Asian Journal of
Islamic Studies and Da'wah

e-ISSN : 3025-4493
p-ISSN : 3025-5252

Index : Harvard, Boston, Sydney University, Dimensions, Lens, Scilit, Semantic, Google, etc

https://doi.org/10.58578/AJISD.v3i1.4668

THE STATUS AND GUIDELINES OF REASON IN LIGHT OF THE QURAN AND SUNNAH: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

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Article Info:

Submitted:	Revised:	Accepted:	Published:
Dec 15, 2024	Jan 1, 2025	Jan 13, 2025	Jan 18, 2025

Abstract

This study examines the status of reason in Islam through the Quran and Sunnah, highlighting its pivotal contribution to development of knowledge, scientific progress, and innovation. The research aims to emphasize the esteemed status of reason in Islam while outlining its proper boundaries to avoid its misuse in matters beyond its scope, such as the unseen and miracles. It also seeks to clarify the levels of reasoning and their distinctions to prevent individuals from falling victim to superstition or blind imitation. The study addresses the misconception propagated by Islam's detractors, who claim that the faith does not value intellect, posing questions about the extent to which reason can be employed, the necessary conditions for its use, and whether there is harmony or conflict between reason and revelation. The research employs an analytical methodology, examining the Quran and Sunnah to demonstrate the role and regulations of reason in Islam. Findings reveal that Islam elevates reason, defining its fields of application and encouraging its use to explore universal laws for the purpose of civilizational development and collective advancement of knowledge and human dignity. Furthermore, the study confirms that Islam promotes critical thinking to enhance societal thought, with the history of Muslim contributions to knowledge contradicting the distorted image spread by

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adversaries. It asserts that Muslims were once global leaders in intellectual and scientific domains.

Keywords: Reason; Revelation; Islamic Scholarship; Intellectual Progress; Ethical Frameworks

INTRODUCTION

Reason searves as an effective tool for understanding and contemplating divine revelation, as well as reflecting on the universe to utilize it for the benefit of humanity. It is through the intellect that humans bear responsibility for their actions, earning praise or blame based on their choices. Given the significance of reason in human life, exploring the domains in which it can be relied upon, its role in comprehending universal truths—both in the observable world and in the unseen realm—becomes essential. This study delves into the functions of reason, its limitations, and the boundaries within which it operates, avoiding the pitfalls of attempting to grasp what lies beyond its capacity in this worldly life.

This research examines the stance of Islam on reason, based on the Quran and Sunnah, highlighting its pivotal role in fostering knowledge, scientific progress, and innovation. A group of scholars has claimed that Islam rejects reason, referencing certain Islamic sects that opposed unrestricted rational inquiry due to fears of adopting pagan thought over Islamic reasoning. This position is evident in the works of scholars such as Al-Ghazali, who criticized Greek philosophy and logic in his *Tahafut al-Falasifah*, and Ibn Taymiyyah, who refuted logical reasoning in *Al-Radd 'ala al-Mantiqiyyin* and *Dar' Ta'arud al-'Aql wa al-Naql*. However, Ibn Rushd (Averroes) countered Al-Ghazali in his *Tahafut al-Tahafut*, advocating a broader application of reason. The debates among classical Muslim scholars were not about outright rejection of reason but rather about its appropriate scope and domains of application.

Throughout Islamic history, reason has played a crucial role in scientific exploration, as seen in contributions to mathematics (Klaina, 2024a), medicine, physics, chemistry, sociology, and history. These advancements demonstrate that Islam encourages rational inquiry, contrary to claims by critics who selectively focus on isolated cases and generalize them. Many of these critics, influenced by Orientalists Klaina & Yachaoui, 2024), have portrayed Islam as opposed to reason, disregarding the nuanced perspectives of Muslim scholars.

In contemporary times, this topic has been extensively studied, often to criticize Muslim intellectual contributions, as seen in works by figures like Mohammed Abed al-Jabri in *We and Our Heritage*, and Hassan Hanafi in *From Heritage to Revolution*. George Tarabishi countered such narratives in *Critique of the Critique of Arab Reason*, and more (Al-Zaidi, 2000).

Secular and modernist critiques often misrepresent Islamic rulings as stagnant and irrelevant to the modern era. They ignore the principle of contextual adaptation in Islamic jurisprudence, summarized by the legal maxim: "Rulings change with the change of times." This underscores the dynamic nature of Islamic law, contrary to claims of rigidity.

Interestingly, many critics of Islam today originate from within Muslim societies, aiming to sever the link between Islamic values and contemporary life. Figures like Mohammed Arkoun argue for historicizing Quranic texts, treating them as allegorical rather than legislative. This perspective has been used to advocate for reforms that distance Islamic societies from their religious foundations under the guise of aligning with modern human rights principles.

Given these challenges, this research underscores the importance of studying the role of reason in Islam and its guiding principles. Such an investigation is critical for promoting intellectual clarity, countering superstitions, and addressing the misuse of science and technology. Returning to the Quran and Sunnah offers a pathway to rectify contemporary intellectual and behavioral deviations, fostering informed decision-making and combating misinformation.

Objectives

This study seeks to illiminate the elevated position of reason in the Quran and Sunnah, showcasing how it grants humans the ability to decern trouths and address emerging challenges. It endeavors to clarify the boundaries of reason as outlined in these primary Islamic sources, emphasizing the principles that should govern its use. Additionally, the study highlights the pivotal role of reason in strengthening faith, fostering constructive collaboration among nations for mutual benefit, and advancing intellectual and behavioral growth. Ultimately, it aims to promote comprehensive intellectual and societal development, rooted in a balance between faith and rational inquiry.

Research Problem

Modern discourse often attempts to portray faith and reason as contradictory forces, whereas Islamic teachings demonstrate their harmony. Misconceptions about the role of reason in Islam persist, with critics labeling Islam as a faith that stifles progress and critical thinking. Such claims overlook the significant scientific advancements made by Muslims, which benefited the entire world. Muslims were once the pioneers of knowledge, inventing methods and tools for scientific research and creating innovations that continue to influence modern understanding, such as in mathematics, physics, chemistry, and medicine (Klaina, 2024a; Klaina, 2024c; Daffa, 2024). This raises critical questions: How does Islam balance reason and revelation? What principles should be observed to avoid intellectual and ideological errors? How do the Quran and Sunnah safeguard reason and highlight its roles?

METHODS

This study adopts an analytical approach, relying on the Quran and Sunnah to explore the role of reason in Islam, the principles that must be adhered to, and how intellectual stagnation and errors in judgment can be overcome through a nuanced understanding of evidence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Early findings reveal that Islam emphasizes the disciplined use of reason, defining its boundaries and scope, while cautioning against blind imitation. It encourages scientific inquiry and reflection on the Quran to understand divine guidance and explore universal laws for practical benefits, thus avoiding paths that could lead to civilizational destruction. By emphasizing a disciplined and principled approach to reasoning, as outlined in the Quran and Sunnah, humanity can address contemporary challenges effectively.

A. THE STATUS OF REASON IN LIGHT OF THE QURAN AND SUNNAH

Researching the status of the intellect in Islam requires examining its foundational sources: the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Through these sources, one can uncover the role of intellect in sound reasoning. In the Qur'an, Allah emphasizes that He created humans and

honoured them with the intellect that enables them to discern truth from falsehood. This faculty is the basis of accountability and a means of elevating scholars, as He states:

> *"Allāh bears witness that Lā ilāha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He), and the angels, and those having knowledge (also give this witness); (He always) maintains His creation in Justice. Lā ilāha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He), the All-Mighty, the All-Wise."* (*Sūrat Āl-'Imrān*, 3:18).

Ibn al-Qayyim (1998, 1:50) deduced over seventy aspects of the virtue of scholars from this verse, including:

a. Allah specifically calls upon scholars as witnesses, excluding others.

b. He associates their testimony with His own.

c. He equates their testimony with that of His angels.

d. He attests to their integrity, as Allah only calls upon trustworthy and just witnesses.

e. He describes them as "those of knowledge."

f. He begins with His own testimony, the greatest of all, followed by the testimony of His chosen creations – the angels and the scholars – highlighting their esteemed status.

On the other hand, the Qur'an censures those who neglect their intellect and hearts, stating:

> *"And surely, We have created many of the jinn and mankind for Hell. They have hearts wherewith they under stand not, and they have eyes wherewith they see not, and they have ears wherewith they hear not (the truth). They are like cattle, nay even more astray; those! They are the heedless ones."* (*Sūrat Al-A'rāf*, 7:179).

Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak was once asked, "What is the best thing a person can be given?" He replied, "Intellect." When asked what if one lacks it, he said, "Good manners." When asked what if one lacks that, he said, "A compassionate brother to consult." When asked what if one lacks that, he said, "Lengthy silence." Finally, when asked what if one lacks that, he said, "Immediate death." (Al-Bayhaqy, 1990, 4:165, No. 4679; Ibn 'Asaker, 1995, 32:459).

For the above reasons, we would like to highlight a number of Islamic principles that underscore the status and importance of reason in advancing science, developing human knowledge, and preserving mental well-being, as follows:

1. Preserving the Reason:

The preservation of reason is one of the five universal objectives of Islamic law (*Maqasid al-Shari'ah*), alongside the preservation of religion, life, lineage, and wealth. Any harm to the intellect is considered a grave crime warranting punishment. Accountability in this world and the hereafter is contingent upon the presence of reason.

Islam emphasizes safeguarding the intellect from corruption, recognizing the severe consequences of losing it. A person who acts irrationally while mentally sound could face outcomes they would otherwise reject.

Compromising the soundness of the intellect is classified as a crime, such as consuming alcohol or taking drugs. Allah says:

> *"O you who believe! Intoxi cants (all kinds of alcoholic drinks), and gambling, and Al-Anṣāb, and Al-Azlām (arrows for seeking luck or decision) are an abomination of Shaiṭān's (Satan) handiwork. So, avoid (strictly all) that (abomination) in order that you may be successful"* (*Sūrat Al-Mā'idah*, 5:90).

This verse explicitly prohibits intoxicants, as Allah commands their avoidance due to their mind-altering effects. This prohibition is a stern warning and criminalization of the act. Islam declares anything harmful as unlawful, emphasizing the importance of intellect in ensuring human well-being.

Allah Almighty has clarified the reason for prohibiting alcohol by stating:

> *"Shaiṭān (Satan) wants only to excite enmity and hatred between you with intoxicants (alcoholic drinks) and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allāh and from Aṣ-Ṣalāt (the prayer). So, will you not then abstain?"* (*Sūrat Al-Mā'idah*, 5:91).

From this verse, it is evident that alcohol leads to discord among people, creating enmity that disrupts the unity Allah has established among hearts through Islam (al- Tabari, 1985, 7:32). It also distracts people from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer, which are among the gravest wrongs. Abu Hayyan (n.d. 4:17), in his commentary on this verse, explains:

> *"Allah mentions two harms associated with alcohol and gambling: one worldly and the other spiritual. The worldly harm is that they incite malice and discord, often manifesting among those who gather for companionship and affection, as their consumption removes rational restraint, causing hidden feelings to surface in states of intoxication, often leading to destruction."*

This aligns with the Prophet's (peace be upon him) words, as narrated by Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Ass: *"Alcohol is the mother of all evils." (Al-Tabarani, 1985, 4:81, No. 3367;* Al-

Munawi, 1988, 1:536, considered its chain of narration sound). Alcohol corrupts the intellect, damages social relationships, and distances people from Allah.

2. The Liberation of the Reason

a. Liberation of the Reason from Ignorance:

Islam liberated the reason from idolatrous thinking and all obstacles to sound scientific inquiry. It emphasized the use of intellect to contemplate the creation of Allah as evidence of truth. Allah says:

> *"Say: "Behold all that is in the heavens and the earth," but neither Āyāt (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) nor warners benefit those who believe not"* (*Sūrat Yūnus*, 10:101).

This verse urges humanity to ponder the heavens, the earth, and their signs as clear evidence of Allah's existence. It also encourages the use of intellect. However, these signs and proofs do not benefit those who persist in disbelief (Ibn Kathir, 1981, 2:435), as their rejection stems from obstinacy and defiance (As-Sa'dy, 2018, 4:253). Al-Tabari (1985, 2:202) comments on this verse, saying:

> *"Have they not looked thoughtfully and reflectively to realize that the heavens and the earth are subject to changes and events, proving that they are created and that every creation must have a Creator who fashioned it? This Creator is wise, knowledgeable, powerful, willing, hearing, seeing, and articulate. If He lacked these attributes, humans would be more complete than Him, which is impossible."*

This guidance explicitly calls for reflection on the universe and the study of its laws to discover truth, avoiding blind imitation or anything that might impede proper reasoning.

Allah condemns the disbelievers' reliance on ancestral traditions instead of listening to the prophets, as stated:

> *"And similarly, We sent not a warner before you (O Muḥammad) to any town (people) but the luxurious ones among them said: "We found our fathers following a certain way and religion, and we will indeed follow their footstep""* (*Sūrat Az-Zukhruf*, 43:23).

Al-Baydawi (n.d., 5:143) explains this verse, noting:

> *"It is a consolation for the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and an indication that such blind adherence is an old misguidance, and that even their elite had no credible basis. Specifying the affluent highlights how indulgence and love for idleness diverted them from contemplation toward blind imitation."*

This verse underscores the Qur'an's critique of blind adherence to ancestral traditions at the expense of intellectual inquiry and divine guidance. It highlights how indulgence in material comforts and attachment to ease often-lead individuals, especially those in positions of privilege, to resist truth and embrace inherited falsehoods. Al-Baydawi's commentary expands on this, emphasizing that blind imitation is not a new phenomenon but a long-standing error, perpetuated even by the elites who should ideally possess discernment. By addressing the affluent specifically, the verse exposes how their indulgence can obstruct contemplation and foster resistance to divine warnings. This serves as a powerful reminder of the dangers of unexamined traditions and the necessity of seeking truth with an open and critical mind.

b. **Cleansing the Reason of Superstition:**

Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *"There is no 'Adwã, nor Tiyara, nor Hama, nor Safar"* (Al-Bukhari, 1997, 7:359, No. 5757; Muslim, 2007, 6: 74, No. 2220).

This Hadith dismisses certain superstitions held by the pre-Islamic Arabs, highlighting that such beliefs have no intrinsic influence. Al-'Ayni (n.d., 21:247), commenting on this Hadith, says:

> *"The Hadith denies the pagan belief that diseases and misfortunes inherently transmit themselves. The Prophet also asked, 'Who caused the first one to be afflicted?' to emphasize that such causation is not self-existent."*

Ibn 'Abd al-Barr elaborates (1967, 24:196):

> *"The Prophet forbade anyone from claiming that one thing transmits harm to another or diseases, and he informed them that nothing inherently transmits anything else. It is as though he said: 'Nothing transmits anything.' This means no one acquires anything from another in terms of character, action, disease, or illness. The Arabs in their ignorance used to claim such things, saying that if one thing came into contact with another, it would infect it. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) clarified that their statements and beliefs were false and prohibited such claims."*

This teaching serves to liberate the Muslim intellect from corrupt beliefs that hinder rational thought, directing it instead toward beneficial reasoning and clarifying truths that the people of ignorance had overlooked. It also serves to correct their misconceptions.

3. Guiding to the Exploration of the Laws of the Universe

Allah has directed humanity to investigate the laws of the universe to benefit from them in life. The Qur'an emphasizes in many verses that the universe operates under fixed laws and is characterized by motion, order, quantity, precision, and classification.

a. Regarding motion:

Allah says:

"45. Have you not seen how your Lord spread the shadow. If He had willed, He could have made it still — But We have made the sun its guide (i.e. after the sunrise, the shadow shrinks and vanishes at midnoon and then again appears in the afternoon with the decline of the sun, and had there been no sunlight, there would have been no shadow). 46. Then We withdraw it to Us a gradual concealed withdrawal" (*Sūrat Al-Furqān*, 25:45–46).

b. Regarding order:

Allah says:

"37. And a sign for them is the night. We withdraw therefrom the day, and behold, they are in darkness.38 . And the sun runs on its fixed course for a term (ap pointed). That is the Decree of the All-Mighty, the All-Knower. 39. And the moon, We have measured for it mansions (to traverse) till it returns like the old, dried, curved date stalk. It is not for the sun to overtake the moon, nor does the night outstrip the day. They all float, each in an orbit" (*Sūrat Yā-Sīn*, 36:37–40).

c. Concerning quantity and precision:

Allah says:

"19. And the earth We have spread out, and have placed therein firm mountains, and caused to grow therein all kinds of things in due proportion. 20. And We have provided therein means of living, for you and for those whom you provide not [moving (living) creatures, cattle, beasts, and other animals]. 21. And there is not a thing, but with Us are the stores thereof. And We send it not down except in a known measure" (*Sūrat Al-Ḥijr*, 15:19–21).

This reflection on the creation of Allah carries numerous benefits that are advantageous to all of humanity, including:

a. Strengthening Faith in the Greatness of Allah:

Reflecting on creation enhances belief in the Creator's majesty. As Allah says:

"53. We will show them Our Signs in the universe, and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that this (the Qur'ān) is the truth. Is it not sufficient in regard to your Lord that He is a Witness over all things?" (*Sūrat Fuṣṣilat*, 41:53).

In his exegesis, Abu Al-Su'ud (1:52) highlighted the reproach for those who fail to observe these signs of monotheism with deep contemplation.

b. Improving Daily Life:

Exploration of the universe leads to discoveries that enhance human well-being, fulfilling essential human needs. For example, the harnessing of electricity, gravity, and nuclear energy has greatly benefited humanity. However, improper use, such as nuclear weapons, demonstrates how such advancements can also lead to destruction, as seen in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

c. Realizing Human Weakness and the Need for Spiritual Elevation:

Reflection on the universe reminds humans of their limitations and dependence on Allah. This realization often draws people closer to Allah, prompting them to follow His commands and avoid His prohibitions. Notably, some scientists embraced Islam upon discovering truths in the Qur'an unknown to humanity for centuries.

d. Promoting International Cooperation in Research and Knowledge Development:

Humanity collectively benefits from collaborative efforts in research and knowledge development. Allah states:

> *"190. Verily, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are indeed signs for men of understanding"* (*Sūrat Āl-ʿImrān*, 3:190).

In his commentary, As-Sa'di (2018, 2:109) emphasized that these verses encourage contemplation and reflection, addressed to all humanity, urging them to use their intellects to uncover universal laws for mutual benefit.

Cooperation aligns with Allah's call to all humanity:

> *"13. O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you with Allāh is that (believer) who has At-Taqwā [i.e. he is one of the Al-Muttaqūn (the pious)]. Verily, Allāh is All-Knower, Well-Acquainted (with all things)"* (*Sūrat Al-Ḥujurāt*, 49:13).

This verse highlights the necessity of mutual understanding and collaboration among all people, irrespective of nationality or race, for constructive purposes such as advancing civilization rather than destroying it.

4. The Scope of Reason

Reason has its domain in which it can operate and boundaries it cannot cross. Knowledge is categorized into four types:

a. **Essential Knowledge:** These are undeniable truths that all rational individuals accept, such as "the whole is greater than the part" and "two is greater than one."
b. **Theoretical Knowledge:** This is attained through reasoning and deduction, relying on essential knowledge to determine its validity.
c. **Empirical Knowledge:** Subject to experimentation to be discovered.
d. **Unseen Knowledge:** This cannot be accessed through reason alone; it requires reliance on revelations found in the Quran and authentic Prophetic traditions.

Consequently, knowledge beyond the scope of reason must be sought through divine revelation. Allah has relieved humanity of the burden of discovering such truths independently, leaving the domain of the seen, unrelated to matters of creed, as fertile ground for intellectual exploration.

5. Results of Adhering to These Principles

Adherence to the aforementioned principles led Muslims to scientific and civilizational superiority. Their high moral standards were among the key reasons for their dominance. As noted by the scholar Sigrid Hunke (1993, 357-358):

> *"Perhaps the greatest victory of the Arabs lies in their tolerance, which astonished other nations. Even the Persian King Cyrus himself remarked: 'These victors do not come as destroyers.' The accusations of bigotry and brutality are but myths spun from imagination, disproven by countless clear evidence of their tolerance and humanity in dealing with conquered peoples".*

Muslim decline occurred only when these principles were neglected, leading to unlawful practices and straying from the divine path, culminating in moral and spiritual decay.

6. The Impact of Muslim Advancement on Others

The scientific progress Muslims achieved in various fields became the foundation for Western civilization. Muslims served as teachers to the West, spreading knowledge irrespective of race or religion. This enlightenment was pivotal in liberating the West from the domination of church authorities, who persecuted dissenting opinions. The West recognized Muslim contributions to science, as Sigrid Hunke stated (1993, 354):

> *"The remarkable leap in civilization made by the desert-dwellers, starting from nothing, is a phenomenon deserving of attention in the history of human thought. Their successive scientific victories, which elevated them to leaders of the civilized world, are unparalleled and incomparable."*

Recognizing the contributions of Muslims to scientific advancement necessitates re-evaluating educational and pedagogical methods. These should be grounded in the efforts of Muslim scholars while benefiting from the positive aspects of other cultures, rather than blindly imitating Western ideologies.

B. GUIDELINES OF USING REASON IN LIGHT OF THE QURAN AND SUNNAH

In contemporary times, it is crucial to explore the extent to which reason should be utilized and whether there are boundaries to its application. This is particularly significant as some groups prioritize reason in all matters, rejecting anything that contradicts their perception or modern human rights principles.

The Qur'an and Sunnah clearly outline the methodology for acquiring knowledge, encourage the use of reason, condemn blind imitation, and specify the scope and limits of reason. These aspects are explored below:

1. Reliance on Revelation for Understanding Existential Truths

The source of absolute knowledge, immune to falsehood, is revelation. What is established through revelation must be accepted and not rejected, as it comes from Allah, who speaks no falsehood. Human knowledge is relative and incapable of grasping absolute truths. Matters that cannot be comprehended by reason alone require reliance on revelation, as there is no other way to access such truths. Allah says:

> *"12. And indeed We created man (Adam) out of an extract of clay (water and earth). 13. Thereafter We made him (the offspring of Adam) as a Nuṭfah (mixed drops of the male and female sexual discharge and lodged it) in a safe lodging (womb of the woman)"* (*Sūrat Al-Mu'minūn*, 23:12–14).

What humans cannot comprehend at one time may become clear in another era due to scientific progress. Allah is the source of all absolute truths, and He encourages humanity to explore observable phenomena to achieve certainty. Allah states:

"53. We will show them Our Signs in the universe, and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that this (the Qur'ān) is the truth. Is it not sufficient in regard to your Lord that He is a Witness over all things?" (*Sūrat Fuṣṣilat*, 41:53).

Modern discoveries about embryonic development align with Quranic verses revealed 1,400 years ago, highlighting the divine origin of this knowledge. For example, Aristotle believed that the woman played a passive role in embryonic formation, while Galen disagreed. Both relied on logical arguments influenced by imagination (Dasen, 2013, and Chung, 2019). Until the 17th century, it was thought that the embryo was entirely formed from male sperm and grew after entering the womb (Esmailzadeh, Farhadi and Shahghasemi, 2012). This notion persisted until the 18th century when microscopes revealed the necessity of both sperm and egg for conception.

These medical discoveries confirm the Quranic account, emphasizing the reliability of revelation in matters of absolute truth, unlike human intellect, which often yields relative knowledge prone to error.

2. Adherence to the Universal Laws Mentioned in the Quran

When interpreting phenomena, it is essential to utilize the universal laws highlighted in the Qur'an, as Allah, the Creator has established the universe under a stable and precise system of laws and balance. The Qur'an outlines numerous consistent laws, such as the law of causality, which we can use to understand Allah's power and oneness. These laws also help us predict the consequences of certain actions, such as tyranny. Allah has warned of the fate of tyrants in this life and the hereafter, stating:

"10. And (with) Fir'aun (Pharaoh) who had the stakes (to torture men by binding them to the stakes)? 11. Who did transgress beyond bounds in the lands (in the disobedience of Allāh). 11. Who did transgress beyond bounds in the lands (in the disobedience of Allāh). 12. And made therein much mischief. 13. So your Lord poured on them different kinds of severe torment. 14. Verily, your Lord is Ever Watchful (over them)" (*Sūrat Al-Fajr*, 89:10–14).

This motivates further exploration of these universal laws to apply them effectively, as they are free from contradiction or inconsistency. Allah emphasizes this in the verse:

"3. Who has created the seven heavens one above another; you can see no fault in the creation of the Most Gracious. Then look again: "Can you see any rifts?"" (*Sūrat Al-Mulk*, 67:3).

This verse challenges humankind to find flaws or inconsistencies in Allah's creation, highlighting the perfection and unity of the universe (Al-Tabari, 1985, 2:29, Ibn

Kathir, 1981, 4:397, and Ibn ʻAtiyyah, 1993, 5:338). Among these universal laws are the "Law of the Struggle Between Truth and Falsehood," (Zaidan, 1998, 43-78). The "Law of Trials and Tribulation" (Zaidan, 1998, 79-111). "Allah's Sunnah (law) in Dealing with Oppressors" (Zaidan, 1998, 113-134). "Allah's Sunnah Concerning Differences and the Differing" (Zaidan, 1998, 135-161). "Allah's Sunnah Pertaining to Equality and Inequality" (Zaidan, 1998, 163-182), "Allah's Sunnah Relating to Affluence and the Affluent" (Zaidan, 1998, 183-187). "Allah's Sunnah About Tyranny and Tyrants" (Zaidan, 1998, 189-198).

3. Utilizing the Senses to Attain Knowledge

The senses are crucial for perceiving and deducing knowledge. Allah states:

"78. And Allāh has brought you out from the wombs of your mothers while you know nothing. And He gave you hearing, sight, and hearts that you might give thanks (to Allāh)" (*Sūrat An-Naḥl*, 16:78).

Al-Zamakhshari (n.d., 2:538) interprets this verse, saying: *"Allah provided you with these faculties to dispel ignorance from which you were born and to acquire knowledge and act upon it."*

Allah also says:

"36. And follow not (O man i.e., say not, or do not or witness not) that of which you have no knowledge. Verily, the hearing, and the sight, and the heart, of each one of those will be questioned (by Allāh)" (*Sūrat Al-Isrā'*, 17:36).

Hearing, sight, and intellect are tools for gaining knowledge. Al-Baydawi (n.d., 3:413) states:

"These are tools by which you sense the particulars of things, comprehend them, and, through repeated observation, arrive at innate knowledge, enabling you to attain theoretical knowledge through reflection."

Allah condemns disbelievers for not using their senses and intellect to arrive at the truth and faith:

"179. And surely, We have created many of the jinn and mankind for Hell. They have hearts wherewith they under stand not, and they have eyes wherewith they see not, and they have ears wherewith they hear not (the truth). They are like cattle, nay even more astray; those! They are the heedless ones" (*Sūrat Al-Aʻrāf*, 7:179).

Commenting on this verse, Al-Tabari (1985, 9:133) notes:

> *"These disbelievers are further astray from the truth than livestock because, despite being granted faculties of understanding and distinguishing between benefit and harm, they abandon what ensures their worldly and spiritual well-being and pursue what harms them."*

Hence, Islam urges the use of all faculties to attain knowledge and reflect upon Allah's signs in the universe and within oneself. Neglecting these faculties leads to misguidance and prevents one from discovering the truth.

4. Avoiding Blind Imitation

Failing to use intellect and relying on blind imitation causes individuals to accept anything they hear without scrutinizing its validity. Disabling reason impedes the pursuit of truth. Allah criticizes such behavior:

> *"170. When it is said to them: "Follow what Allāh has sent down." They say: "Nay! We shall follow what we found our fathers following." (Would they do that!) even though their fathers did not understand anything nor were they guided?"* (*Sūrat Al-Baqarah*, 2:170).

Al-Razi (2000, 5:8), reflecting on the degradation of blind imitation, commented on the mentioned verse:

> *"This parable was given as a warning to the listeners, emphasizing that the disbelievers fell into their misguided ways due to their neglect of attentiveness and lack of concern for religion. From this perspective, they were likened to cattle. Such a parable enhances the listener's understanding of the disbelievers' condition and demeans the disbeliever himself when he hears it, breaking his spirit and narrowing his chest, as he is reduced to the level of a beast. This serves as the ultimate deterrent and rebuke for anyone who hears it, discouraging them from following a similar path of blind imitation."*

Muslims have internalized this lesson, evident in their diligence in seeking evidence and avoiding blind imitation. For example, it is narrated by Imam Malik, from Yahya ibn Sa'id, from Muhammad ibn Yahya ibn Hibban, from Ibn Muhayriz, that a man from Banu Kinanah named Al-Mukhdaji heard a man in *al-Sham* (Syria) known as Abu Muhammad say, "Witr is obligatory." Al-Mukhdaji went to 'Ubadah ibn al-Samit, intercepting him on his way to the mosque, and relayed what Abu Muhammad had said. 'Ubadah replied, "Abu Muhammad is mistaken. I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) say:

> *"Allah, Almighty and Exalted, has prescribed five prayers upon His servants. Whoever performs them without neglecting any out of disdain for their rights will have a covenant with Allah that He will admit him to Paradise. In addition, whoever does not perform them will have no covenant with*

Allah. If He wills, He may punish him, and if He wills, He may admit him to Paradise" (Al-Bayhaqy, n.d., 1:393, No. 504. Ibn ʻAbd al-Barr mentioned, 1967, 23:288, and commented: *"There is no disagreement about the chain of narration of this Hadith from Malik; it is an authentic and established Hadith. Several individuals from Muhammad ibn Yahya ibn Hibban have narrated it..."*).

This illustrates how Al-Mukhdaji did not accept Abu Muhammad's claim without verification. Instead, he sought clarity regarding the ruling and the report from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). Such behavior is repeatedly seen in efforts to verify information and avoid blind imitation, especially when doubt arises or certainty is sought.

5. Relying on Evidence in Claims

Scientific research and legal cases must be based on evidence, as it establishes rights, resolves disputes, and confirms historical and scientific facts. Claims without evidence cannot lead to reliable conclusions. The Qur'an and Sunnah emphasize the need for proof in claims. For instance, Allah says:

"Say (O Muḥammad), "Produce your proof if you are truthful" (*Sūrat Al-Baqarah*, 2:111).

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also said:

"If people were to be given what they claim (without proving their claim) the life and property of the nation would be lost" (Al-Bukhari, 1997, 6:66, No. 4552; Muslim, 2007, 4:489, No. 1711).

Evidence varies based on the subject of study and must be appropriate to the context.

In the absence of evidence, superstition and injustice prevail. This situation is exploited by individuals with ill intentions to assert dominance through lies and deception. Such people may seek unwarranted recognition in society by creating a false image of themselves. Allah criticizes these individuals, saying:

"They ... love to be praised for what they have not done" (*Sūrat Āl-ʻImrān*, 3:188).

Although this verse originally referred to the People of the Book who concealed the truth about the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), its meaning applies to anyone who falsely claims credit for achievements they did not accomplish. Al-Tabari (1985, 4:208) comments that Allah censures people who seek unwarranted praise and

recognition, whether for unperformed deeds or actions intended for worldly acclaim rather than divine reward.

Al-Bayhaqi (1990, 5:375) elaborates that Allah condemns those who seek human praise for deeds they falsely claim to have performed. This highlights the danger of intellectual and moral dishonesty and its potential to spread confusion and division in society, often exploited by manipulative individuals.

6. Differentiating Levels of Evidence

Evidence can be categorized into varying levels of strength:

a. **Certainties:** These provide conclusive and undeniable knowledge.

b. **Probabilities:** These require critical analysis and reasoning to determine their validity.

The latter type, known as "speculative evidence" (ظَنِّيَّةُ الدَّلالة), must be grounded in reason and analysis, unlike baseless assumptions driven by whims or doubts.

Allah warns against following baseless assumptions:

> *"36. And most of them follow nothing but conjecture. Certainly, conjecture can be of no avail against the truth. Surely, Allāh is All-Knower of what they do"* (*Sūrat Yūnus*, 10:36).

Al-Tabari (1985, 11:116) interprets this as a rebuke of those who rely on assumptions without proper evidence, emphasizing that conjecture cannot replace certainty or lead to reliable outcomes.

Therefore, it is crucial to prioritize strong evidence over weaker claims. This principle aligns with a hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him):

> *"I am only a human being, and you people have disputes. May be someone amongst you can present his case in a more eloquent and convincing manner than the other, and I give my judgement in his favour according to what I hear. Beware! If ever I give (by error) somebody something of his brother's right then he should not take it as I have only given him a piece of (Hell) Fire"* (Al-Bukhari, 1997, 9:73, No. 6967; Muslim, 2007, 4:490, No. 4473).

This highlights the importance of distinguishing between truth and falsehood, as some individuals may manipulate evidence or present falsehoods convincingly (Klaina, 2023). Consequently, scholars emphasize that a judge's ruling does not legitimize what is unlawful or prohibit what is lawful (As-S'di, 2018, 1:233; Ibn al-'Arabi, n.d., 1:88; Al-Qurtubi, n.d., 2:338).

7. Relying on Authentic Evidence

Relying on weak or false evidence undermines credibility and leads to erroneous conclusions. Allah challenges those who make baseless claims:

> *"111. And they say, "None shall enter Paradise unless he be a Jew or a Christian." These are their own desires. Say (O Muḥammad), "Produce your proof if you are truthful"'* (*Sūrat Al-Baqarah*, 2:111).

Al-Zamakhshari (n.d., 1:204) comments: *"Any claim without proof is baseless and invalid."* Similarly, Al-Samarqandi (n.d., 1:111) explains that such unfounded claims are mere fabrications.

Islam establishes strict criteria for accepting evidence, such as the testimony of two just witnesses or one man and two women, to ensure credibility. In Hadith sciences, scholars meticulously examine narrators for integrity, precision, and continuity of transmission, rejecting any narrations that lack these qualities.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized the importance of accurately transmitting knowledge:

> *"May Allah brighten the face of one who hears my statement, retains it, and conveys it as he heard it. Perhaps the one who conveys it understands it better than the one who hears it."* (Ahmad, n.d., 3:225, No. 13374, 4:80, No. 16784, 4:82, No. 16800, 5:183, No. 21630).

Conversely, he warned against fabricating Hadiths:

> *"Whosoever tells a lie against me intentionally then surely let him occupy his seat in Hell-fire"* (Al-Bukhari, 1997, 2:220-221, No. 1291; Muslim, 2007, 1:45, No. 3).

Scholars have thus dedicated themselves to verifying the authenticity of narrations and distinguishing between accurate and false reports. This foundational principle—"If you quote, ensure its authenticity; if you claim, provide evidence"—stems from both the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

Relying on rumors or unverified information disrupts social stability and fosters harm. Therefore, raising awareness about the importance of evidence-based reasoning and distinguishing between truth and falsehood is essential for maintaining trust and making informed decisions.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the esteemed position of reason in Islam, its proper scope, and the principles that govern its use. Through the blessing of reason, humans gain the ability to make choices and decisions based on thoughtful deliberation and wisdom, bearing responsibility for their actions. Reason enables discernment, allowing individuals to adopt what is beneficial and avoid what is harmful, guided by Islamic teachings derived from the Quran and Sunnah. This underscores that reason operates within its perceptible realm, while matters beyond its scope—such as miracles and the unseen—fall under the domain of divine revelation.

The Quran and Sunnah encourage humans to contemplate the universe, explore its laws, and utilize them to enhance daily life. These sources serve as essential guides for understanding and interpreting the observable world, promoting scientific research and innovation. They reject blind imitation and emphasize evidence-based reasoning, offering a comprehensive and integrated framework for examining both the material and spiritual realms within the bounds of revelation-guided intellect.

Through adherence to these divine directives, Muslims excelled in diverse fields such as mathematics, physics, astronomy, and medicine, becoming leaders in knowledge and innovation for centuries—a fact acknowledged even by Western historians. However, the decline of Muslims in modern times can be attributed to a loss of strength, the effects of colonialism, smear campaigns, the theft of scholarly manuscripts, and attempts to erase Muslim contributions to global progress. Despite such challenges, the light of Islamic knowledge endures, and its contributions continue to be recognized, including by fair-minded observers in the West.

This study also highlights the risks of misusing reason, whether by delving into areas beyond its grasp or neglecting it entirely. Such neglect fosters superstition, blind imitation, and an inability to discern between credible and baseless claims. These pitfalls result in intellectual stagnation, hinder scientific progress, and disrupt cultural and social cohesion.

In today's world, Muslim societies face numerous challenges, including media misinformation, exploitation by individuals who have aligned themselves with the West at the expense of their own communities. These individuals present Western ideas as ultimate truths while disparaging Islamic principles as backward. Their calls for "reforming religious discourse" are, in reality, veiled attempts to undermine the faith entirely (Klaina, 2023).

They pose a greater threat to the Muslim community than external forces, as they communicate in the native language and sow seeds of doubt among the masses (Klaina, 2024b). Addressing the role of reason, its status, and its principles is crucial to countering this intellectual deviation and promoting sound methodologies of thought.

To rectify the current plight of Muslims, which oscillates between negligence and extremism, substantial efforts are required to reform education at all levels. This includes developing curricula that foster critical and rigorous thinking, integrating Islamic ethical principles into educational content, and reinforcing the importance of values in the lives of Muslims. These measures are vital for reclaiming the leadership Muslims once held in scientific and economic fields. A significant challenge lies in overcoming self-serving national interests to enable collective efforts for the common good. Additionally, engaging with non-Muslims influenced by distorted perceptions of Islam can help build bridges for mutual understanding and collaborative civilizational progress. Addressing issues within institutions where certain individuals undermine societal development due to self-serving agendas or inadequate competence is equally essential.

Finally, it is imperative to note that Islamic teachings do not merely offer a theoretical framework; they present a comprehensive strategy for achieving individual and societal growth, with the potential to positively impact the international community. The question remains whether global societies possess the genuine will to embrace these principles for the benefit of humanity and civilizational advancement. The future will reveal the answers, but in the meantime, it is incumbent upon us to fulfill our responsibilities in this noble endeavor.

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