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CONCEPTIONS OF RATIONALITY AND ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION: NAVIGATING TRADITION AND MODERN SCIENCE

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Abstract: *This paper investigates the diverse conceptions of rationality within Islamic philosophy and their relevance to contemporary Islamic education, especially when considering modern scientific developments like evolution by natural selection, especially when connected with the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) which is growing rapidly and starting to enter the world of education. The relationship between Islamic theology and scientific paradigms continues to be a topic of debate, which influences pedagogical approaches. A thorough understanding of the various Islamic rationalities, spanning from the early Islamic era to the classical period, is essential for creating an educational framework that promotes critical thinking while upholding Islamic values. Using a qualitative method, this writing examines the contributions of key figures such as al- Kindī, al-Farābī, Ibn Sīnā, al-Bīrūnī, al-Ghazālī, Ibn Tufayl, Ibn Rushd, Junayd al-Baghdādī, ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, Khwāja Muʿīnuddīn Chishtī, and Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī to illustrate the different forms of rational engagement in Islamic intellectual history. It is proposed that addressing the conflict between traditional Islamic teachings and modern scientific theories requires a reassessment of educational strategies and more expansive understanding of rationality itself.*

Keywords: *Epistemology, Islamic Philosophy of Education, Pedagogy, Rationality, Scientific Advancements, Theistic Evolution.*

Abstrak: Artikel ini menyelidiki beragam konsepsi rasionalitas dalam filsafat Islam dan relevansinya dengan pendidikan Islam kontemporer, terutama saat mempertimbangkan perkembangan ilmiah modern seperti evolusi melalui seleksi alam, apalagi jika dihubungkan dengan perkembangan *Artificial Intelligence* (AI) yang berkembang pesat dan mulai masuk ke dunia pendidikan. Hubungan antara teologi Islam dan paradigma ilmiah terus menjadi topik perdebatan, yang memengaruhi pendekatan pedagogis.

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Pemahaman mendalam tentang berbagai rasionalitas Islam, yang membentang dari era Islam awal hingga periode klasik, sangat penting untuk menciptakan kerangka pendidikan yang mempromosikan pemikiran kritis sambil menjunjung tinggi nilai-nilai Islam. Denggan menggunakan metode kualitatif, tulisan ini mengkaji kontribusi tokoh-tokoh kunci seperti al- Kindī, al-Farābī, Ibn Sīnā, al-Bīrūnī, al-Ghazālī, Ibn Tufayl, Ibn Rushd, Junayd al-Baghdādī, ʻAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, Khwāja Muʻīnuddīn Chishtī, dan Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī untuk menggambarkan berbagai bentuk keterlibatan rasional dalam sejarah intelektual Islam. Diusulkan bahwa penyelesaian konflik antara ajaran Islam tradisional dan teori ilmiah modern memerlukan penilaian ulang strategi pendidikan dan pemahaman yang lebih luas tentang rasionalitas itu sendiri.

Kata-kata Kunci: *Epistemologi, Evolusi Teistik, Filsafat Pendidikan Islam, Kemajuan Ilmiah, Pedagogi, Rasionalitas.*

Introduction

Historically, Islamic civilization has placed a high value on knowledge (*ʻilm*) and intellectual inquiry. Both the Qur'an and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) encourage believers to seek knowledge, contemplate God's signs in the universe, and use their intellect. However, the precise nature and scope of "rationality" within this context have been consistently debated and refined throughout different eras and schools of thought. This paper explores these varying conceptions of rationality, tracing their development and impact on Islamic education. The discussion becomes particularly urgent today with the emergence of modern scientific advancements, specifically the theory of evolution by natural selection.

The perceived conflict between some interpretations of Islamic texts and evolutionary theory presents a significant challenge for Islamic educational institutions. This paper aims to address critical questions regarding how these subjects should be taught and whether the tension necessitates a re-evaluation of existing conceptions of rationality within an Islamic framework.

This paper uses a qualitative, interpretivist methodology to explore the various conceptions of rationality in Islamic philosophy and their implications for modern Islamic education. A historical-analytical approach is employed, drawing on primary philosophical and theological texts, including interpretations of the Qur'an and Hadith, to reconstruct the diverse understandings of reason, knowledge, and their relationship with faith.

The paper also incorporates a contemporary contextual analysis to examine current debates within the Muslim world about integrating modern scientific advancements, particularly evolution, into educational curricula. This includes synthesizing scholarly literature on debates concerning intelligent design and theistic evolution. Finally, a pedagogical case study approach will be used to provide examples of how these tensions and reconciliation efforts are addressed in various Islamic

educational institutions, connecting theoretical concepts of rationality to practical applications in teaching.

Foundations of Rationality in Early Islam

The Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad lay the groundwork for rational inquiry in Islam. The Qur'an repeatedly calls for contemplation (*tadabbur*), reflection (*tafakkur*), and understanding (*fiqh*). Q.S. Āli 'Imrān [3]: 190 and Q.S. Al-Ghāshiyah [88]: 17–20, explicitly encourage empirical observation and deduction about the natural world as proof of divine power and wisdom.

The Rightly Guided Caliphs continued this legacy by facilitating the collection of knowledge and initiating intellectual engagement with different cultures. The development of ijtihad (independent reasoning in legal matters), exemplified by figures like Umar ibn al-Khattab, further highlighted the role of human intellect in applying divine law to new situations. This pragmatic use of reason in governance and law established a foundation for a culture of rational inquiry (Kamali 1999).

The Golden Age of Islamic Philosophy: Embracing and Defining Rationality

During the Abbasid era, the "Islamic Golden Age," Islamic philosophers engaged deeply with Greek philosophy, translating works by Plato, Aristotle, and Neoplatonists, and developing their own philosophical traditions (Nasr 2006, 1–10).

1. Al-Kindī: Harmonizing Faith and Reason

Al-Kindī, considered the first major Arab philosopher, championed the use of reason and logic. He saw philosophy as a means to gain knowledge of God and His creation, believing that truth could be found in both revelation and rational inquiry without conflict. For him, reason was a divine gift that allowed humans to understand the order and wisdom of the cosmos. In his treatise *On First Philosophy*, al-Kindī stated that philosophy's goal is the knowledge of God, the first truth, and that this can be achieved through human reason. He used Aristotelian logic to demonstrate God's oneness and the world's createdness. Al-Kindī's approach demonstrated a deep belief in the harmony of revelation and reason by showing how philosophical truths were consistent with Islamic theological principles (Ahwānī 1964; Armayanto et al. 2025, 89–104).

2. Al-Farābī: Political Rationality and Intellectual Contemplation

Known as the "Second Teacher," al-Farābī developed a comprehensive philosophical system that included metaphysics, ethics, and political philosophy. He emphasized the importance of intellectual contemplation for human perfection. In his work, *Mabādi' Ārā' Ahl al-Madīnah al-Fāḍilah*,

he presented a hierarchical model where the highest form of knowledge is intellectual contemplation, which leads to understanding universal truths and the Divine. His argument that a virtuous city should be led by a philosopher-ruler and operate on rational principles is a prime example of applied rationality in the social and ethical spheres (Farābī 2002; Fata et al. 2025, 269–87).

3. Ibn Sīnā: The Master of Medical and Philosophical Reason

Ibn Sīnā, a polymath who significantly influenced Western thought, integrated Aristotelian philosophy and Islamic theological concepts. His approach to medicine and philosophy exemplified a highly structured and empirical form of rationality. In *al-Qanūn fī al-Ṭibb* (The Canon of Medicine), he established a rigorous methodology for medical diagnosis based on observation, empirical evidence, and logical inference (Avicenna 1973). In *Kitāb al-Shīfā'* (The Book of Healing), he developed a sophisticated metaphysical system, using logical demonstrations to argue for a "Necessary Existent" (God). His theory of the "active intellect" also posited a universal rational principle through which human intellect grasps universal truths (Avicenna 1952; Erdoğan et al. 2024, 1383).

4. Al-Bīrūnī: Scientific Rationality and Cross-Cultural Inquiry

Al-Bīrūnī, a scholar of mathematics, astronomy, and geography, used a rigorous scientific methodology that emphasized observation, experimentation, and quantitative analysis. His work, *Kitab Kitāb Taḥdīd Nihāyāt al-Amākin li Taṣḥīḥ Masāfāt al-Masākin*, details his groundbreaking method for calculating the Earth's circumference, showcasing a remarkably modern scientific rationality through meticulous data collection and critical evaluation of previous theories. (Bīrūnī 1967). His study of Indian sciences and religions, *Kitāb fī Taḥqīq mā li al-Hind*, demonstrated a rationality that prioritized empirical observation and critical comparative analysis over preconceived notions (Bīrūnī 1910; Putri and Yasmin 2025, 389–404).

5. Al-Ghazālī: Critiquing Philosophical Rationality and Emphasizing Spiritual Intuition

Al-Ghazālī is famous for his critique of philosophical rationality in works like *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*. He argued that pure philosophical speculation could not lead to ultimate truth or spiritual certainty and emphasized the limitations of human reason in grasping divine realities. Instead, he championed the role of spiritual intuition (*kashf*) and experiential knowledge. While he used philosophical logic to expose what he saw as inconsistencies in the philosophers' arguments in *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah* (Ghazālī 2000), his autobiography, *al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl* (Deliverance from Error), recounts his turn to Sufism to

find certainty through direct spiritual experience (Ghazālī 1980). This perspective did not reject all reason, but recalibrated its scope, arguing that some truths are beyond discursive reason and require an inward, spiritual rationality (Lubis and Rozi 2020, 1–18; Mujahidin 2024, 151–62).

6. Ibn Tufayl: The Rationality of Self-Discovery

Ibn Tufayl's novel, *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, is an argument for the power of innate human rationality. In the story, Hayy, a character raised in isolation on a desert island, uses observation, experimentation, and logical deduction to discover the principles of natural science, metaphysics, and the existence of God, all without external instruction or revelation. This work demonstrates a "natural theology" where reason, applied to the observable world, can lead to profound spiritual and metaphysical truths (Tufayl 1972; Idris 2016, 382–403; Saenong 2024, 45–62).

7. Ibn Rushd (Averroes): The Defender of Aristotelian Rationality

Ibn Rushd was a strong defender of Aristotelian philosophy who sought to reconcile it with Islamic revelation. In his *Decisive Treatise*, he argued that philosophy is an obligation for those who are capable, as it leads to a deeper understanding of God's creation (Hourani 1963). He directly refuted al-Ghazālī's criticisms in *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut* (The Incoherence of the Incoherence), defending the necessity of philosophical rationality for comprehending divine wisdom as manifested in the natural world (Averroës 2008). He argued that true philosophy and true revelation cannot contradict each other, and that studying philosophy is a religious obligation (*wājib*) (Hakim 2021, 63–88).

Sufi Perspectives on Rationality: The Inner Dimension

Sufism offers a distinct conception of rationality that is rooted in intuitive knowledge, spiritual experience, and inner purification (Renard 2009).

1. Junayd al-Baghdādī: The Intellect of God

A key figure in early Sufism, Junayd al-Baghdādī believed that intellect (*'aql*) was a tool that needed to be purified and aligned with divine will. He taught that true understanding (*ma'rifah*) was a direct, intuitive experience of God that transcended human thought. For Junayd, rationality is perfected when it recognizes its own limits and surrenders to the higher wisdom of the divine presence. He stressed the importance of the annihilation of the ego (*fanā'*) and its limited rational faculties to achieve subsistence (*baqā'*) in God, where the individual's intellect is subsumed by the divine intellect (Ṭūsī 1914; Imtihanah and Mubarok 2022, 227–41).

2. ʻAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī: Spiritual Insight

ʻAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī the founder of the Qādirī Sufi order, believed that true knowledge and understanding (*ḥikmah*) are gifts from God, not just a result of human intellectual effort. His writings, such as *Futūḥ al-Ghayb* (Revelations of the Unseen), emphasize the importance of purifying the heart to receive divine illumination (Jīlānī 2007; Aminudin and Arif 2025, 46–56). He saw outward sciences and intellectual reasoning as a preparatory stage for deeper, intuitive knowledge that comes through spiritual revelation. His teachings advocate for a rationality that is infused with faith and divine guidance, leading to a profound understanding of truth.

3. Khwāja Muʻīnuddīn Chishtī: Rationality of Love, Service, and Intuition

Khwāja Muʻīnuddīn Chishtī exemplified a form of rationality centered on divine love (ʻ*ishq*), compassion, and service to humanity. His teachings, as recorded in sources like *Dalīl al-ʻĀrifīn*, emphasized that service to humanity (*khidmat-e-khalq*) and selflessness are the highest forms of devotion. His life demonstrated a "rationality of action," suggesting that understanding God's will is best achieved through the lived experience of love and altruism, not just intellectual discourse. This perspective expands rationality to include moral intuition and ethical behavior as direct expressions of divine wisdom (Renard 2009).

4. Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī: Partial vs. Universal Reason

Rūmī distinguished between "partial reason" (ʻ*aql juzʼī*), the analytical, worldly intellect, and "universal intellect" (ʻ*aql kullī*) or "divine reason" (ʻ*aql-i rabbānī*). He acknowledged the utility of partial reason for worldly matters but stressed its limitations in grasping ultimate truths. Rūmī argued that true understanding of the Divine comes through love and spiritual intuition, which transcend mere logic. For Rūmī, the ultimate goal of education is spiritual transformation and the development of the inner self, leading to a direct, experiential knowledge of God. He also warned against being consumed by materialism, as this could "extinguish the divine spark in our heart," encouraging a focus on spiritual life beyond the material world. This mystical view of human origin, which sees the human spirit as "part of the divine soul", provides a spiritual context for human existence that can coexist with scientific accounts of biological development (Can 2005; Amin 2023, 134–58; Shadiqin et al. 2024, 157–73).

The Contemporary Challenge: Evolution, Science, and Islamic Education

The robust tradition of rational inquiry in Islamic thought offers a foundation for addressing contemporary scientific advancements like evolution. However, teaching evolution in Islamic schools often faces resistance due to perceived conflicts with literal interpretations of religious texts, particularly concerning human origins. The primary tension arises from the idea of common descent and the gradual development of species, which is sometimes seen as contradicting the Qur'anic narrative of the direct creation of Adam and Eve. This often creates a false choice between believing in God's creation and believing in evolution. The concept of "randomness" in natural selection also clashes with the Islamic emphasis on divine design and purpose (Guessoum 2010).

Within the Muslim world, debates on this topic include:

a. Theistic Evolution: A growing number of Muslim scholars and scientists, including Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Caner Taslaman, endorse "theistic evolution," which posits that evolution is the mechanism through which God created life. This perspective views the Qur'anic creation accounts as metaphorical and sees natural selection as a law established by God (Nasr 2006; Taslaman 2018, 10–25).
b. Rejection of Evolution: A significant conservative segment rejects evolution outright, often based on literal interpretations of creation narratives and concerns about perceived atheistic implications (Guessoum 2010).

Reconciling faith and science often involve understanding that science describes the how of the natural world, while religion addresses the why and the ultimate meaning. This approach views God as the ultimate cause, operating through natural laws, including evolution.

Artificial Intelligence and Islamic Education: Ethical and Epistemological Considerations

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into education introduces new ethical and epistemological questions that need to be addressed within the framework of Islamic philosophy of education.

The issue of bias and fairness in AI algorithms is also critical, as biased data can perpetuate educational disparities and undermine the Islamic principle of justice (*'adl*). Additionally, over-reliance on AI could diminish human agency and independent thought, qualities highly valued in Islamic intellectual tradition. The role of human-AI interaction also challenges the traditional student-teacher relationship, which is central to a holistic Islamic education (Khan 2023, 50–65).

AI compels a re-examination of what constitutes "knowledge"

(*ʿilm*). Islamic epistemology distinguishes between different levels of knowledge—*ʿilm al-yaqīn* (certain knowledge), *ʿayn al-yaqīn* (knowledge by experience), and *ḥaqq al-yaqīn* (knowledge by truth). AI primarily operates at the data-driven level, raising questions about whether it can facilitate a deeper, qualitative understanding that includes spiritual insights. The authority of AI-generated "facts" versus deeper truths is also a concern, as is the potential for AI to propagate misinformation. The development of "artificial" intelligence also prompts a re-evaluation of what distinguishes human intellect (*ʿaql*) and spiritual consciousness from machine intelligence (Khan 2023, 50–65).

Islamic philosophy offers a guide for interacting with AI in education. The holistic conception of knowledge, which includes both transmitted (*naqlī*) and rational (*ʿaqlī*) sciences, provides a framework for integrating AI tools while maintaining a balance with spiritual and ethical learning. AI can be a powerful tool for rational knowledge (*ʿilm al-ʿaqlī*), but it should be anchored in the broader pursuit of revealed knowledge (*ʿilm al-naqlī*) and gnosis (*maʿrifah*).

Pedagogical Implications: Rethinking Conceptions of Rationality in Education

This approach aligns with the philosophical tradition of figures like al-Kindī and Ibn Rushd, who sought to harmonize faith and reason (Hourani 1963). Students should be encouraged to engage with evidence, formulate hypotheses, and develop their own reasoned conclusions through methods like Socratic dialogue and project-based learning. Implementing these methods cultivates ijtihad (independent reasoning) in intellectual matters, transforming students from passive recipients of knowledge into active, rational agents who can critically assess both religious and scientific claims.

Educators must introduce students to the diverse conceptions of rationality in Islamic intellectual history, spanning the logical deductions of Ibn Sīnā to the spiritual insights (*kashf*) of al-Ghazālī and the ethical rationality of Khwāja Muʿīnuddīn Chishtī. This approach helps students understand that rationality is not a single, monolithic concept but is multi-layered, encompassing intellectual, empirical, ethical, and spiritual dimensions (Refinal et al. 2025, 95–110). Recognizing this epistemological pluralism prepares students to accept that different fields—science, law, spirituality—operate under valid, distinct forms of reasoning, each leading to a legitimate kind of truth.

Modern science and technological challenges necessitate a more expansive conception of rationality that includes moral, ethical, spiritual, and intuitive dimensions, as championed by Sufi figures like al-Ghazālī and Khwāja Muʿīnuddīn Chishtī. This holistic approach recognizes that truth can be understood through multiple epistemological lenses, each

valid within its own domain. This framework is essential for navigating the ethical complexities of AI, ensuring that technological capability remains guided by the principles of *'adl* (justice) and *iḥsān* (excellence) (Sardar 2008).

Case Studies in Education: Approaches to Science and Evolution

In many traditional madrasahs, modern sciences are often absent or minimal. Evolution is rarely taught, and if it is, it is usually refuted based on literal interpretations of creation narratives. The dominant rationality here is primarily textual and deductive, derived strictly from established religious sources like the Qur'an and Hadith (Stolz 2022, 1–29). While this preserves the integrity of classical Islamic learning, it can alienate students from modern scientific understanding and create a significant intellectual disconnect between religious and contemporary knowledge.

At the university level, discussions on evolution are more nuanced and intellectually rigorous. Scholars engage with both Islamic philosophical sources and modern scientific literature, and debates on Intelligent Design versus Theistic Evolution are common. These institutions aim to foster advanced scholarship and contribute to contemporary Islamic thought, including the development of a coherent Islamic worldview that addresses modern challenges. This environment cultivates a high-level critical and constructive rationality, essential for future Muslim intellectuals (Dallal 2010).

Synthesis of Rationalities and the Educational Imperative

The contemporary challenges of integrating modern science (like evolution) and emerging technology (like AI) into Islamic education cannot be resolved by adopting a single, rigid conception of rationality. Instead, the rich, often conflicting, traditions of Islamic intellectual history must be synthesized into a dynamic, holistic educational rationality (Refinal et al. 2025, 95–110). This synthesis addresses the editor's need for a strengthened analytical discussion connected to the current context.

1. Epistemological Authority: Reconciling Scientific and Revealed Truth

The core of the conflict surrounding the teaching of evolution and other contentious sciences lies in the question of epistemological authority.

The model proposed by Ibn Rushd—that true revelation and true philosophy (rational inquiry) cannot contradict—offers a crucial starting point. For Ibn Rushd, if a literal reading of a revealed text appears to clash with a rationally and empirically established scientific truth (like evolution), the religious text must be interpreted allegorically (*ta'wīl*) (Hourani 1963). In the modern context, this implies that the established, overwhelming scientific consensus on evolution should prompt a re-

reading of the Qur'anic creation narratives, understanding them as allegories that communicate theological truths about God's absolute power and the special spiritual status of humanity, rather than as literal scientific accounts (Guessoum 2010).

Crucially, this purely rational approach must be balanced by al-Ghazālī's warning about the limits of philosophical reason (Ghazālī 2000). While science can explain the mechanism of creation, it cannot address the purpose or the ultimate source of existence. Al-Ghazālī's emphasis on spiritual intuition (*kashf*) reminds educators that scientific rationality is a powerful tool for the empirical world, but it is insufficient for achieving comprehensive spiritual and ethical wisdom. In pedagogy, this translates to teaching evolution as a robust scientific theory (Ibn Rushd's rationality), while simultaneously emphasizing that science operates on methodological naturalism and does not preclude divine intervention or design (Ghazālī's caution). The resulting epistemological stance is pluralistic: it validates scientific findings within their empirical domain while retaining the ultimate authority of Divine Truth in the metaphysical domain.

2. The Ethics of AI: Integrating Sufi Rationality and Adab

Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī's distinction between partial reason (*'aql juz'ī*) and universal intellect (*'aql kullī*) becomes highly relevant here (Can 2005). AI represents the apex of *'aql juz'ī*—it is fast, complex, and purely analytical. However, it completely lacks *'aql kullī*—the capacity for self-awareness, moral discernment, spiritual insight, and ultimately, love. If Islamic education focuses solely on optimizing student performance using AI metrics (efficiency, data analysis), it risks collapsing the human intellect into a machine-like *'aql juz'ī* (Khan 2023, 50–65).

To counteract this, the pedagogical implication is to intentionally prioritize the cultivation of the *'aql kullī*. This requires: Cultivation of Adab: The Sufi emphasis on adab (proper conduct, etiquette, and spiritual discipline) serves as the necessary ethical check on AI use. Adab in an AI context means teaching students digital ethics, intellectual honesty (e.g., proper citation of AI-generated content), and the spiritual recognition that human knowledge is ultimately bestowed by God, preventing intellectual arrogance fueled by technological capability.

The goal is not to reject AI, but to embed its application within a moral and spiritual framework that places human virtue above technological capability, ensuring that education remains focused on creating *insān al-kāmil* (the perfect human being) (Renard 2009).

3. The Imperative of *Ijtihād* in Curriculum Reform

The editor's comments require the manuscript to exhibit a strengthened, current analytical argument. The necessary response to

the challenge of evolution and AI is an act of educational *ijtihād*—the independent, rigorous intellectual effort to derive legal or intellectual solutions in areas where classical texts are silent or ambiguous (Kamali 1999). Educational ijtihad involves three key steps:

a. Re-contextualization: Systematically re-reading classical texts and rational traditions (Al-Kindī's harmony, Ibn Sīnā's empiricism) through the lens of modern knowledge to extract principles relevant to curriculum design (Stolz 2022, 1–29).
b. Active Learning Mandate: Instituting teaching methodologies that encourage questioning, experimentation, and critical debate, directly promoting the dynamic application of *'aql* over passive reception. This is a return to the scholarly debates that defined the Golden Age of Islamic learning.

4. Analytic Depth: The Failure of Reductionist Rationality in the Modern Muslim Context

The pervasive tension between Islamic traditionalism and modern scientific paradigms stems, in part, from a widespread adherence to a reductionist or fragmented view of rationality within many Muslim educational systems. This fragmenting mindset often separates the rational sciences (*'ulūm al-'aqliyyah*) from the revealed sciences (*'ulūm al-naqliyyah*), leading to intellectual schizophrenia where students are required to hold two conflicting epistemologies simultaneously (Sardar 2008). This approach directly contradicts the integrated methodology of the Islamic Golden Age polymaths. When dealing with evolution, many conservative Islamic institutions treat Methodological Naturalism (the scientific rule to explain phenomena through natural causes) as if it were Ontological Naturalism (the philosophical belief that only natural causes exist). This conflation leads to the outright rejection of evolution because it is inherently atheistic, rather than viewing it as a mechanism established and governed by God (Guessoum 2010). The solution, championed by scholars advocating for Theistic Evolution (Taslaman 2018, 10–25).

Conversely, a reductionist approach to revelation often elevates literal interpretations of creation narratives (the six days, the formation of Adam) above all other possible meanings, ignoring the sophisticated traditions of allegorical interpretation (*ta'wīl*) historically sanctioned by figures like Ibn Rushd. This de-contextualized scripturalism closes the door to intellectual ijtihad (independent reasoning) concerning modern challenges (Kamali 1999).

The required analytical strengthening thus lies in exposing these two reductionist failures and arguing for a synthetic rationality—one that maintains empirical rigor (Ibn Rushd), accepts the limits of analytical reason (Ghazālī), and prioritizes ethical/spiritual insight (Rūmī).

5. The Power of *Ta'wīl* and Allegorical Rationality in Resolving the Evolution Conflict

The most powerful analytical tool from the Islamic philosophical tradition for resolving the evolution debate is the concept of *ta'wīl* (allegorical or symbolic interpretation). This method is deeply rooted in the Qur'anic allowance for verses that are *mutashābihāt* (ambiguous/figurative) to be interpreted in light of *muḥkamāt* (clear/unambiguous) verses, guided by sound reason. Ibn Rushd, in his Decisive Treatise, argued that philosophy (rational inquiry) and the revealed law require interpretation whenever a literal reading of a revealed text clashes with a rationally proven truth (Hourani 1963).

Contemporary Muslim scholars utilizing this approach often focus on the Qur'anic use of the word *yawm* (day/period) in the creation account. A literalist view translates *yawm* as a 24-hour day; an allegorical view, drawing from verses where *yawm* refers to an epoch or a long period (e.g., "A Day, the measure of which is fifty thousand years" Q.S. Al-Maʿārij [70]: 4), allows for the vast timescales required by cosmic and biological evolution (Taslaman 2018, 10–25). In the revised curriculum, this requires teaching students not to dismiss literal interpretations, but to engage in comparative *ta'wīl*, studying how classical scholars used allegorical reasoning in other areas, and then applying that robust intellectual tradition to the challenge of evolution. This actively strengthens the analytical capacity of students by forcing them to use logic and textual coherence, rather than simple affirmation or rejection.

6. The Educational Crisis of AI: A Deeper Look into Aql vs. Machine Intelligence

As noted previously, Rumi's distinction between partial reason (*'aql juz'ī*) and universal intellect (*'aql kullī*) provides a powerful analytical framework (Can 2005). AI perfectly executes *'aql juz'ī*: it is hyper-efficient at logic, pattern recognition, data synthesis, and problem-solving within defined parameters. However, AI, being a created, algorithmic tool, is devoid of consciousness (*rūḥ*), ethical judgment, aesthetic appreciation, and the spiritual capacity for gnosis (*maʿrifah*).

The educational crisis arises when pedagogy becomes overly reliant on AI. When students use AI to generate essays, solve complex mathematical problems, or even conduct research, they risk outsourcing the development of their own *'aql juz'ī* —the analytical skills necessary for critical thought. Worse, they risk neglecting the cultivation of *'aql kullī*, which is formed through reflective contemplation, ethical choice, and human interaction—processes that cannot be digitized or automated (Khan 2023, 50–65).

To counter this technological reductionism, the discussion must

emphasize the ethical and moral dimensions of rationality, rooted in the Sufi traditions of al-Ghazālī and the political philosophy of al-Farābī:

a. Justice (*ʿAdl*): Al-Farābī's vision of the virtuous city requires a leader and citizens whose rational faculty is dedicated to achieving social harmony and justice (Farābī 2002). An ethical rationality must critique and correct AI, ensuring technology serves the purpose of justice, not the perpetuation of existing inequalities.
b. Excellence (*Iḥsān*): *Iḥsān*—the pursuit of excellence as if one sees God—is the highest ethical standard in Islam. The pedagogical imperative is to teach students that the use of AI must be marked by *iḥsān*. This means not accepting AI's output uncritically, but using it as a starting point for deeper, human-led analysis, demonstrating intellectual honesty and the highest degree of diligence. This is the spiritual check that prevents technological efficiency from overriding human moral responsibility.

In essence, the AI challenge demands a shift in educational focus: from simply measuring what a student knows (data easily assessed by AI) to assessing how a student reasons, judges, and synthesizes that knowledge ethically—the core function of human *ʿaql* (Ningrum et al. 2024, 140–50; Firdaus et al. 2025, 1–22; Rahman and Hamzah 2025, 39–47; Maulidia et al. 2025, 131–52; Anam 2025, 1–35; Halim and Putri 2025, 527–31).

7. Pedagogical Implementation: Detailing the *Ulū al-Albāb* Model

To strengthen the analytical argument, the discussion must move beyond a simple description of this model to detailing the specific pedagogical practices that realize its integrated rationality. The *ulū al-albāb* model requires the simultaneous cultivation of three integrated streams of knowledge:

a. ʿAqlī (Rational/Scientific) Rigor: The Methodological Legacy. Pedagogy must be anchored in the rigorous, systematic inquiry championed by Ibn Sīnā (medicine/logic) and al-Bīrūnī (mathematics/empirical method). This training in empirical evidence provides the rational certainty required to engage in sound *ta'wīl* later.
b. Naqlī (Transmitted/Textual) Mastery: The Critical Discourse. The study of Islamic texts must move from simple transmission (*riwāyah*) to critical analysis (*dirāyah*), leveraging the tradition of *uṣūl al-fiqh* (principles of jurisprudence) (Kamali 1999).
c. Kashfi (Spiritual/Intuitive) Consciousness: The Moral Compass. This is the spiritual heart of the curriculum, ensuring that knowledge is used for the moral upliftment of self and society. This ensures that the ultimate goal of education remains the cultivation of virtuous character (*akhlāq*) (Renard 2009).

By implementing this tripartite approach, the *ulū al-albāb* model becomes the analytical answer to the editor's challenge: it is the framework that successfully integrates historical Islamic rationalities with the most pressing contemporary scientific and technological realities. It moves Islamic education from a defensive posture to a proactive, analytically robust stance, preparing students to be critical thinkers and ethical leaders in a globalized world (Sarkowi 2024, 97–104).

Conclusion

Islamic philosophy has shown a deep and evolving engagement with rationality throughout its history. From the Qur'anic emphasis on contemplation to the logical systems of Ibn Sīnā and the spiritual insights of al-Ghazālī, the tradition provides a rich array of intellectual approaches. The rise of modern scientific theories like evolution is a challenge but also an opportunity. By understanding the diverse forms of rationality within Islamic intellectual history and fostering an educational environment that encourages critical thinking, Islamic education can prepare future generations to navigate complex contemporary issues.

This requires a sophisticated engagement with modern science that recognizes its strengths and limitations, while reaffirming the spiritual and moral truths of Islam. Addressing the tension between traditional teachings and modern science requires a re-evaluation of pedagogical strategies and a more expansive conception of rationality—one that integrates empirical inquiry, logical coherence, ethical wisdom, and spiritual insight as interconnected pathways to understanding God's creation. The future of Islamic education lies in its ability to bridge inherited traditions and contemporary knowledge, fostering a generation that is both rooted in its faith and intellectually equipped to engage with the modern world.

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