideline, while reason becomes an interpretive means. When the two work in harmony, a moderate, rational, and relevant understanding to the needs of the times (*wasathiyah*) is born. On the other hand, an imbalance between the two will give rise to two extremes: secular rationalism that ignores revelation, or textual fundamentalism that rejects the dynamics of reason (Nugroho & Ramadhan, 2022; Zahro & Nursikin, 2024).

In the context of education and the renewal of contemporary Islamic thought, this relationship is becoming increasingly important. The Islamization of science (al-Faruqi) and dual hermeneutics (Fazlur Rahman) are two modern approaches that affirm the need for integration between reason and revelation to build a dynamic and contextual Islamic epistemology (Abdussamad, 2015; Verona, 2023). Thus, the understanding of *nash* through reason becomes not only an intellectual, but also a spiritual endeavor, which leads man to strike a balance between rationality and faith.

The Role of Reason in Interpreting Nash

In mainstream Sunni epistemology, reason is generally not regarded as an independent source of ultimate truth, but rather as an essential epistemic instrument for understanding revelation. Through the faculty of reason, humans are able to apprehend the meaning, purpose, and wisdom embedded in the *nash*, both in the Qur'an and the Hadith. In this sense, reason functions as a mediating faculty that

connects textual authority with historical and social context, linking the absoluteness of revelation with the dynamism of human experience (Hidayat & Rijal, 2024). Therefore, the process of interpreting the *nash* necessarily involves the active engagement of the intellect in order to actualize divine guidance within concrete human realities.

In the discipline of Qur'anic exegesis, this role of reason is most clearly reflected in the methods of *tafsir bi al-ra'y* and *tafsir bi al-dirayah*, which incorporate rational, linguistic, historical, and contextual analysis. These approaches affirm that while revelation remains the ultimate normative reference, its interpretation requires the disciplined use of reason within established hermeneutical frameworks

In the science of interpretation, the role of reason is clearly seen in the method of *tafsir bi al-ra'yi* or *bi al-dirayah*, which is interpretation that involves the ability to reason, linguistic, historical, and social knowledge (Algifari, 2024; Nurdin & Sidik, 2022). *Tafsir bi al-dirayah* emphasizes that a mufassir must use his intellect deeply to understand the meaning of the verse without violating the principles of shari'i. In this context, reason is used not to replace revelation, but to actualize its meaning according to the needs of the times. This is in line with the principle of *ijtihad* in Islamic law, where reason is used to examine problems that are not explicitly found in the *nash*.

The role of reason as an instrument of interpretation is also seen in the study of *kauniyyah* verses that talk about natural phenomena. The Qur'an invites people to pay attention to Allah's creation and learn from it. In QS. Al-Ghasyiyah [88]: 17–20, for example, Allah commands man to pay attention to the camel, the sky, the mountains, and the earth — all of which contain signs of His greatness. This command is an encouragement for humans to use their intellect to study natural reality and develop science (Syam et al., 2023). Thus, scientific activity in Islam is part of the manifestation of the revelation's command to think.

In the context of ushul fiqh, reason plays an important role in shaping legal reasoning instruments such as *qiyas*, *istihsan*, and *maslahah mursalah* (Aminuddin et al., 2024; Yanti, 2022). *Qiyas* is the application of reason in associating a law with another law based on the similarity of 'illat (legal reasons). *Istihsan* is the use of reason to choose a law that is more in accordance with the principles of justice and benefit, while *maslahah mursalah* emphasizes the role of reason in determining the public interest when no explicit textual evidence is found (Harun, 2022). All these methods show that reason is a dynamic tool that enables Islamic sharia to remain relevant in the face of social change.

In addition, reason serves as a tool to understand maqashid al-shari'ah, which is the noble goals of Islamic law. Scholars such as al-Syatibi and al-Qaradawi affirm that the Shari'ah was revealed to realize the benefits of humans, both in this world and in the hereafter. The benefit can be recognized through a sound and clear mind, because it is able to weigh the benefits and harms of an action (Sutoyib & Soleh, 2024). In this context, reason does not simply interpret the text, but also leads humans to understand the ethical and social dimensions of revelation.

Reason in the Tradition of Islamic Thought

Rationalist groups, especially the Mu'tazilah, place reason as the supreme authority in understanding religion. They argue that reason can determine good and bad without the aid of revelation. According to this view, reason has an autonomous ability to judge the morality of an act and establish the principle of God's justice. Therefore, they argue that revelation must be understood in line with rational logic, and in the event of a contradiction, the text must be interpreted in accordance with the reasoning of reason (Dhestiana, 2020; Romdhon & Masruchin, 2023).

Although Mu'tazilah's views were considered too rational by some scholars, their contribution was immense in developing the Islamic tradition of rational theology. Through the concept of *al-'adl wa al-tawhid*, they emphasize the importance of rationality in understanding the oneness and justice of Allah. They also developed a dialectical methodology (*kalam*) that trains Muslims to think systematically and argumentatively (Husni, 2022).

Traditionalists such as Hanabilah, on the other hand, reject the dominance of reason in understanding *nash*. They are of the view that reason cannot be used to interpret verses related to the attributes of Allah, the supernatural, and the law of worship that is *ta'abbudi* (Wirman, 2019). Ibn

Taymiyyah emphasized that revelation and reason are not contradictory, but if there is a difference, then it is the understanding of reason that needs to be corrected (Sutoyib & Soleh, 2024). He rejected philosophical speculations that were considered to cause ambiguity in the creed. However, Ibn Taymiyyah still appreciated the role of reason as a tool to understand the text and to establish rational postulates for faith.

The moderate approach was developed by Ash'ariyyah and Maturidiyyah. This school seeks to balance revelation and reason with the principle that reason has an important function, but it must not violate the limits of revelation. Al-Ash'ari emphasized that reason is necessary to justify the existence of God and understand the obligation to believe in Him, but the laws of the Shari'ah can only be known through revelation (Adryan & Santalia, 2022). This view makes reason a tool of justification (*muhaqqiq*) for the truth of revelation, not as a source of law in itself.

This moderate approach then gave birth to more dynamic thinking in modern times. Figures such as Muhammad Abduh and Rasyid Ridha tried to revive the role of reason in understanding religion without leaving revelation. They emphasize that Islam is a rational religion that is in accordance with human nature (Faruq et al., 2024). Through *Tafsir al-Manar*, Abduh interprets the verses of the Qur'an with a scientific and rational approach, and invites Muslims to think critically about social reality. Fazlur Rahman (1982) then continued this idea through the concept of "double movement" hermeneutics, where texts are understood in their historical context and then applied to the contemporary context (Abdussamad, 2015). This approach emphasizes that reason is a means of renewing Islamic thought to remain relevant to the challenges of modern times.

The Integrative Method between Nash and Reason

The integration between reason and *nash* is an attempt to avoid the dichotomy between rationality and spirituality. Islam views that revelation and reason come from the same source, Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala, so that there is no possibility of an essential contradiction between the two (Sutoyib & Soleh, 2024). Therefore, what is needed is not a rejection of reason, but an arrangement of its role so that it runs in harmony with revelation.

There are three basic principles that are the foundation of the integration of reason and revelation. First, *tawazun* (balance), which is reason used proportionately in the area that is justified by the sharia. Second, *ta'aqqul*, which is using rationality to understand the wisdom of sharia and divine purposes. Third, *tazkiyah al-'aql*, which is the purification of the mind from lust and subjectivity so that reasoning remains clear and objective (Maryati & Wahyuningsih, 2020). With this principle, reason can function as a means of understanding the meaning of *nash* without violating the values of monotheism.

In ushul fiqh, the integration of reason and *nash* is reflected through the concepts of *ta'lil al-ahkam* (search for legal reasons) and *maqashid al-shari'ah* (the purpose of Islamic law). *Ta'lil al-ahkam* uses reason to understand the rational reasons behind a sharia provision. For example, the prohibition of khamar is not just because of its substance, but because of its destructive effects on human reason and morals. Thus, reason can find the ethical and social dimensions of the shari'a laws.

The concept of *maqashid al-shari'ah* developed by al-Syatibi emphasizes that Islamic law aims to realize five main benefits: protecting religion, soul, intellect, descendants, and property. All of these benefits can be recognized through the use of common sense that is in harmony with revelation (Hafiz & Walidin, 2024). This thinking shows that rationality in Islam is not secular rationality, but rationality oriented towards divine welfare and moral values.

Ijtihad is the most concrete manifestation of the synergy between reason and revelation. Through ijtihad, scholars use their intellect to dig up the law from the source of revelation according to the social context and the times. Ibn al-Qayyim stated that ijtihad is the highest form of intellectual devotion to Allah, because it combines spiritual sincerity and rational intelligence in understanding the sharia (Hidayat & Rijal, 2024). Without the role of reason in ijtihad, Islamic law will stagnate and lose its relevance in modern life.

In the contemporary context, the integration of reason and *nash* is manifested through the epistemological approach put forward by modern thinkers such as Muhammad Abid al-Jabiri and Syed

Naquib al-Attas. Al-Jabiri (1982) introduced the epistemological models of *bayani*, *burhani*, and *irfani*, in which *bayani* emphasizes revelation, *burhani* emphasizes empirical reason, and *irfani* emphasizes spiritual intuition. All three must be integrated in order to produce complete and balanced Islamic knowledge (Madyan, 2025).

Meanwhile, al-Attas emphasizes the importance of purification of the mind (*adab al-'aql*) in order to be able to understand revelation correctly. According to him, the crisis of modern Muslims' thinking is rooted in a mistake in using reason that is independent of the guidance of the values of revelation (Zahro & Nursikin, 2024). Therefore, the integration of reason and revelation is not only a methodological issue, but also a spiritual and moral one.

Thus, the role of reason in interpreting *nash* cannot be separated from efforts to build a balanced Islamic epistemology. Reason is not only a tool of logical thinking, but also a moral and spiritual instrument to which revelation must direct. When reason works in the divine corridor, it will not be contrary to revelation, but rather becomes a means of uncovering deeper truths.

The Limitation of Reason to Nash the Qath'i

In Islamic epistemology, a fundamental principle is that reason operates within certain limits in its engagement with revelation. This limitation does not diminish the value of reason; rather, it reflects the distinct yet complementary domains in which reason and revelation function. Revelation, as the source of absolute truth, occupies a transcendent and authoritative position. In contrast, reason—despite being one of the greatest endowments granted to human beings—remains relative, empirically conditioned, and bound by the constraints of space and time (Hidayat & Rijal, 2024; Husni, 2022).

The first limitation of the role of reason lies in matters of *qath'i*, both in terms of *thubut* (validity of sources) and *dalalah* (definite meaning). In matters that have been definitively determined by the Qur'an and Hadith, reason does not have the authority to reject or deny its meaning. For example, the teachings about the oneness of Allah (monotheism), the obligation of worship, and definite laws such as the prohibition of adultery, murder, and usury. Reason can only understand the wisdom behind these provisions, not change their substance (Dhestiana, 2020; Wirman, 2019). This is in line with the Qur'anic command in Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]:285, which states: “*The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers. All of them have believed in Allah, His angels, His books, and His messengers, [saying], ‘We make no distinction between any of His messengers’...*” This verse affirms the principle that believers are required to accept revelation in its entirety, without selectively affirming or rejecting parts of it.

In the context of faith, reason can only be used to understand the truth of revelation, not to determine the essence of God. Kalam scholars such as al-Ash'ari and al-Maturidi affirm that reason is able to prove the existence of God through the signs of His creation, but it cannot reveal His essence in its entirety. Unseen things such as angels, heaven, hell, and the Day of Resurrection are included in the territory that can only be known through revelation (Adryan & Santalia, 2022). When reason tries to penetrate this territory without the guidance of revelation, what arises is speculation and epistemological doubt.

Another limitation is found in the worship of *mahdah*. The rules, conditions, and procedures of worship such as prayer, zakat, fasting, and hajj are not determined through reason, but through explicit revelation. Reason functions to understand the symbolic meaning and wisdom of the worship, not to change its format. In this case, *the principle of ta'abbud* emphasizes that worship is a form of absolute obedience to Allah without the need for rational justification (Maryati & Wahyuningsih, 2020). This thinking is a bulwark against modern tendencies that try to rationalize all aspects of religion excessively.

Intellectual Ethics in Interpretation

In addition to limitations, Islam also establishes the ethics of using reason in the process of interpreting revelation. This ethics serves as a moral and methodological guideline so that thinking activities do not go out of the corridor of divine truth. In classical Islamic literature, this ethics of thinking is known as *adab al-'alim* and *adab al-'aql*, which are *adab* that regulates the relationship between man and science and between reason and revelation (Humaedah & Almubarak, 2021).

The first etiquette that must be maintained is sincere intentions. Reason can only function correctly if it is directed to seek truth, not justification. Scholars such as al-Ghazali in *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* emphasized that knowledge that is not accompanied by sincerity will plunge its owner into intellectual arrogance. He warned scholars not to use knowledge as a tool to gain position or influence (Hafiz & Walidin, 2024). In the context of *Nash's interpretation*, sincerity is the moral foundation so that reason is not used to manipulate the meaning of revelation for ideological or political interests.

The second ethics is to respect the authority of the text. In the Islamic tradition, revelation holds the highest position and cannot be subjugated by human opinion. Reason only acts as a translator, not a ruler over the text. Therefore, a mufassir is obliged to understand the linguistic context, *asbab al-nuzul*, and the principles of correct interpretation before interpreting the verse. Al-Razi in *Mafatih al-Ghaib* asserts that interpretation without adequate discipline will result in dangerous epistemological errors (Romdhon & Masruchin, 2023).

The third ethics is prudence in the *zanni* area. In matters that are uncertain or still contain the possibility of double interpretation, reason must be careful and not hasty in establishing a single truth. The principle of *tawaqquf* taught by Ash'ariyyah emphasizes that in matters that cannot be reached with certainty by reason, the best attitude is to restrain oneself and surrender its meaning to Allah (Adryan & Santalia, 2022). This attitude reflects intellectual humility while maintaining the purity of the teachings from speculative interpretations.

The fourth ethics is to maintain objectivity and cleanliness of heart. In the view of al-Farabi and Ibn Sina, the intellect contaminated by lust will not be able to grasp the truth purely (Erdriani et al., 2024). Therefore, Islam requires the process of *tazkiyah al-nafs* (purification of the soul) so that the intellect can work clearly. This is also emphasized by al-Attas, that the crisis of modern Muslim thinking occurs due to the loss of manners and deviations in the orientation of reason (Zahro & Nursikin, 2024).

The fifth ethics is the willingness to accept differences. In the history of tafsir and fiqh, the difference in the results of *ijtihad* is an inevitability born from differences in methods and contexts in the use of reason. Scholars differ not because they contradict revelation, but because they have a different way of thinking and approach to the text. Therefore, an interpreter is obliged to respect the plurality of views as long as they are still based on the principles of sharia. This principle is also the basis for the development of inclusive and tolerant Islamic thought (Suardi & Nurhidayah, 2023).

By maintaining these ethics, reason will function in a balanced manner and not slip into epistemological errors. Intellectual ethics in Islam not only regulates the way of thinking, but also directs the moral orientation so that rational reasoning is always subject to spiritual values.

Criticism of Modern Rationalism in Nash's Interpretation

The development of modern science and philosophy has had a profound influence on the way Muslims understand revelation. One of the main challenges that arises is modern rationalism, which is a view that places human ratio as the supreme source of knowledge and independent of the authority of revelation. In this paradigm, everything must be empirically and logically proven to be true. This kind of view greatly influenced Western hermeneutics which was later applied in religious studies, including sacred texts (Verona, 2023).

Modern rationalism has made a positive contribution to developing methods of critical analysis of texts, but in the Islamic context, this approach often leads to a reduction in the meaning of revelation. Some modern Muslim scholars try to apply Western hermeneutics in the interpretation of the Qur'an on the grounds of contextualization. However, this approach often ignores the transcendental and spiritual dimensions of revelation (Abdussamad, 2015). For example, Fazlur Rahman through *the double movement* approach seeks to combine historical analysis with contemporary relevance, but he still insists that revelation has a normative value that should not be ignored (Madyan, 2025)

Extreme rationalism has the potential to give rise to two forms of deviation: secularization of interpretation and relativism of meaning. The secularization of interpretation occurs when interpretation is based solely on human logic without acknowledging the authority of revelation. Relativism of meaning occurs when the truth of the text is considered to depend entirely on the reader's interpretation.

These two tendencies negate the divine aspect of revelation and make sacred texts mere cultural products (Hafiz & Walidin, 2024).

In response to these challenges, contemporary Islamic thinkers such as Syed Naquib al-Attas and Ismail Raji al-Faruqi proposed the concept of Islamization of knowledge. According to al-Attas, the epistemological crisis of modern Muslims is rooted in the adoption of the Western paradigm of rationalism that separates science from the values of revelation. Therefore, reason must be returned to its position as an instrument that functions within the framework of monotheism (Zahro & Nursikin, 2024). Meanwhile, al-Faruqi emphasized that all disciplines must be united in the framework of monotheism so that they are not uprooted from their spirituality roots (Verona, 2023).

In addition, al-Jabiri (1982) offers an epistemological framework of *bayani*, *burhani*, and *irfani* as an effort to rebuild Islamic rationality rooted in revelation. *Bayani* represents the textual dimension (revelation), *the burhani of the* rational-empirical dimension (intellect), and *the irfani* of the intuitive-spiritual dimension (*kasyf*). These three approaches must be integrated in order to produce complete and balanced Islamic knowledge. This epistemological model asserts that Islam does not reject rationality, but places it within a broader ethical and theological framework (Madyan, 2025).

Islamic criticism of modern rationalism does not mean a rejection of science or freedom of thought. On the contrary, Islam encourages the use of reason to develop knowledge, but with the awareness that human rationality must be subject to revelation as a source of value. In this perspective, revelation serves to provide moral orientation and meaning for knowledge, so that science does not lose its direction and purpose. Thus, the integration of reason and revelation is a middle ground that avoids Muslims from the dangers of secularism on the one hand and dogmatism on the other.

Integrative Model between Revelation and Reason in Islamic Epistemology

Islamic epistemology from the beginning was built on the basis of the belief that revelation and reason come from the same source, namely Allah Subhanahu Wa ta'ala. Therefore, the two cannot be in intrinsic contradiction to each other. Revelation functions as a guide and guide for the intellect to stay on the path of truth, while the intellect acts as an instrument for understanding, interpreting, and implementing the content of revelation in human life (Hidayat & Rijal, 2024; Husni, 2022).

In this framework, the relationship between revelation and reason is not absolutely subordinative, but complementary. Revelation leads the mind not to get caught up in speculative error, while reason helps man grasp the rational, moral, and empirical dimensions of revelation. This symbiotic relationship makes Islam an integrative and non-dualistic knowledge system — in contrast to modern Western epistemology that separates rationality and spirituality (Zahro & Nursikin, 2024).

Classical Muslim thinkers have long emphasized the importance of a balance between the two. Al-Ghazali (in *Al-Mustashfa*) affirms that "reason is the foundation of revelation, and revelation is light to reason." This statement shows that no revelation can be understood without reason, and no reason survives without the guidance of revelation (Maryati & Wahyuningsih, 2020). Ibn Taymiyyah in *Dar' Ta'arud al-'Aql wa al-Naql* even elaborated on rational arguments to show that every commandment of revelation is basically in line with the nature of the right reason (Sutoyib & Soleh, 2024)

From a philosophical perspective, al-Farabi and Ibn Sina built a theory of reason that positioned the human intellect as a means of achieving divine knowledge. Ibn Sina divides knowledge into two paths: the knowledge of revelation received by the prophets and the rational knowledge gained through contemplation and empirical experience (A. Prasetia, 2025). However, the two meet in one goal — knowledge of God and universal truth. In this view, revelation and reason are two different paths that lead to the same source of truth.

In the contemporary context, Fazlur Rahman (1982) emphasized the need for a double hermeneutic model in understanding the Qur'an. The text of revelation, according to him, must be read through two movements: from the present to the historical context (to understand the original intent of the revelation), and from the historical context back to the present (to actualize its moral message). This process can only be done with the active involvement of the intellect as a rational interpreter of the meaning of the text (Abdussamad, 2015). Thus, Fazlur Rahman's approach emphasizes the role of reason not as a substitute for revelation, but as a bridge that connects sacred texts and social reality.

From these various views, it can be concluded that Islamic epistemology does not place reason and revelation in an antagonistic relationship, but in a synergistic relationship. Revelation provides orientation and value, while reason provides elaboration and actualization. Both combine to form a knowledge system that is rational, moral, and transcendental at the same time.

Bayani, Burhani, and Irfani's Approach as an Integrative Model

Efforts to formulate a complete and integrative model of Islamic epistemology were carried out seriously by modern thinkers such as Muhammad Abid al-Jabiri. In his monumental work *Bunyah al-'Aql al-'Arabi* (1982), al-Jabiri identified three main epistemological approaches in the treasures of Islamic thought: *bayani*, *burhani*, and *irfani* (Madyan, 2025).

Burhani's epistemology is based on logical and empirical rationality. This approach develops knowledge through observation, deduction, and scientific analysis in accordance with the principle of causality. In the context of Islam, *burhani* is represented by philosophical and scientific traditions developed by figures such as Ibn Sina, al-Farabi, and Ibn Rushd (Erdriani et al., 2024).

Irfani's epistemology is oriented towards spiritual intuition and inner experience. This approach is rooted in the Sufism tradition, which places knowledge as the result of purification of the soul (*tazkiyah al-nafs*) and *kasyf* (revelation) of spiritual reality (Humaedah & Almubarak, 2021).

These three approaches, according to al-Jabiri, are not to be opposed, but to be integrated. *Bayani* provides a normative foundation, *burhani* provides a rational framework, and *irfani* provides a spiritual dimension. The integration of the three creates a holistic Islamic knowledge system: textual in orientation, rational in methodology, and spiritual in purpose (Zahro & Nursikin, 2024).

A similar view was put forward by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, who asserted that the crisis of knowledge in the modern Islamic world arose due to the separation of knowledge from *adab* and the values of revelation. According to him, the integration of reason and revelation can only be achieved if reason is guided by *adab al-'aql* — that is, moral and spiritual awareness that knowledge is a mandate from Allah that must be used for good (Zahro & Nursikin, 2024). Therefore, al-Attas offers the paradigm of *ta'dib* (the formation of *adab*) as the basis of Islamic education, where reason and revelation work together to form knowledgeable human beings with morals.

In addition to al-Jabiri and al-Attas, Ismail Raji al-Faruqi developed the idea of Islamization of knowledge as a major project of Islamic epistemological reconstruction. According to al-Faruqi, all branches of science — both religion and science — must be returned to the value of monotheism as the principle of knowledge. This is because in Islam, there is no dichotomy between rational science and revelation; both are manifestations of God's will in the universe (Verona, 2023). Thus, the integration of revelation and reason means returning all human intellectual activity to the divine orbit.

In the perspective of *maqashid al-shari'ah*, this integration also has practical relevance. Al-Syatibi emphasized that Islamic sharia aims to maintain the five main benefits: religion (*din*), soul (*nafs*), intellect (*'aql*), offspring (*nasl*), and property (*mal*). Interestingly, one of the *maqashid* that must be maintained is the intellect itself. This shows that Islam not only recognizes, but also glorifies reason as part of the *maqashid sharia* (Hafiz & Walidin, 2024). Thus, the correct use of reason is not only allowed, but is obligatory in order to preserve the purposes of sharia.

Reconstruction of Contemporary Islamic Epistemology

In the modern context, the role of reason in interpreting revelation needs to be understood dynamically and adaptively to the development of the times, without losing its normative roots. The contemporary world is characterized by technological advancements, cultural plurality, and complex global challenges. This situation demands a new paradigm in Islamic thought — one that is able to combine scientific rationality with the spirituality of revelation (Madyan, 2025).

Integration of Knowledge and Values Model emphasizes the importance of returning science to the moral values that come from revelation. In the Islamic education system, science should not be understood solely as a means of technological or economic production, but as a means to build a just and civilized civilization (*madaniyah wa akhlaqiyyah*). Ismail Raji al-Faruqi and Syed Naquib al-Attas both emphasized that knowledge that is detached from revelation will lose its ethical orientation and give birth to a humanitarian crisis (Verona, 2023; Zahro & Nursikin, 2024).

The epistemology of monotheism is a concept that places all branches of knowledge in the framework of the oneness of God. Reason serves as an instrument to reveal the signs of God's greatness in the universe, while revelation is a guide in understanding the purpose of creation. In this paradigm, there is no dichotomy between religious science and empirical science, as both lead to the recognition of the oneness of God (Hidayat & Rijal, 2024). The epistemology of monotheism restores the function of reason as a means of devotion, not just a cognitive instrument.

Islamic rationality must stand on the principle of moderation (*wasathiyyah*). That is, the use of reason must stay away from two extremes: dogmatism that rejects critical thinking, and extreme rationalism that rejects revelation. In the Ash'ariyyah and Maturidiyyah traditions, *wasathiyyah* rationality means making reason as a tool to explain revelation, not to judge it (Adryan & Santalia, 2022). This principle is particularly relevant in the modern era, where many people try to interpret religion freely without any valid methodological guidance.

With these three approaches, Islamic epistemology can move from simply preserving classical heritage to a productive and contextual model. The integration of revelation and reason allows Islam to respond to modern challenges without losing its spiritual authenticity.

Implications of Synthesis on Islamic Tafsir and Philosophy

The epistemological synthesis between reason and revelation has far-reaching implications for various fields of Islamic science, especially Islamic interpretation, philosophy, and education. In the field of interpretation, the integrative model encourages the birth of contextual interpretations that are still based on linguistic and theological principles. This kind of interpretation does not reject the scientific and rational method, but places it within the corridor of Qur'anic values. Contemporary works of tafsir such as *al-Manar* by Abduh and Rashid Ridha, or *Tafsir al-Mishbah* by Quraish Shihab, are clear examples of approaches that combine reason, science, and spirituality in reading the text of revelation (Suardi & Nurhidayah, 2023).

In the field of Islamic philosophy, this synthesis revives the dialogue between science, faith, and ethics. Islamic philosophy does not stop at metaphysical speculation, but is geared towards building moral and civilizational consciousness. Ibn Rushd, for example, asserted that true philosophy is a rational reflection on revelation, not an attempt to match it (Romdhon & Masruchin, 2023). Thus, Islamic philosophy based on revelation can be an alternative to the crisis of Western epistemology that is trapped in relativism and nihilism.

In the context of Islamic education, this epistemological synthesis demands a reformulation of the curriculum that places the integration between science and faith as the main principle. Education does not only transfer knowledge, but also forms a clear mind and a clean heart. The ultimate goal is to produce knowledgeable, civilized, and noble human beings (*Kamil people*) (Erdriani et al., 2024; Madyan, 2025).

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that within Islamic epistemology, reason and revelation operate in a hierarchical yet integrative relationship, where revelation functions as the ultimate normative source, while reason serves as an indispensable epistemic instrument for interpretation and application. Classical and contemporary Islamic scholarship consistently affirms that the validity of rational inquiry depends on its alignment with the guiding framework of revelation, particularly in distinguishing between *qa'* and *ann* domains.

The study contributes to the discourse on Islamic epistemology by articulating a systematic reconstruction of the relationship between reason and *nash* as a hierarchical-integrative model that bridges theological, philosophical, and legal perspectives. This model moves beyond reductive dichotomies between rationalism and textualism, offering a more coherent account of how Islamic intellectual tradition accommodates both rational inquiry and divine authority.

The implications of this study are twofold. Theoretically, it provides a conceptual framework for re-examining epistemological debates in contemporary Islamic thought. Practically, it offers a foundation for developing integrative approaches in Islamic education, particularly in fostering a

balanced engagement between critical reasoning and normative commitment to revelation. Such a framework is essential for responding to modern intellectual challenges without compromising the spiritual and ethical foundations of Islamic knowledge.

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