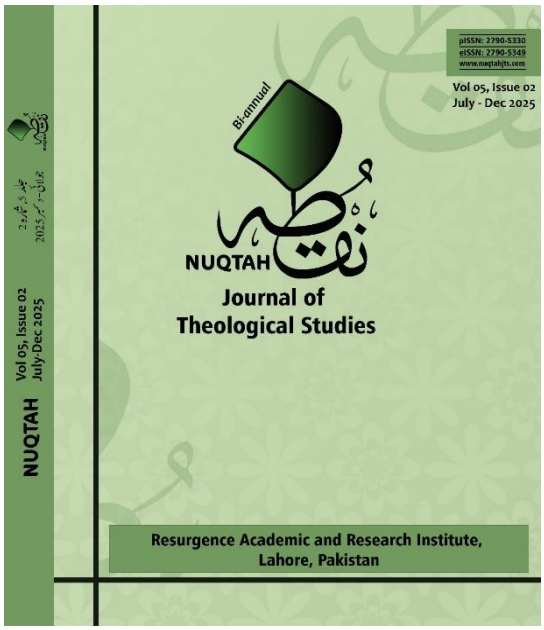

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The Intellectual Aesthetics of the Qur'an: An Analytical Study in the Light of Reflection, Contemplation, and Scientific Insight

Saddaqat Hussain

Lecturer, Department of Higher Eduction ,Muzzafarabad, AJ&K

Email sadaqatajk2@gmail.com

Andleeba Kiran

Mphil Scholar Riphah International University Islamabad.

Email andleebch91@gmail.com

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Abstract

The Holy Quran is the first book on Earth that has made astonishing revelations about the heavens, the Earth, and everything in between, inviting humanity to study and observe the wonders of nature. The entire Quran encourages mankind to explore the marvels of creation. There are approximately 756 verses in the Quran that contain profound scientific insights. If deeply analyzed, these verses can lead to groundbreaking discoveries in the world of science.

The Quran invites humanity to contemplation and reflection, viewing scientific advancement as a means to understand the realities of the universe. From the Quranic perspective, science is not merely a tool for material progress but a means to recognize the signs of the Creator. There are around 756 verses in the Quran that encompass fundamental aspects of modern scientific research. A thoughtful examination of these verses can result in remarkable scientific revelations.

The Quran sheds light on various aspects of scientific knowledge. When scientific disciplines are explored within it, we find that there are 328 references to biology, 37 to chemistry, 19 to mathematics, systematic numerical patterns, and 31 to physics. These references highlight the significance and depth of scientific subjects.

To this day, science has not been able to disprove the theories presented by the Quran. Undoubtedly, the Quran and Islam have contributed to the expansion and dignity of scientific knowledge. Many principles of modern scientific progress align with Quranic teachings

Keywords: Quranic Scientific Insights, Scientific Interpretation, Islam and Science, Modern Scientific Discoveries, Cosmology and the Quran.

Introduction

In today's modern scientific age, the importance of defending Islam's ideological foundations has become greater than ever before. While scientific knowledge has undoubtedly broadened intellectual horizons, certain negative influences have also sought to distance modern minds from religion. In this context, it has become essential to present the Qur'anic scientific teachings in a systematic and well-reasoned manner, so that the misconceptions being spread about religion can be effectively addressed.

The Holy Qur'an is a divine book of guidance that provides comprehensive solutions to the challenges faced by humanity in every era. In the modern age, while scientific progress has expanded human consciousness, the scientific interpretation of the Quran has further illuminated the universal truths of Islam. In this era of globalization, the message of Islam continues to retain its meaning, depth, and influence. The harmony between modern scientific discoveries and Qur'anic statements has established Islam on rational and scientific foundations, compelling people from all walks of life to acknowledge that Islam alone offers the true and practical solutions to the problems of the contemporary world.

The primary objective of this research is to examine modern scientific theories in the light of the scientific indications found in the Qur'an and to demonstrate that none of the Qur'an's scientific statements have ever been proven wrong. Furthermore, the study aims to analyze the negative effects of contemporary science on modern minds and to propose concrete recommendations that can help highlight the intellectual harmony between Islam and the scientific disciplines.

In the modern era, people have become so deeply influenced by science and scientific knowledge that scientific concepts dominate their minds; in fact, they tend to view everything through the lens of science. Yet, the Qur'an is by no means behind in this domain. It is, in fact, the Qur'an that provides the most authentic foundations for the scientific disciplines. Moreover, it contains the perfect antidote to the negative effects that contemporary science often produces on modern minds. Within it also lie powerful

and constructive elements capable of transforming the prevailing tendencies of atheism, materialism, and religious apathy in the modern rational mind into a renewed inclination toward faith in God.[1]

That is precisely why *Da'wah* (the call towards faith) and the reformation of human conduct hold such great importance in Islam. The religion of Islam plays a deeply influential role in the moral and spiritual reform of humanity. Both the Qur'an and Hadith emphasize various expressions and terms that relate to inviting others toward the path of faith. Islam, being a complete code of life, can only achieve its intended objectives when it is presented with wisdom, insight, and understanding.

This research paper represents an effort to analyze the scientific themes found in the Qur'an and to evaluate them in the light of modern scientific discoveries. It also seeks to clarify the relationship between science and religion, reinforcing the idea that the Qur'an is fully in harmony with the fundamental principles of science.

During the course of this study, several questions arose in my mind, and I endeavored to find their answers. For example:

1. To what extent do contemporary scientific studies corroborate the scientific claims mentioned in the Qur'an?
2. How effective is the Qur'anic scientific exegesis in establishing harmony between science and religion?
3. What influence can the Qur'an exert on modern scientific thought, and in what practical ways might its principles be applied?

Literature Review

Comparison between Sheikh Tantawi and FakhruddinRazi in Ayat-e-Koniya: Ph.D. Thesis by QayyumAkhtar under the supervision of Dr. Munir Ahmed, Department of Islamic Studies, Islamic University, Bahawalpur (2012).

The Importance of Knowledge of the Universe for Understanding the Qur'an, Junaid Ahmad Hashmi, Ma'arif-ul-Islamia, Volume 1, Number 2, 2002

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Modern science and its purposeofexistencein Islamic perspective, Dr. Nisar Ahmed Farooqi, volume 22, issue 01. 1984

Tafsir of Dr. HalukNoorbaqi (The verses of Holy Quran and the fact of science.) A Research and Critical Study, Mohammad Latif Khan, Dr. Abdul HameedAbbasi, Islamic Studies, Volume 15, Number 1, 2016.

Authors had a few papers and compilationsof works on the scientific topics of the Quran, but the scientific style of the Quran is not discussed in detail. So theauthor was curious to studythe scientific style of the Quran in the light of scientific commentary.

Proof of the existence of scientific methods and titles in Qur'an

Definition of Scientific Exegesis (Tafseer-e-Ilmi):

In Arabic, the word *"al-'ilm"* (العلم) is used for science. In modern usage, however, the meaning of *science* has been narrowed down to refer specifically to the study of the natural order — that is, the knowledge acquired through observation, experimentation, and contemplation of the universe.[2]

On the simplest level ,science is knowledge of the world of nature .there are many regularities in nature that mankind has had to recognize for survival since the emergence of Homo sapiens as a species[3].

The very foundation of science rests upon two essential elements: **observation** and **reflection**. Observation is connected to scientific experimentation and the human senses, whereas reflection and contemplation arise from the intellect. Islam is the only revealed religion whose teachings—nearly one-third of which in the Holy Qur'an—draw human attention to the various manifestations of nature, urging mankind to observe, ponder, and reflect. In essence, the Qur'anic teachings inspire in human beings a scientific curiosity and encourage them to uncover the mysteries of nature through systematic and thoughtful inquiry.

According to Dr. Muhammad Husain al-Dhahabi,

التفسیر الذی یُحَکِّم الاصطلاحات العلمیة فی عبارات القرآن، ویجتہد فی استخراج مختلف العلوم والآراء الفلسفیة منه-[4]

Scientific exegesis (al-tafsīr al-'ilmī) is the method of interpretation in which scientific terminology is applied to the expressions of the Qur'an, and an effort is made to derive various branches of knowledge and philosophical ideas from it.

According to Dr. Muhammad Husain al-Dhahabi,[5] the application of scientific terms, knowledge, and philosophical opinions in understanding the Qur'an constitutes scientific exegesis.[6]

According toMuhammad ibn Lutfi al-Sabbagh:

Scientific exegesis (*al-tafsīr al-'ilmī*), according to Muhammad ibn Lutfi al-Sabbagh,[7] is the method of Qur'anic interpretation in which scientific terminology is used to understand the verses, and the interrelation between the verses, as well as knowledge derived from experimental and astronomical sciences and philosophical ideas, is explained.[8]

In his view, the explanation of knowledge obtained from experiments, astronomy, and philosophical theories is termed scientific exegesis.

Science and Religion: Classification of Intellectual Attitudes

With the advancement of scientific knowledge, three prominent intellectual groups have emerged in human thought:

1. Those who separate science and religionThis group views science and religion as conflicting concepts. The majority of its members rely more on human reason and scientific principles than on religion, and at times, they may even fall into arrogance or self-conceit.
2. Those who consider science as the sole realityThese individuals give absolute priority to scientific knowledge and regard religion as unnecessary or irrational. They may deny the existence of God and religion altogether and, in some cases, even reject fundamental natural principles.
3. Those who believe in the harmony between science and religionThis group supports religion with rational reasoning while also evaluating science in light of religious principles. According to them, science and religion are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary. Science operates within a limited scope, whereas religion is based on divine knowledge that fully clarifies the truths of life and the universe.

The Holy Qur'an employs a unique and effective method of *da'wah* (inviting others to God) by describing certain cosmic facts in its verses. The invitational appeal and intellectual stimulation found in these scientific verses cannot be matched by any other method. The most important topic in the cosmic verses is the creation of the universe, which encompasses two fundamental elements: time (the beginning

of temporal existence) and space/matter (the creation of material reality). The Qur'an is the only book that presents these truths in a definitive manner.

The Qur'an encompasses all knowledge related to the worldly life and the hereafter, and it contains the essence of every branch of science. The scientific facts presented in the Qur'an are eternal and will continue to guide humanity until the Day of Judgment.

The Prophets (peace be upon them) effectively used rational and logical arguments in calling people to God, silencing the followers of falsehood. In the modern era, this method is known as the scientific or empirical approach to da'wah. Example: Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) prevented his people from worshipping stars, the moon, and the sun, drawing their attention to the fact that these celestial bodies rise and set, thereby demonstrating that they are mere creations and not worthy of worship.[9]

Verses that embody **the scientific method of da'wah** can be classified into two types. These verses essentially act as proponents of a scientific approach to study. One group of verses encourages the pursuit of knowledge, while the other invites reflection and contemplation on the universe and the phenomena of nature.

Dr. SaeedullahQazi states: *"There are 750 verses in the Holy Qur'an related to the phenomena of nature and science. These verses contain the scientific observations, theories, and principles that were known at the time."*[10]

The style adopted by the Qur'an in its scientific verses to express the signs of the universe is exemplary. It simultaneously embodies both detail and conciseness. These verses address every generation and every community, presenting the message of guidance and its arguments with full clarity.[11]

The Significance of Scientific Exegesis in the Quran

This presents a unique and highly effective method of da'wah (Islamic invitation), particularly through its exposition of certain cosmic realities. The intellectual and invitational appeal embedded in the scientific verses of the Qur'an is unparalleled in any other literary style. Among the cosmological verses, the most significant theme is the origin of the universe, which encompasses two fundamental elements: time (the beginning of temporal existence) and space (the creation of matter). The Qur'an stands as the sole text that articulates these realities with absolute certainty.

The Qur'an encompasses knowledge of both worldly and spiritual realms, encapsulating the essence of every branch of science. The scientific truths presented in the Quran are eternal, offering guidance to humanity until the Day of Judgment. Historically, prophets employed diverse strategies to invite people toward Allah, prominently utilizing rational and logical arguments. They applied wisdom and sagacity to guide their communities toward monotheism and truth, persuading the followers of falsehood through reasoned dialogue.

For instance, Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) urged his people to abandon the worship of stars, the moon, and the sun by drawing their attention to the natural phenomena of their rising and setting, thereby demonstrating that these celestial bodies are creations, not objects of worship. Similarly, Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) presented miracles before Pharaoh's court to manifest the oneness of Allah and substantiate his prophethood.

The prophetic method emphasized wisdom, prudence, and benevolence, inviting people to truth with compassion and employing gradual reformative measures. These methodologies remain relevant and effective in contemporary da'wah.

In the modern era, scientific exegesis has emerged as a distinctive and valuable addition to Qur'anic commentary, gaining widespread acceptance among the general public due to its various merits. Its

appeal and intellectual attractiveness differentiate it from other interpretative approaches. The Qur'an possesses remarkable capacity to address contemporary issues, affirming the relevance and significance of Islam's message even in the age of globalization. Scientific exegesis has established a harmonious link between divine guidance and empirical observation, underscoring that Islam is a faith congruent with the demands of every era and that its principles and revelations are fundamentally true.

The Qur'an addresses all aspects of human necessity, providing comprehensive guidance across both material and spiritual spheres. It serves as the primary source for both scientific and non-scientific knowledge. Examples include:

- The existence of plants, minerals, and living organisms on Earth.
- The provision of sunlight and the regulated movement of the moon and stars.
- The formation of clouds and rainfall through oceans.
- The occurrence of earthquakes and oceanic pathways.
- The use of iron in weaponry.
- Principles related to human anatomy, health, nutrition, and hygiene.

All these phenomena, continuously discovered and utilized for human benefit, exemplify the Qur'an's enlightening and intellectually stimulating approach to guidance. Scientific exegesis not only elucidates these realities but also reinforces the Qur'an's timeless role as a source of wisdom, knowledge, and guidance for humanity.

The Qur'an as the Source of Knowledge: Beyond a Religious Text

The Holy Qur'an, being the Word of Allah, invites human beings to reflection, insight, and the awakening of consciousness. It is not merely a scientific book, nor is it only a religious text; rather, it represents the **"Gateway to Knowledge" (Bab al-'Ilm)** encompassing all branches of knowledge. The Qur'an stimulates human thought, reasoning, and moral discernment, fostering intellectual and spiritual development simultaneously.

Dr. Muhammad Tufail Hashmi, in his work *TareekhFalsafah al-Islam*, highlights this comprehensive nature of the Qur'an:

"*The Qur'an, revealed in eloquent language to people, is not merely a religious book; it serves as the source of nearly three hundred fields of knowledge. For instance, it encompasses lexicography, history, literature, natural sciences, philosophy, and astronomy. In fact, the Qur'an itself serves as the origin of most of these disciplines*." [12]

This observation underscores the Qur'an's unparalleled role as a foundational source for both religious and secular knowledge. Unlike texts confined to a single domain, the Qur'an integrates diverse fields of inquiry, offering guidance that is simultaneously spiritual, ethical, and intellectual. Its linguistic eloquence, coupled with the depth of its subject matter, ensures that it remains a comprehensive reference for human civilization across temporal and spatial boundaries.

In essence, the Qur'an transcends the conventional dichotomy of religious versus scientific literature. It embodies a holistic framework wherein **divine guidance and rational inquiry coexist,** positioning the Qur'an as a perennial source of knowledge and a timeless guide for human understanding.

Islam and the Genesis of Scientific Inquiry

Islam introduced humanity to innovative modes of critical thinking and reflection. The Qur'an repeatedly invites contemplation on the creation of the universe, the emergence of natural phenomena, and the underlying processes of cosmic formation. This persistent encouragement to observe, analyze, and reflect

led to the development of scientific knowledge, enabling humans to uncover both apparent and hidden secrets of the cosmos. This continuum of exploration, initiated through Qur'anic guidance, remains active to this day.

Dr. Maurice Bucaille acknowledges this unique aspect of the Qur'an:

"*As we will see later in this section, another critical fact is that the Qur'an, while encouraging us to cultivate science, contains many observations on natural phenomena and includes explanatory details that are found to be in complete agreement with modern scientific data." There is nothing comparable in the Judeo-Christian Revelation".*[13]

The methodology underlying scientific knowledge—based on observation, experimentation, systematic organization, and derivation of results—finds its early exemplar in Islamic scholarship. Modern Western scientists recognize that Muslim scholars were among the first civilizations to place systematic observation of natural phenomena at the core of intellectual activity. Their emphasis on empirical study and careful analysis laid the foundational principles of scientific thought, which conferred upon them a unique distinction among the nations of the world.

Thus, the Qur'an not only provided spiritual and moral guidance but also catalyzed a culture of inquiry and reasoning. By integrating faith with empirical observation, Islam cultivated a civilizational environment in which science could flourish, establishing the Muslim world as a pioneering contributor to the global body of knowledge.

Scientific Exegesis and Qur'anic Discoveries

Discussing scientific exegesis and the Qur'an's revelations, Dr.SaeedullahQazi notes:

"There are five types of knowledge in the Qur'an. One of them is *Ilm al-Ahkam* (the knowledge of legal injunctions), comprising approximately 500 verses, while the verses related to natural phenomena and science number around 750. If the Qur'an were opposed to science, what would be the status of these 750 verses?"[14]

This observation underscores the Qur'an's intrinsic compatibility with scientific inquiry. When the discoveries and observations mentioned in the Qur'an are compared with contemporary Muslim perspectives, the alignment is strikingly clear. There is no doubt that in earlier eras, commentators were unable to provide scientific explanations of the Qur'an as we do today. Modern knowledge and technological advancements have enabled a deeper understanding of these phenomena, allowing for interpretations that were not accessible to classical exegetes.

Dr. Muhammad Iqbal also emphasizes this point, highlighting the Qur'an's capacity to harmonize spiritual guidance with empirical knowledge:

"The point to emphasise, however, is the Quran's general empirical attitude, which instilled in its followers a reverence for the actual and ultimately made them the founders of modern science. It was a great achievement to reawaken the empirical spirit in an age that dismissed the visible as meaningless in men's search for God".[15]

The Qur'an as a Pioneer of Scientific Awareness

From the perspective of da'wah (Islamic propagation), the Qur'an serves as a herald of the modern scientific era. It acquainted humanity with new ideas and inspired a profound intellectual revolution. This is exemplified in **Surah Al-Baqarah (2:164),** which draws attention to a wide range of natural phenomena and scientific realities:

﴿إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ مَاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيَاحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ﴾[16]

"Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, the alternation of night and day, the ships that sail the seas for the benefit of mankind, the water that Allah sends down from the sky—reviving the earth thereby after its death and dispersing therein every kind of living creature, the (movement of) winds, and the clouds subjugated between the sky and the earth—there are signs for people of understanding."

This verse illustrates that the Qur'an encourages the study and understanding of **astronomy, meteorology, hydrology, winds, clouds, agriculture, maritime navigation, mineral resources, and other natural and applied sciences**. A careful reflection on the reference to ships highlights that their operation requires knowledge of materials such as iron, energy sources, and engineering—implying the importance of technological and industrial knowledge as well.[17]

Thus, the verse serves as a comprehensive invitation to observe, analyze, and acquire knowledge across multiple disciplines. It demonstrates that the pursuit of all significant sciences—natural, technical, and industrial—is consistent with Qur'anic guidance. By linking observable phenomena to divine signs, the Qur'an fosters both **rational inquiry and spiritual reflection,** establishing a framework where empirical knowledge and faith coexist harmoniously.

This integration of religious insight with scientific observation underscores the Qur'an's role as a timeless catalyst for intellectual development, encouraging believers to seek understanding of the universe while appreciating the wisdom and omnipotence of its Creator.

The Qur'an not only draws attention to natural phenomena but also highlights the civilizational benefits of intellectual inquiry. Recognition and honor are bestowed upon those who contemplate the creation of celestial bodies, study the alternation of day and night, and investigate their underlying mysteries and wonders. Similarly, those who acquire knowledge of the laws governing winds, rainfall, and clouds are commended.

In essence, individuals who strive to understand the reality, nature, and functional significance of these phenomena through thoughtful reflection are designated as "people of understanding" (*Ahl al-'Ilm*) or "possessors of intellect" (*Sahib al-'Aql*).[18]

Classical and modern exegetes have emphasized that this verse underscores the necessity of pursuing civilizational, industrial, and natural sciences. Furthermore, it exemplifies the Qur'anic emphasis on reflection (*Tafakkur*) and contemplation (*Tadabbur***)**, presenting intellectual engagement as an integral component of both spiritual and practical development.

Derivatives of Reflection in the Qur'an and Their Significance

Among all revealed scriptures, the **Qur'an** stands as the only divine book that persistently invites humankind to reflect upon the **universe and its system,** to seek **insight, wisdom, and deep contemplation**. Every particle of creation bears undeniable signs and proofs of the **existence, oneness, power, and lordship of the Creator** for those endowed with vision and understanding.

The Qur'an abounds with verses that, through diverse linguistic and rhetorical styles, **encourage observation, reflection, and contemplation** of the cosmos and natural phenomena. It frequently employs terms derived from the root **"نظر" (to look or observe)** — such as *"انظر" (look), "ينظرون" (they observe), "تنظرون" (you see),* and *"الناظرين" (the observers)* — emphasizing that **intellectual and spiritual reflection** is an essential means to recognize the signs of Allah within the fabric of creation.[19]

According to scholarly analysis, there are approximately 200 Qur'anic verses that pertain directly to natural phenomena. Similarly, around 770 verses throughout the Qur'an reflect its scientific outlook and orientation.

The eminent scholar Sheikh Tantawi (رحمه الله) estimated the number of scientific verses in the Qur'an to be 750. At Aligarh Muslim University, Dr. Muhammad Sharif Khan, Reader in the Department of Islamic Studies, identified 756 verses as reflective of the Qur'an's scientific approach. Likewise, Dr. Hafiz Muhammad HaqqaniMian also maintained this number at 756.
In addition, the renowned scholar and preacher Sheikh Ahmed Deedat **(**رحمه الله) placed the number of such verses at 720, emphasizing the Qur'an's consistent engagement with scientific thought and natural observation.[20]
The study of natural phenomena and the knowledge of the cosmos in the Qur'an has been explored by scholars such as Dr. Hafiz Muhammad Haqqani, Dr. Ghulam JilaniBarq, and Dr. Muhammad Sharif Khan, whose findings reveal a remarkable consistency and concordanc**e** in the number of verses identified on this subject. This uniformity serves as an encouragement for contemporary researchers engaged in Qur'anic studies related to science and nature.
The term in question, as interpreted by the classical lexicographers, carries the meaning of deep reflection and contemplation. It appears **1**30 times in the Qur'an, out of which approximately 16 to 20 instances occur in the context of "Āfāq" (the horizons/universe) and "Anfus" (the human self). Linguistically, the expression **"**النظر" is defined as:
"تقليب البصر والبصيرة لإدراك الشيء ورؤيته" which means *"to turn one's sight and insight repeatedly in order to perceive and understand something."*[21]
The Qur'an employs a rich variety of expressions and linguistic forms to invite humankind toward reflection upon the universe and the attainment of divine guidance. Through contemplation of the natural world, the Qur'an seeks to direct human thought toward ultimate spiritual success and salvation in the Hereafter.
The following key Qur'anic verbs and their derivatives illustrate this emphasis on observation and reflection:

- **"**ينظرون" (yanẓurūn**)** — from *نظر*, meaning *to observe or examine*; mentioned 13 times.
- **"**يرون" (yarawn**)** — from *رأى*, meaning *to see or perceive*; occurs 298 times.
- **"**يتفكرون" (yatafakkarūn) — from *تفكر*, meaning *to think or ponder*; appears 18 times.
- **"**يعقلون" (ya'qilūn) — from *عقل*, meaning *to understand or reason*; used 51 times.
- **"**يفقهون" (yafqahūn) — from *فقه*, meaning *to comprehend or grasp deeply*; found 28 times.
- "يتدبرون" (yatadabbarūn) — from *تدبر*, meaning *to reflect or deliberate thoughtfully*; mentioned 44 times.

Tadhakkur, Tadabbur, and Tafakkur (Remembrance, Reflection, and Contemplation)
The term **"Tadhakkur" (تذكر)** literally means *remembrance* or *recollection*. It refers to the process by which a person, having forgotten a truth, is reminded of it through the **observation of signs or phenomena** that awaken his awareness. Allah Almighty has placed numerous **evidences and signs throughout creation** to remind humankind of the realities they may neglect or overlook.
In the Qur'an, the concepts of **Tafakkur (تفكر– thinking deeply), Tadabbur (تدبر– reflecting thoughtfully),** and **Tadhakkur (تذكر– remembering or taking heed)** are employed in a complementary manner, urging human beings toward intellectual and spiritual awakening. The Qur'an often concludes such exhortations with expressions like:
"لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ"*for a people who reflect,*[22] **"لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ"***for a people who reason,*[23] **"لِقَوْمٍ يَذَّكَّرُونَ"** *– for a people who take heed.*[24]

Fiqh (Understanding and Comprehension)

In the Qur'an, the term **"Fiqh" (فقه)** is used as a synonym for **'Aql (intellect or reason).** Although in later Islamic tradition *Fiqh* came to denote a specific branch of **Islamic jurisprudence**, in the **Qur'anic and Prophetic context** it conveys a broader meaning — that of **understanding, insight, and deep comprehension.**

Commenting on this gradation of intellectual engagement, **Ameen Ahsan Islahi** explains:

"This represents a descent from the highest to the lower stages. The highest quality is that man should **reflect upon the universe**; if he fails to do so, he should at least **use his reason**, listen to what is rational, and strive to understand. He should benefit from the **reminders** offered by the phenomena of the universe, which continuously direct him toward the ultimate reality."[25]

Hearing, Reasoning, and Reflection in Surah al-Naḥl

In **Surah al-Naḥl**, three significant terms appear within the same thematic context: **"يسمعون" (they hear),** [26] **"يعقلون" (they reason),** and **"يفكرون" (they reflect)**. The derivative **"تعقلون"** occurs approximately **23 times**, while the term **"يعقلون"** appears **more than 20 times** throughout the Qur'an. These frequent usages indicate the Qur'an's deliberate emphasis on the **use of human intellect, reasoning, and contemplation** as pathways to divine understanding.

'Ibrah (Lesson and Reflection through Experience)

The word **"'Ibrah" (عبرة)** signifies *taking a lesson or deriving moral insight* from a given situation or event. It involves a process whereby a person, through **observation and reflection**, penetrates beyond the surface of phenomena to discern their underlying meaning.

For instance, referring to the **destruction of earlier nations** due to their misdeeds, the Qur'an declares that such events serve as **moral lessons** for those endowed with knowledge and understanding:

﴿لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ﴾[27]

"Indeed, in their stories there is a lesson for those of understanding." (Surah Yusuf, 12:111)

Thus, when the Qur'an discusses the **signs within the horizons (Āfāq)** and within the **selves (Anfus)**, it does not merely call upon human beings to employ **hearing (sama'), sight (baṣar),** and **intellect ('aql)**. Rather, it invites them to go beyond — to **ponder (tadabbur)**, **remember (tadhakkur)**, **comprehend (tafaqquh),** and **take heed ('ibrah)** — so that they may not restrict themselves to material gains, but instead be led toward **spiritual realization and divine awareness (ma'rifat-e-Ilāhī)**.

The Significance of Scientific Exegesis in the Contemporary Era

The **scientific interpretation (Tafsīr 'Ilmī)** of the Qur'an holds profound significance in the modern age. Its distinctive feature lies in the way it presents the **solution to contemporary intellectual and social challenges** in the **light of Divine Revelation**.

In an era when the younger generation has been deeply influenced by **Western secular ideologies** and is entangled in the **complexities of modern problems,** scientific exegesis has emerged as a **remarkably effective means** of addressing these issues with clarity and eloquence. This interpretive approach has proven to be **intellectually enriching** for both **scholars ('Ulamā') and educated laypersons** alike.

For the general educated class, it serves as an invaluable **gift of understanding**, while for scholars, it represents a **great scholarly blessing** (*Ni'mat-e-'Uzmā*). The **modern scientific mind**, in particular, has found itself deeply impressed and spiritually engaged through this method. Consequently, many contemporary exegetes adopted this approach as a **strategic and persuasive means of Da'wah (Islamic invitation)** to reach the modern generation—an approach that has yielded significant positive influence. Indeed, scientific exegesis has become a **precious intellectual asset** in the pursuit of Qur'anic understanding. The **renewed enthusiasm and intellectual curiosity** toward the Qur'an witnessed in the

modern era owes much to the **contributions of scientific interpretation** and its capacity to harmonize Faith and reason.[28]

The Primordial Knowledge and the Invitation to "ʿUlūm al-Asmā'" (The Knowledge of Names) and Its Significance

The very first form of knowledge to which **humanity (BanīĀdam)** was invited was not the **knowledge of Sharī'ah (divine law)**, but rather the **knowledge of nature**, which the Qur'an refers to as **"ʿIlm al-Asmā'" (the Knowledge of Names).** This term may be interpreted, in the light of scientific exegesis, as the **knowledge of the phenomena of the universe.**

Imam al-Shah (رحمه الله) described this as **"ʿIlm al-Tadhkīr bi-Ālā' Allāh"** *the knowledge that reminds humankind of the bounties and signs of Allah.* It encompasses the understanding of all **existing entities of the universe** along with their **distinct properties and characteristics.**

In the modern context, this concept closely aligns with what we refer to today as **the natural sciences**, for these sciences such as **geology, astronomy, biology, physics, and chemistry**deal precisely with the **study of material entities, their nature, and their properties**.

Thus, the Qur'anic notion of **"ʿIlm al-Asmā'"** may be seen as the **divinely inspired foundation of human inquiry into the natural world**, reflecting that from the very beginning, **the pursuit of knowledge in Islam was rooted in understanding creation as a means of recognizing the Creator.** [29]

The Qur'anic Concept of "ʿIlm al-Asmā'" (The Knowledge of Names) and Its Scientific Significance

Baqarah, 2:31)-(Surah al *"And He taught Adam the names of all things."* [30]**﴿وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا﴾**

The Qur'anic expression **"al-Asmā'" (الأسماء)** is the plural of **"ism" (اسم),** which in Urdu is generally translated as *"names."* However, in Arabic, the root meaning of *ism* derives from *"ʿalāmah"* — **a sign or symbol** that serves to identify or distinguish something (*اسم الشيء علامته*). Lexically, it also means *"that by which the essence of a thing is known"* (*الاسم ما يُعْلَمُ ويُعْرَفُ به ذات الشيء*).[31]

Accordingly, the term **"Asmā'"** here connotes **signs, symbols, or distinctive properties,** and thus refers to the **qualities, effects, and characteristics of all created things**. Most exegetes interpret this verse to mean that **Adam (peace be upon him)** and his progeny were endowed with knowledge of **all things in existence**—their **properties, functions, and relationships**—in other words, the **fundamental principles of the physical and natural sciences.**

In modern terminology, these are referred to as **"physical properties."** According to **Ibn ʿAbbās (رضي الله عنه),** the verse encompasses *"the names of all things with which human beings are familiar—animals, the heavens, the earth, the seas, and everything therein."*

Al-ʿAllāmahTantāwī (رحمه الله), in his interpretation, expands upon this idea, writing:

"[32]والهمه المعرفه ولاختراع،وسائر الصناعات وهو متى عرف الالفاظ كلهاعرف المعانى كلها"

"Allah inspired Adam with the knowledge of invention, discovery, and the various crafts, for when he came to know all the words, he also came to know all their meanings."

Al-Jawāhir fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm

Similarly, in **the scientific interpretation of al-Jawāhir** and **Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī**, this verse is understood to encompass **all branches of knowledge and art,** which in the modern age are termed **science and technology.** Science and technology, in this sense, are the **understanding of matter and its forces**, and the ability to utilize them for human benefit.

Without mastery of ʿ**Ilm al-Asmā'**—that is, the sciences and their practical applications—the objectives and utility of **scientific exegesis (tafsīrʿilmī)** in the present age cannot be fully realized. Only through

the **study of the laws and properties of creation**, and through **deep reflection upon the works of God,** can humanity uncover the **hidden mysteries of the universe** and offer guidance to the **modern rational mind,** particularly those who, deceived by natural phenomena, have drawn **erroneous and atheistic conclusions**.

Just as knowledge of earlier realities was encompassed within ʿ**Ilm al-Asmā'**, awareness of **new and future realities** is likewise included—indeed, **the potential knowledge of all things until the Day of Judgment**. The highest purpose and outcome of this pursuit is **maʿrifatAllāh**—the realization of divine knowledge and awareness. Through the investigation of the **system of divine lordship (niẓām al-rubūbiyyah),** one perceives the **everlasting attributes of Allah**—His Oneness, Power, Eternal Knowledge, Wisdom, Providence, Mercy, and His intricate universal design. This recognition leads to the stage of **waḥdat al-shuhūd (unity of witnessing),** beyond which the intellect cannot go astray.

From this Qur'anic invitation, it becomes evident that there exists **no essential contradiction between religious knowledge (ʿilm al-dīn)** and **natural knowledge (ʿilm al-fiṭrah)**, for both emanate from the **same divine source—the Qur'an itself.** The purpose of these scientific verses is to encourage the **descendants of Adam**, i.e., Muslims, to pursue comprehensive knowledge of **all aspects of creation,** and to guide humankind in both **spiritual and material spheres** in accordance with the needs of every age.

It is indeed remarkable—and lamentable—that while Muslims rejoice in reading these verses and take pride in the fact that their forefather Adam (peace be upon him) demonstrated intellectual superiority before the angels by enumerating the names of all things, they seldom strive to **inherit that knowledge** in its true sense. Instead, other nations have mastered this **science of creation**, raising their flags of dominance over the horizons of the world and excelling in every field of human endeavor—while the Muslim world, having neglected this legacy, continues to fall behind.

The Contemporary Muslim Response to Knowledge of Creation

In the present age, when Muslims encounter discussions regarding the **names of things or the phenomena of the universe**, they often respond in one of two ways: either with **fear and apprehension**, or by **rejecting such knowledge** as foreign or non-Islamic, choosing to **close their eyes to it.** However, all these entities, their properties, and their functions are knowledge that should have been **internalized and mastered** by them.

The **true benefit** of the Qur'anic injunction on the knowledge of names is realized **only when one reflects** on how much they have truly **benefited from their forefather's knowledge** and to what extent they fulfill the **responsibilities of vicegerency (khilāfat al-arḍ) on Earth.**

As an example, **three natural phenomena** illustrate the Qur'an's encouragement to observe and study the world: there are **three locations where two seas meet but do not mix.** These are:**The Strait of Gibraltar,the African coasts (where the Atlantic and the Mediterranean converge),** and **the Gulf of Alaska.**

At each of these locations, the **boundaries between the waters remain distinct,** and the two seas maintain **their separate physical characteristics** despite meeting. Such phenomena underscore the Qur'an's invitation to study nature carefully, reflecting on **creation's laws, boundaries, and signs,** which ultimately lead to **knowledge of the Creator** and the proper exercise of human intellect.[33]

Findings:

1. A profound **correspondence exists between modern scientific discoveries and Qur'anic facts**.

2. Contemporary scientific findings **confirm numerous Qur'anic verses,** such as those relating to the **creation of the universe** and the **development of the human embryo.**
3. The Qur'an **supports scientific inquiry** and provides guidance in the **correct direction for research.**
4. The Qur'an contains **multiple indications compatible with modern scientific principles,** opening **new avenues for exploration and investigation.**
5. Islam **fully endorses scientific research and intellectual inquiry,** promoting **scholarly and technological advancement.**
6. In light of ongoing scientific progress**, further research into the Qur'an is essential** to elucidate its **scientific statements in greater detail.**

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