

QUR'ANIC, SUFISTIC, AND PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF A LOVE-BASED CURRICULUM: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF IBN 'ARABĪ AND AL- FAKHR AL-RĀZĪ

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Abstract: *This study investigates the concept of love in the works of Ibnu Arabi and al-Fakhr al-Rāzī to elucidate the Qur'anic, Sufistic, and philosophical foundations of the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC). The research seeks to develop an integrative model by analyzing Ibn 'Arabī's Sufi-metaphysical perspective and al-Rāzī's philosophical-exegetical approach, as well as their respective contributions to the KBC. Employing qualitative library research, the study analyzes data using content and comparative methods. The comparative analysis centers on the five pillars of the love-based curriculum: (1) love of God and His Messenger, (2) love of knowledge, (3) love of the environment, (4) love of oneself and others, and (5) love of the homeland. The findings indicate that Ibn 'Arabī conceptualizes love as an ontological principle of divine self-disclosure (tajalli) that connects al-ḥaqq and creation, while al-Rāzī interprets love within a rational, psychological, and ethical framework aimed at human perfection. Although their approaches differ, both thinkers assert that love is intrinsic to the structure of existence and the primordial nature (fiṭrah) of humanity. This convergence is evident in their epistemological, ecological, social, and spiritual perspectives. Consequently, the KBC is presented as a transformative model that integrates Qur'anic, Sufi, and philosophical sources to foster spiritual awareness, ethical responsibility, ecological consciousness, and social harmony by establishing love as a foundational principle in education and human development.*

Keywords: *Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Ibn 'Arabī, KBC, Love.*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji konsep cinta dalam pemikiran Ibn 'Arabī dan al-Fakhr al-Rāzī

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untuk menjelaskan landasan Qur'ani, sufistik, dan filosofis dari Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta (KBC). Penelitian ini bertujuan mengembangkan model integratif melalui analisis perspektif sufistik-metafisik Ibn 'Arabī dan pendekatan filosofis-tafsiris al-Rāzī, serta kontribusi keduanya terhadap KBC. Dengan menggunakan penelitian kepustakaan kualitatif, data dianalisis melalui metode analisis isi dan analisis komparatif. Analisis komparatif difokuskan pada lima pilar kurikulum berbasis cinta, yaitu: (1) cinta kepada Allah dan Rasul-Nya, (2) cinta terhadap ilmu pengetahuan, (3) cinta terhadap lingkungan, (4) cinta terhadap diri sendiri dan sesama, serta (5) cinta tanah air. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Ibn 'Arabī memandang cinta sebagai prinsip ontologis dari penyingkapan diri Ilahi (*tajallī*) yang menghubungkan *al-baqq* dengan ciptaan, sedangkan al-Rāzī menafsirkan cinta dalam kerangka rasional, psikologis, dan etis yang diarahkan pada kesempurnaan manusia. Meskipun pendekatan keduanya berbeda, kedua pemikir tersebut sama-sama menegaskan bahwa cinta merupakan bagian inheren dari struktur eksistensi dan fitrah primordial manusia. Titik temu ini tampak dalam perspektif epistemologis, ekologis, sosial, dan spiritual mereka. Oleh karena itu, KBC dipresentasikan sebagai model transformatif yang mengintegrasikan sumber-sumber Qur'ani, sufistik, dan filosofis guna membangun kesadaran spiritual, tanggung jawab etis, kesadaran ekologis, dan harmoni sosial dengan menjadikan cinta sebagai prinsip dasar dalam pendidikan dan pengembangan manusia.

Kata-kata Kunci: *Cinta, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Ibn 'Arabī, KBC.*

Introduction

Between December 2024 and November 2025, KontraS monitoring records documented numerous violations of freedom of religion or belief: 14 restrictions on worship, 9 acts of vandalism against religious sites, 6 cases of blocked construction, 4 forced closures, and 4 instances each of intimidation and persecution (Arya 2025). Adding to this concern, Ashfiya (2025) highlights SETARA Institute data showing a surge in intolerance during 2023–2024, with 477 incidents and 731 documented actions—217 incidents and 329 actions in 2023, rising to 260 incidents and 402 actions in 2024.

In 2020, religious freedom in Indonesia fell to its lowest point, scoring 1 out of 4, alongside a rise in intolerance-related incidents. This trend stems from the growth of anti-tolerance ideologies, often tied to fundamentalist views and influenced by broader socio-political factors (M. L. Hakim et al. 2023, 1). As a result, religious intolerance drives conflict and violence. The gap between constitutional guarantees and their enforcement leads to systemic discrimination against minorities, hindering a truly pluralistic democracy in Indonesia (J. Fenton 2016, 181). For example, Mujani (2019, 339–40) found that most Indonesian Muslims (87% of the population) tend to show religio-political intolerance, especially toward non-Muslim representatives. However, economic, political, and security conditions, institutional engagement, and democratic values can help reduce intolerance.

In light of these persistent violations, Mahdiyīn et al. (2025, 299) invite educators and stakeholders to consider Ali Asghar Engineer's liberation theology as a practical and inspiring solution. By integrating justice, freedom, and equality into Indonesia's religious education curriculum, this approach encourages graduates to become critical thinkers and socially responsible leaders, ready to drive inclusive, transformative reforms and help build a just, tolerant, and harmonious

society. Meanwhile, Cahyo and Devi Tri (2021, 331) highlight the importance of cultural mechanisms that empower peace actors as an effective means of preventing ethnoreligious conflict. Therefore, integrating local wisdom into curricula is essential to promoting genuine engagement and collaboration across Indonesia's diverse communities.

Philosophy is central to curriculum development. The philosophical stance of schools and leaders shapes curriculum aims, content, and structure. Schools rarely follow just one philosophy. Instead, they reflect many perspectives. This variety adds dynamism and enriches curriculum development. Studying philosophy helps educators better understand schools and curricula. It also fosters reflection on beliefs and values. Throughout history, philosophical questions have influenced education and society. Today, rapid change requires ongoing evaluation. Philosophy conceptually explores human existence, thought, and reality. It seeks to understand life as a whole, covering many issues in a unified framework (Ornstein and Hunkins 2018, 46).

Various philosophical foundations guide curriculum design. Progressivism stresses learning by doing; constructivism values knowledge built through experience; and humanism emphasizes personal growth. These are essential for developing the Islamic education curriculum (Supriyanto and Fuadi 2025). Intercultural philosophy explores diverse cultural and religious perspectives and offers an epistemological basis for promoting diversity in curriculum and teaching (Abdul-Jabbar and Makki 2024, 1).

Philosophy serves as the foundational basis for the formulation and development of the educational curriculum in Indonesia, integrating dimensions of knowledge, character formation, and civic responsibility. The curriculum is designed to foster cognitive development alongside the cultivation of moral character and an awareness of diversity in accordance with the principle of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. National education standards function as a comprehensive framework for both implementation and quality assessment, while Pancasila provides the philosophical orientation that guides educational objectives. Overall, the curriculum prioritizes character education, moral and civic development, and inclusivity to shape individuals who are ethically grounded, socially responsible, and appreciative of diversity (Pulhehe and Robandi 2024, 408).

Building on these philosophical foundations, Nasaruddin Umar critiques earlier religious education curricula for encouraging exclusivist attitudes and creating early psychological boundaries toward followers of other religions. He argues that genuine tolerance requires more than passive coexistence; it means actively acknowledging and engaging with differences to sustain social cohesion in Indonesia's pluralistic society. As a result, developing a love-based curriculum that emphasizes compassion, mutual recognition, and inclusive coexistence is considered essential to promoting interreligious and interethnic harmony in Indonesia (Kemenag Tulungagung 2025).

In general, love may be conceptualized as a set of interrelated layers of images that evolve. These layers move from specific apprehensions to broader social and

consolidative dimensions. Such overarching patterns are particularly suitable for explaining the complexity and elusiveness of love. Its development both reflects and responds to shifting social dynamics, which alternately affirm and challenge the concept itself (Cebal-Loureda et al. 2024, 11). Kaur et al. (2023, 4) have examined the love-based curriculum in their previous research. In their view, posthumanist education must be fundamentally *ecocentric* and grounded in love, engaging the entirety of students' beings to cultivate a profound sense of feeling for and devotion to Mother Nature. According to them, love, care, and reverence for all human beings and our nonhuman kin are at the core of posthumanist education. The foundation of the divine eye and the cultivation of close relations with nature and with all constituent elements of the universe are conceived as integral dimensions of both formal schooling and post-schooling experiences; the body, heart, and spirit constitute an indispensable and inseparable aspect of the learning process.

Nasaruddin Umar argues that the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) should go beyond formal classrooms where teachers and students, or lecturers and university learners, meet. KBC is seen as a curriculum for life, based on the idea that some curriculum exists wherever people are present. Love is described as the basic principle of existence, transcending space, society, geography, culture, and religion. As a gift from God and the highest moral value, love should not be confined to teaching methods. In this view, curriculum guides human life, supporting a holistic approach that includes spirit, society, and nature. Umar says that major human problems are often treated only at the level of their results, not at their real causes. He calls for a return to a Sufistic worldview, which sees the universe as the showing (*tajalli*) of God. Umar says modern ways of thinking have taken away the sacred side of reality, replacing it with a rational view that measures value by numbers and use. The main goal of KBC is to relight the lamp of the heart in learners, making teachers more than knowledge givers, but also guides who help students find spiritual and inner understanding (Pendis Channel 2025).

Curriculum constitutes a distinct academic discipline (or subdiscipline) with its own intellectual autonomy. This discipline primarily focuses on educational practice for the advancement of education itself. Therefore, the field of curriculum studies needs to formulate its own theoretical foundations, including theories of knowledge and theories concerning instructional content or subject matter (Deng 2021, 190). In addition, the philosophy of education plays a crucial role in shaping a just and equitable future for education. Nevertheless, it can contribute effectively to such development only when it is grounded in ideas derived from diverse cultural traditions of ways of knowing and modes of theorizing (English and Heilbronn 2024, 156). In essence, education should be more oriented toward justice (Akbar 2024, 397; Azada-Palacios 2024, 319). Therefore, the deconstruction and reconstruction of the curriculum should be carried out through sincere collaboration and partnership with Indigenous communities, with respect for their authority and their right to determine the direction of educational procedures and urgencies. The principles of mutuality and common learning must serve as the

foundation for building deferential associations between educational institutions and Indigenous societies (Dei and Cacciavillani 2024, 224).

Curriculum change requires not only a transformation in teachers' mindset. It also demands a comprehensive reform of the school education system as a whole. In the new paradigm, the concepts of both the teacher and the learner must be redefined. Parents must also understand and accept curriculum reform as a positive change for their children's development. Curriculum transformation cannot succeed without systemic revisions in education. All stakeholders must understand and internalize the innovative pattern and its philosophical foundations (Kondrla et al. 2023, 79).

This study makes three principal contributions. The first is the introduction of an integrative model that synthesizes Qur'anic, Sufi, and philosophical principles to substantiate the values underlying the Love-Based Curriculum. Next, the study draws on the philosophical-exegetical thought of al-Fakhr al-Rāzī alongside the Sufi metaphysical perspective of Ibn 'Arabī. Lastly, it examines how the concept of love in the works of Ibn 'Arabī and al-Fakhr al-Rāzī has influenced the development of contemporary Islamic education curricula.

This research employs a qualitative methodology, drawing on library research techniques. Data was collected from journals, articles, books, policy documents, and research reports. The literature reviewed includes works by Ibn 'Arabī and al-Fakhr al-Rāzī, studies on the philosophical foundations of curriculum, and the Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education No. 6077 of 2025 on Love-Based Curriculum Guidelines. Researchers conducted systematic searches of databases such as Scopus, SINTA, and institutional repositories. This ensured the inclusion of relevant and high-quality sources. Data analysis involved content and comparative analyses to identify key themes and concepts underlying the Love-Based Curriculum. These themes include Qur'anic, Sufi, and philosophical principles. Similar studies on Qur'anic-Sufi-Philosophical values have also been conducted by Zenrif et al. (2024, 641–42), Ichwan et al. (2024, 673–75), and González (De Diego González 2023, 1–13). Building on this scholarly discourse, Aini (2017) further examined the concept of *Tasbīḥ al-Ālam* by comparing the thought of Ibn 'Arabī and al-Fakhr al-Rāzī.

Why are the views of Fakhr al-Rāzī and Ibn 'Arabī selected as the subject of this study? The contributions of Fakhr al-Rāzī to Qur'anic exegesis affirm an interdisciplinary approach that systematically integrates *kalām* (theology), philosophy, and linguistic analysis rationally and methodically, thereby reinforcing the primacy of reason in comprehending the hermeneutical complexities inherent in divine revelation (Öktem 2025, 159–60). For Iyer (2023, 1), pluralism and its conceptual foundation in the meaning and reality of being are further elaborated through Ibn 'Arabī's intricate distinction and mutual interpenetration between the transcendence (*tanzīh*) and immanence (*tashbīḥ*) of al-Ḥaqq (the Real).

In his research, Carbó (2023, 47) explicates that the eye (*'ayn*) and the heart (*qalb*) maintain a profoundly intimate relationship within the Sufi tradition of Ibn 'Arabī. He further elucidates that the image of the Beloved (God) that dwells

within the human heart is simultaneously and actively present in the eye, thereby enabling the eye to discern the Beloved's countenance concealed beneath the multiplicity of phenomenal manifestations in the world. In another dimension of their study, Junaedi et al. (2024, 19–20) elaborate on Ibn 'Arabī's epistemology, which integrates *kashf* (spiritual unveiling) with textual analysis of the Qur'an and hadith in the formulation of legal judgments, such that his interpretations are not only enriched with spiritual insight but also remain firmly anchored within the Islamic scholarly tradition. In this regard, the present study is positioned to complement and complete the ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions of the existing discourse.

The Conceptual Foundations of Love in the Thought of Ibn 'Arabī

Waḥdat al-wujūd (the Unity of Being) appears in pre-seventh-century Hijrī thought and in both Islamic and non-Islamic traditions. Ibn 'Arabī developed *waḥdat al-wujūd* into a systematic doctrine and established its principles in Islamic intellectual tradition. He expanded its branches, clarified its implications, and expressed its core with spiritual clarity, experiential insight (*dhawq*), and scholarly depth. Supporters and critics alike recognized his original mystical system. Most praised his Sufi expertise and leadership in *waḥdat al-wujūd*. Ibn 'Arabī remains the main authority and model for proponents of the Unity of Being (Hakim et al. 2024, 235–38; Tapp 2023, 8–10; Jahāngīrī 1996, 261–62).

'Afīfī (1991, 7) argues that Ibn 'Arabī gave *waḥdat al-wujūd* (the Unity of Being) its fully articulated form and built a Sufi terminology for it, drawing on sources such as the *Qur'an*, *ḥadīth*, *kalām* theology, Peripatetic philosophy, Neoplatonism, Christian theology, Stoicism, Jewish thought (via Philo), the Ismā'īlīs, the Qarmaṭians, the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', and earlier Muslim Sufis. He recast these terms within a unique conceptual scheme, giving each a new meaning true to *waḥdat al-wujūd*, and created a technical lexicon that, for centuries, was the main intellectual tool for proponents of *waḥdat al-wujūd*. Later authors probed its full meanings, and all Muslim Sufis after Ibn 'Arabī—poet or not, Arab, Persian, or Turkish—used this terminology.

The doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, as articulated by Ibn 'Arabī (1946, 92–93) in his seminal work *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, is his influential contribution to Islamic metaphysics. Ibn 'Arabī's main contribution is his argument that within existence, nothing is truly comparable or opposed, asserting that Being, in its ultimate reality, is singular. Nothing can oppose itself, so what ultimately remains is God alone. Nothing exists independently of Him. There is neither absolute union nor absolute separation. This realization leads to the concept of direct witnessing (*mushāhadah*), where the knower perceives only the Divine presence during contemplation.

Accordingly, if existence belongs to God, then the existence of all entities is entirely dependent upon Him. All things come into being through His creative act and persist through His sustaining permanence. Existence is attributed solely to God and not to anything else. Considered independently, created beings are

transient and lack essential or independent existence. However, in relation to God, they persist because divine existence sustains them. This understanding leads to the dissolution of all perception directed toward anything other than God. As stated in Q.S. Al-Ghāfir [40]: 16, which indicates that nothing is ultimately intended or sought except Him. Similarly, Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 115 affirms that nothing exists apart from Him; nothing is hidden from or separated from His presence. Furthermore, Q.S. Al-Ḥadīd [57]: 3 signifies that nothing is first except through Him, nothing is last except through Him, nothing becomes manifest except through His existence, and nothing remains hidden except through His sustaining reality. Therefore, God alone possesses true self-subsisting existence (Bakrī 2006).

Ibn 'Arabī (n.d.-a, 113) articulates a theory of love with several foundational contributions. He asserts that divine generosity enables God to instill the reality of love in every *mumkin al-wujūd* (contingent being whose existence is granted by Him). Besides existence, God also bestows a unique delight, which inclines the cosmos towards mutual love. The key contribution here is the understanding of love as an essential element divinely implanted in all creation.

Ibn 'Arabī (n.d.-a, 113) states:

Thus, the world comes to love one another with a love that is conditioned (*muqayyad*), derived from the reality of Absolute Love (*ḥubb muṭlaq*). Hence, it is said: 'A person loves another,' or 'someone loves a particular object.' Yet this is nothing but the manifestation (*ẓubūr*) of the Real (*al-ḥaqq*) in the essence of that which is loved, appearing in another locus of manifestation—whatever that may be. The lover of God does not object to any lover regarding whom he loves, for he perceives no lover but God in each locus of manifestation. Whoever does not possess this divine love will object to those who love. There is, moreover, a subtle point concerning those who claim that it is impossible for anyone to love God Most High: namely, that the Real cannot be ascribed to non-existence, nor to anything that bears any relation whatsoever to non-existence. Yet love is connected to non-existence; thus, no love from a created being can properly be related to God. Rather, God's love pertains to the created thing, for the creature is non-existent. Therefore, the creature is eternally and perpetually beloved by God. And since love cannot be conceived in conjunction with the existence of the creature, the creature, in itself, never truly exists. This reality entails that the creature is a locus of manifestation (*maẓhar*) of the Real, not something that possesses independent manifestation. Whoever loves a person with divine love does so according to this principle: his love is not confined by imagination nor by any particular form of beauty, for all forms belong to Him. Thus, love is not attached to them.

This perspective presents another of Ibn 'Arabī's crucial contributions: the cosmos is conceived as *tajallī*, an ongoing manifestation of divine love. Beauty is loved for its own sake, and when augmented, results in even greater love—like light upon light. He proposes that humans love God by perceiving His beauty in the cosmos, as God created the universe in His image. Thus, to love the world's beauty is to love God. The cosmos itself is the only *majlā* (locus of manifestation) for God. This framing succinctly demonstrates his contribution to theories of divine love and manifestation ('Arabī, n.d.-a, 269).

For Ibnu Arabi (n.d.-a, 111), love is structured into three hierarchical levels:

1. Natural love (*ḥubb ṭabī'ī*) is the most common level of human experience. Its main goal is union at the level of the vital or animal soul. Here, each partner's

soul intertwines with the other. This union comes through sensual pleasure and aroused desire, ending in sexual union. Such desire spreads throughout the body, like water soaking into wool or a dye coloring an object.

2. Psychic–spiritual love (*ḥubb rūḥānī nafsī*) seeks to emulate the beloved (*maḥbūb*), fulfill the beloved’s rights, and recognize its true status. In other words, at this level, love goes beyond desire and becomes an ethical and existential alignment with the beloved.
3. Divine love (*ḥubb ilāhī*) covers both God’s love for the servant and the servant’s love for God, as expressed in the Qur’anic verse: “*He loves them, and they love Him*” (Q.S. Al-Mā’idah [5]: 54). The highest realization of this love occurs when the servant sees himself as a locus of manifestation (*mazḥar*) of *al-Ḥaqq* (God). At this point, the transition occurs: the servant becomes the outward sign of the Real, much as the soul is to the body—the soul is inward and unseen, known only to the one who loves. Meanwhile, *al-ḥaqq* becomes visible within the servant, and the servant’s form expresses God’s determinations, measures, and outward traits. Thus, at this stage, the servant becomes the object of divine love.

The main contribution of Ibn ‘Arabī’s perspective is his assertion that God’s creation of the cosmos is fundamentally an act of perfect beauty, both in its origin and ongoing creative act. He uniquely characterizes God as both loving beauty and as the sole possessor of true beauty. Motivated by divine self-love, God willed to see Himself reflected in otherness, thereby creating the world as a mirror of divine beauty. God’s contemplation and love for the cosmos are conditioned by vision and lead to the manifestation of limited, relative beauty within absolute beauty, thereby making some beings more beautiful than others. Ibn ‘Arabī’s significant contribution also includes his emphasis on the relationship between divine and human love: when a servant loves beauty, God reciprocates. True adornment for God, he asserts, is only achieved by emulating the Prophet, encapsulated by the statement in Q.S. Āli ‘Imrān [3]: 31. Adorning oneself with prophetic qualities thus becomes the means to God’s love, grounded in God’s own love of beauty (‘Arabī, n.d.-b, 269–70).

Several Sufi figures articulated definitions of *maḥabbah* (love) prior to Ibn ‘Arabī. These conceptualizations are documented in *Mawsū‘at al-Kasnazān fīmā iṣṭalaha ‘alayhi Ahl al-Taṣawwuf wa al-‘Irfān* (al-Kasnazānī 2005, 16–17), including the following:

1. Ibrāhīm ibn Adham conceptualizes *maḥabbah* as prioritizing the Beloved above all else, so that the Beloved becomes an intimate companion in solitude and a substitute for all forms of comfort.
2. Dāwūd al-Ṭā’ī defines *maḥabbah* as the continuous and unceasing remembrance of the Beloved.
3. Rābī‘ah al-‘Adawīyyah uses a metaphor, describing *maḥabbah* as a fire that ripens what is inert. The human heart must be matured through love. With-

out this maturity, claimed love is only nominal and lacks authenticity.

4. Syaḳīq al-Balkhī sees *maḥabbah* as purifying the heart from attachment to anything but the Beloved, together with complete surrender to Him; consequently, in this state, all matters are entrusted to the Divine, regardless of relief or constraint.

Early Sufi figures defined *maḥabbah* as inner states and spiritual practices like longing, remembrance, purification of the heart, and total surrender to the Beloved, all pointing to personal spiritual transformation and guidance toward God. Ibn 'Arabī, meanwhile, creates a structured system distinguishing natural, psychic-spiritual, and divine love. He moves from an individual's experience to a broader metaphysical vision, retaining earlier themes like purification and closeness to the Beloved, but seeing love as the core of existence and divine expression. This shift shows how early Sufis saw love as a personal experience, while Ibn 'Arabī framed it as a unified theory shaping ethics, knowledge, and reality.

The Conceptual Foundations of Love in the Thought of al-Fakhr al-Rāzī

Al-Fakhr al-Rāzī, as interpreted by al-Aribi (1992, 170–71), grounds his intellectual framework in a philosophico-theological structure. Rational-inferential knowledge (*ma'rifah istidlāliyya-istintājiyya*) is accorded a primary status in the effort to know God and to attain the true religion. Deductive rational cognition thus functions as an indispensable means for attaining truth. However, if divine reality constitutes the goal of rational intellectual activity, a critical question arises: is human intellect capable of attaining it fully? According to al-'Arabī, al-Fakhr al-Rāzī maintains that the intellect can only know an object insofar as it can encompass it (*iḥāṭah*). Whatever is fully presented to and comprehended by the intellect falls within the scope of its cognitive grasp. Yet this principle cannot be applied to knowledge of God, since the human intellect can't encompass the divine essence in its totality. Human beings, therefore, know their Creator only to the extent permitted by possibility (*bi-qadr al-imbkān*). That which cannot be known through its essential reality may only be known through its effects and acts. The more exalted and sublime these acts are, the more complete the intellect's understanding becomes of the perfection of their agent.

Mahdawī Najād (2008, 59) sees al-Fakhr al-Rāzī as a key figure in the rise of philosophical theology (*al-kalām al-falsafī*). After al-Rāzī, religious teachings were increasingly articulated through philosophy and logic. Mahdawī Najād also mentions Ibn Khaldūn, who says al-Rāzī brought together *kalām* and philosophy.

Two principal themes characterize al-Fakhr al-Rāzī's theory of human action in the later phase. First, this theory connects closely to cosmogony. It examines whether human actions stem solely from human power or from divine agency. This issue is central in the classical discourse of *'ilm al-kalām* on human action, often called the creation of acts (*khalq al-af'āl*). Second, al-Rāzī's theory of action includes a psychological dimension closely related to ethics. This concerns nature and mechanisms of human choice and motivation. In this context, a key question

arises: does the human being act deterministically (*mujbar*), or is he free to choose (*mukhtār*)? Al-Rāzī's most important discussions of human action in his later period appear in *al-Arba'in*, *al-Ma'ālim*, *al-Tafsīr*, and especially *al-Matālib*. He also wrote *Kitāb al-Jabr wa al-Qadar*, a treatise focusing on predestination and human freedom (Shihadeh 2006, 17).

In *al-Matālib al-Āliyah*, al-Fakhr al-Rāzī (1986b, 16) argues that although the doctrine of *jabr* (determinism) has its difficulties, the doctrine of *qadar* (absolute human freedom) causes even more problems. If humans are truly free, the inclination to act must arise without a determining cause. This creates a major dilemma. If every possible entity (*mumkin*) requires a cause, then human actions are necessarily determined. This leads to *jabr*. Conversely, if entities do not require a cause, the very idea of causality collapses. It becomes impossible to establish the existence of any cause, including God. Al-Fakhr al-Rāzī also rejects any intermediate position where some possibilities require a cause and others do not. He calls this position internally contradictory and untenable. Only two options remain: either affirm determinism (*jabr*) or deny causality altogether. The latter is far more untenable. Thus, al-Rāzī regards *qadar* as even more problematic than *jabr*.

Love starts when the mind imagines something perfect. When the mind forms this idea, love follows. If the mind sees evil instead, it feels disliked. Goodness and perfection have two kinds. One is eternal, never changing; this is spiritual perfection and happiness with the divine. The second is changing—bodily perfection and physical happiness, always in flux like quicksilver. For example, a person might love someone thinking this will bring wealth, but if he learns it won't, he feels anger instead (Rāzī 1999b, 502)

Al-Fakhr al-Rāzī's philosophical thought aligns closely with that of Plotinus; both emphasize love as rooted in the soul's inclination toward pure beauty. For Plotinus (1952, 100), this inclination arises from recognition, proximity, and inner awareness that transcend rational thought. Both philosophers' contrast beauty with what is base or devoid of beauty, which they see as opposed to nature and the Divine. Additionally, both hold that nature operates according to principles of goodness and order, sourcing order from the Good and the Beautiful. An object or experience that evokes pleasure and intimacy becomes attractive to the soul, central to both frameworks on the origin and causality of love. This principle extends to physical love, where desire is directed toward manifesting beauty. Both agree that nature, by its constitution, is directed toward beauty, not deficiency or lack.

If love is based on chasing worldly goods and pleasures, it does not last and tends to change quickly. This is because love depends on the idea of perfection, which itself changes. When perfection is short-lived, so is this kind of love. But if love is based on seeing true, lasting perfection, then it endures and does not change. The effect lasts as long as its cause. This is echoed in the divine statement Q.S. Az-Zukhrūf [43]: 67 (Rāzī 1999b, 502–3).

For al-Fakhr al-Rāzī (2005, 587), it is important to tell *'ishq* (intense love) and *shawq* (longing) apart. *'Ishq* is the joy from thinking about being seen as perfect.

Shawq shows up when the beloved is present in our imagination but not in our senses. Imagination gives pleasure and pulls us close, but sensory absence causes pain. Thus, pleasure and pain trade places. Pleasure after pain feels stronger, and so happiness becomes deeper. Knowing this, longing (*shawq*) for the Necessary Being (*wājib al-wujūd*) or higher intellects is not possible. Longing is unique to the human soul.

A Comparative Study of Ibn ‘Arabī and al-Fakhr al-Rāzī’s Contrasting Perspectives on the Five Pillars of the Love-Based Curriculum

This study investigates where and how these thinkers diverge in their interpretations of the curriculum’s pillars. The Love-Based Curriculum has five core components: (1) love of God and His Messenger; (2) love of knowledge; (3) love of the environment; (4) love of oneself and others; and (5) love of the homeland (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam 2025).

Love of God and His Messenger

The Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) seeks to cultivate an understanding of God as the Absolutely Loving Being and of the Prophet as a paradigmatic exemplar of compassion. It further promotes a balanced apprehension of the divine attributes of *jamāliyyah* (beauty) and *jalāliyyah* (majesty/rigor), thereby correcting reductive perceptions that portray God solely as a punitive authority and replacing them with a more proportionate theological vision. Moreover, the curriculum emphasizes the primacy of divine mercy (*rahmah*) over wrath, so that acts of worship, adherence to the Prophetic Sunnah, and service to fellow human beings and the environment are motivated by love rather than compulsion (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam 2025, 27).

What the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) teaches matches the Qur’anic Sufistic view of Ibn ‘Arabī (n.d.-a, 113). Ibn ‘Arabī says that for every ontological presence (*ḥaḍrah*), there is an entity from God’s Name *al-Nūr* (the Light), which reflects on His Name *al-Jamīl* (the Beautiful). That Light gives it existence. So, each lover loves only himself. That is why God says He loves the loci of manifestation (*mazābir*), even though these loci do not exist in themselves. Love attaches to what appears, but what appears is the Manifest (*al-Zābir*) within them. The relationship between the Manifest and these loci is what love really is. The true object of love is actually non-existence. Love seeks perpetuity, but perpetuity does not occur; it has no end, so it cannot be called an occurrence. Love is an attribute of the Real— “*He loves them*”—and also of creation— “*and they love Him* (Q.S. Al-Mā’idah [5]: 54).” Because love belongs to the Real, it has majesty (*‘izzah*). Through their connection, this majesty enters creation and causes humility (*dhillah*) in its rightful place both ways. So, the lover humbles himself not under the majesty of the beloved, but under the majesty of love itself. The beloved may outwardly belong to the lover or be under his power, yet the lover still humbles himself before it. This shows that the majesty involved is that of love, not of the beloved.

One of the most profound manifestations of the servant’s love for God and

God's love for the servant is expressed in the act of worship and devoted submission to Him. In his research on the mystical experience of Ibn 'Arabī, Lala (2022, 20–21) concludes that the act of raising empty hands—as a symbol of human impotence and absolute dependence upon God—at various positions within formal prayer demonstrates that the servant is incapable of performing even the most trivial of tasks without divine assistance. This act evokes a profound awareness of God's mercy in enabling the worshipper to undertake such acts of devotion, while simultaneously serving as a constant reminder of God's boundless mercy in granting the servant the capacity to fulfill all his or her duties and obligations.

Throughout the Sufi path of spiritual ascent, the wayfarer gradually embodies divine qualities. In this state, he serves as a living expression of how the Infinite Divine reveals itself through the finite nature of humanity. Such a manifestation symbolizes divine love (Kortas 2024, 187). Therefore, gratitude as an expression of love for God is more powerfully associated with an individual's personal and emotional understanding of God as the Most Compassionate Being than with a merely theological or doctrinal conception of a loving God (Watkins et al. 2024, 1).

Al-Fakhr al-Rāzī (1986a, 58) gives a philosophical view that supports a key idea in the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC): love of God. He states that, by nature (*fiṭrah*), the human soul wants to love Divine Majesty. When the soul focuses too much on the body and on pleasure or worldly matters, it blocks its urge to return to its true home, its real center. If a person works to remove these obstacles, the soul's pure nature shines through, and the barriers fall away. Then, the light of Divine Majesty appears inside. People are encouraged to strive for this, so they can feel—even a little—the joy of witnessing the Divine through knowledge. Once found, this joy grows stronger and brings happiness. It keeps drawing the soul back to God.

The views of Ibn 'Arabī and al-Fakhr al-Rāzī offer two different ways to understand divine love. Ibn 'Arabī sees love as the link between *al-Ḥaqq* (the Real) and its forms. For him, love is God turning toward Himself through creation, making love both cosmic and non-dual. Al-Fakhr al-Rāzī, by contrast, sees love through the lens of psychology and ethics. He believes love is the soul's natural pull toward divine perfection. This pull is blocked by attachment to the physical world, but it can be restored with spiritual growth. Despite their different approaches—ontological for Ibn 'Arabī and psychological for al-Fakhr al-Rāzī—both agree. They say love for God is basic and built into the universe's structure and the soul's original nature (*fiṭrah*).

A close look at the ideas of Ibn 'Arabī and al-Fakhr al-Rāzī reveals two unique yet mutually supportive models of divine love. Each helps the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC). Ibn 'Arabī's view focuses on love as the relationship between *al-Ḥaqq* (the Real) and what comes from it. Here, love is how God reveals Himself in creation, making it cosmic and non-dual. Al-Fakhr al-Rāzī, on the other hand, offers a psychological and ethical model. He sees love as a built-in tendency (*fiṭrah*) of the soul toward divine perfection. This love gets blocked by material attachment but can return through spiritual purification.

Love of Knowledge

The Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) cultivates an awareness that, through knowledge, human beings can unveil the grandeur of creation. This helps them discern the wisdom underlying the revealed law (*sharī'ah*). Deep engagement with the cosmos, history, and religious teachings leads to an inner experiential awareness. This awareness gives rise to a universal sense of divine love (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam 2025, 27).

Within the framework of the Divine Names, Ibn 'Arabī (2004, 224) articulates a Sufi foundation for why human beings are inclined to pursue knowledge. Dependence upon the Name *al-'Alīm* (the All-Knowing) leads to an awareness of one's need to determine how to emulate this divine attribute in practice. Thus, the human being recognizes his own limitations. He strives to understand the appropriate way to embody this attribute. To embody (*takballuq*) the Name *al-'Alīm* means that the servant acquires knowledge through personal effort and inquiry. This is achieved particularly through reflection and rational investigation, rather than through direct instruction from others. Such knowledge may be informed by observation, but the cognitive process ultimately comes from the self. In this way, one meaningfully emulates the attribute of *al-'Alīm*. This stands in contrast to divine knowledge, which is not acquired or learned, but is perfect and inherent from the outset.

According to Ibn 'Arabī (n.d., 473), those who lack a proper understanding of the spiritual path often claim that *ḥāl* (a transient spiritual state) is superior to knowledge, primarily because they do not truly comprehend the nature of *ḥāl*. In contrast, the great masters of Sufism seek refuge from such states in this world, as *ḥāl* may function as a significant veil (*ḥijāb*) that obscures deeper realization. Consequently, Sufi authorities distinguish between *ḥāl* as a divine bestowal (*mawhibah*) and *maqām* as the result of disciplined effort. This worldly life, in their view, is a domain of acquisition (*kasb*), not a realm for indulging in spiritual states. Effort elevates one's rank, whereas *ḥāl* may consume one's time without necessarily advancing one's station. Indeed, *ḥāl* is often regarded as a derivative of *maqām*—a state prematurely experienced before its proper attainment through gradual progression. For this reason, the true merit of *ḥāl* pertains to the Hereafter, while the excellence of knowledge and *maqām* extends to both this world and the next. This distinction is further underscored by the Qur'anic command addressed to the Prophet: Q.S. Ṭāhā [20]: 114, without any corresponding injunction to seek an increase in *ḥāl*. Thus, had those who privilege *ḥāl* over knowledge possessed a sound experiential understanding of the latter, they would not advance such a claim; rather, their position reflects a lack of attainment in both knowledge and authentic spiritual states.

Al-Fakhr al-Rāzī (1985, 24) explains that humans pursue knowledge because they experience its benefits. Before one has tasted the pleasure linked to power or capability, the desire for it is weak. Once experienced, however, this desire intensifies. Rāzī illustrates this with an analogy: a person might feel attracted after

hearing about someone beautiful, but direct encounter and intimacy deepen that attraction. Closer proximity strengthens longing. Similarly, with knowledge and power, the more one attains, the more one wants. Human desire for knowledge and power is unbounded. In contrast, the physical world is finite. Even if one gained full mastery, it would be insufficient. The same applies to knowledge: even after comprehending much, the urge for more persists, as what is unknown always exceeds what is known.

Al-Fakhr al-Rāzī (1999c, 171) maintains that if a person cannot properly understand religious knowledge except through travel, such travel becomes obligatory. During the Prophet's time, this was the case because the *shari'ah* was not yet fully established; new obligations and rulings could often emerge. Today, however, the Sharia has become stable and well-established. Thus, if one can acquire knowledge at home (*watan*), travel is no longer necessary. Nonetheless, the wording of the Q.S. At-Tawbah [9]: 122 highlights the importance of travel. It may be inferred that truly blessed and beneficial knowledge is often gained through journeying (*safar*).

On the other hand, al-Fakhr al-Rāzī (1999d, 484) provides a philosophical explanation for why Musa sought knowledge from Khidr, even after attaining prophethood. Through various expressions of humility, Moses shows a deep commitment to seeking knowledge. This attitude is fitting. The more a person's knowledge grows, the more they recognize the happiness and beauty found in knowledge. As a result, the desire to seek knowledge intensifies. One's reverence for those with knowledge also deepens. Human beings should not stop seeking knowledge, even after achieving a high status.

Al-Fakhr al-Rāzī (1999c, 154) lists several reasons for the variation in human intellectual capacities. He explains that these differences first arise from disparities in cognitive abilities. If people are equal in this way, the difference lies in their motivation to pursue knowledge. If motivation is equal, then it relates to perseverance in facing the challenges of learning. If equality persists, the distinction comes from temperament (*mizāj*). Some are sharp, excitable, and inclined to argue, while others are calm, composed, and receptive. If all these are equal, then differences result from external factors, such as access to knowledge, resources, time, and mental composure. If all these factors were identical, there would be no differences in knowledge and ignorance, acceptance and rejection, or objectivity and obstinacy. In short, human differences in knowledge and intellect come from cognitive ability, motivation, perseverance, character, and opportunity.

The thought of Ibn 'Arabī and al-Fakhr al-Rāzī on the human inclination toward knowledge forms a key foundation for the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC). Ibn 'Arabī sees the pursuit of knowledge as a spiritual process of drawing closer to God. Al-Rāzī sees it as a rational drive shaped by evolving experience. The KBC unites these views by teaching that knowledge is not just for acquisition. It is also a path through which people can appreciate creation and deepen their experience of divine love.

Love of the Environment

The Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) seeks to cultivate an understanding of the universe as a manifestation of divine love and majesty, thereby fostering attitudes of respect and care toward the environment. The human–nature relationship is framed not in transactional terms, but rather as one grounded in love and responsibility akin to self-regard. Furthermore, *sunnatullāh* is understood as a divinely ordained system of balance that must be preserved to sustain life. (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam 2025, 28)

Richardson et al. (2020, 835) emphasize that fostering a close relationship with nature and participating in simple nature-based activities enhances concern for environmental conservation. Further study indicates that interventions designed to strengthen emotional connectedness with nature are more effective in promoting conservation behavior than simply increasing the amount of time spent in natural environments. Meng and Si (2022, 20) state that ecological knowledge, positive attitudes, and emotional attachment to one's environment shape environmental appreciation. Environmental education, strong local identity, and supportive government policies are key to encouraging pro-environmental behavior and sustainability.

For Ibn 'Arabī (n.d., 382), the entirety of the cosmos is, in its essence, pure. However, when a condition designated as impurity (*najāsa*) arises by divine ordinance, such impurity is ascribed only to a particular locus in accordance with the prescriptions of the Sharia and within a specific contextual framework. Thus, impurity does not pertain to the essential nature of things but rather constitutes an accidental and contingent attribute. This view is grounded in the principle that whatever proceeds from *al-Quddūs* (the All-Holy) is intrinsically pure. Consequently, impurity is to be understood as a relative and derivative condition, not an ontological property. At the fundamental level, all existence is originally pure. Ibn 'Arabī (n.d.-a, 112) also says the cosmos matches the degrees of the Divine Names. Every Divine Name influences the world, with nothing in excess or lacking. The universe exists because of divine love.

Building on Ibn 'Arabī's perspective, it can be inferred that loving the environment is, in essence, an expression of love for God. The Divine Names are manifested within the entities that constitute the environment, and any transformation occurring within it reflects shifts in the manifestation of those Names. Thus, when human beings appreciate the beauty of the natural world, they are loving God as manifested through His Name *al-Jamīl* (the All-Beautiful).

Al-Fakhr al-Rāzī (1999a, 283) asserts that, from a rational perspective, loving the environment requires refraining from causing corruption (*fasād*) within it. Corruption includes the destruction of life (such as killing or harming), property (through theft, usurpation, or deceit), religion (through disbelief or deviation), lineage (through immoral acts or slander), and intellect (through substances or practices that impair reasoning). For al-Rāzī, these five elements—life, property, lineage, religion, and intellect—are the fundamental pillars of human welfare.

The Qur'anic injunction in Q.S. Al-A'raf [7]: 56 thus represents a comprehensive prohibition against all forms of harm. The phrase *after its rectification* indicates that the earth was created in a state of order and suitability for human benefit and should not be corrupted. This rectification is further reinforced by the *sending (irsāl)* of prophets and the revelation of scriptures, which provide normative guidance for human conduct. Therefore, adherence to these teachings is obligatory, as their rejection leads to disorder and corruption in a divinely ordered world. Such a condition is both theologically untenable and contrary to rational judgment.

The views of Ibn 'Arabī and al-Fakhr al-Rāzī on the environment present complementary ontological and rational-ethical frameworks. Ibn 'Arabī views nature as a sacred manifestation of the Divine Names, making love for the environment a theological expression of love for God. In contrast, al-Fakhr al-Rāzī frames environmental ethics through the prohibition of *fasād* and the preservation of the five essentials of human welfare. Despite their differing approaches, both converge on the principle that safeguarding the environment is integral to the human relationship with God, both as an expression of divine love and as a moral responsibility.

Within the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC), the perspectives of Ibn 'Arabī and al-Fakhr al-Rāzī are combined to provide students with both spiritual and ethical reasons for protecting the environment. Ibn 'Arabī's idea that nature reflects the Divine encourages students to develop a sense of respect and love for the world around them. Al-Fakhr al-Rāzī's teachings help students understand the responsibility to prevent harm. KBC brings these perspectives together to help learners see the environment as an expression of divine love, which must be kept in balance for life to flourish.

Love of Oneself and Others

The Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) teaches that humans are manifestations (*tajallī*) of divine love. Self-knowledge leads to knowledge of God and the fulfillment of one's divine potential. By cultivating self-compassion and social-emotional skills, learners become balanced both mentally and spiritually. Learning about human unity and diversity helps students absorb values like *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), virtuous character, and social ethics, which foster harmonious and civil relationships (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam 2025, 29–30).

Rinne et. al (2024, 10) explain why people feel stronger affection for those with close emotional bonds than for outsiders, while the neural mechanisms of affection are similar across relationships. Furthermore, their findings clarify why traditions such as Christianity and Buddhism use terms like neighborly love and loving-kindness to describe benevolence, even though these emotions are typically less intense than love in intimate relationships. Additionally, the gradual activation of reward-related brain regions in different forms of love supports the idea that human altruism stems from offspring-care instincts. Finally, emotional attachment to pets further suggests that interspecies love can resemble human interpersonal love at the neural level.

According to Ibn 'Arabī (2004, 213–14) in *Kashf al-Ma'nā*, people should show compassion because they must embody the divine Name *al-Raḥmān* (The All-Merciful). To do so is similar, but not equal, to embodying the Name *Allāh*. *Al-Raḥmān* means universal mercy, as shown in Q.S. Al-A'rāf [7]: 156. This mercy connects all beings and encourages them to treat each other with care and kindness. Every being also expresses self-regard through this mercy. Practicing *takballuq* means serving others with compassion, without discrimination, as long as it fits within the Shari'a.

In essence, love (*mawaddah*) between spouses serves as a stabilizing principle in marriage, sustaining the relationship and facilitating procreation. Compassion (*rahmah*), by contrast, refers to the tenderness and mutual care experienced by each partner, through which they develop a sense of longing and tranquility in one another's presence. The wife's longing for her husband may be likened to that of a part toward its whole, a branch toward its origin, or a stranger toward its homeland. Conversely, the husband's longing for his wife resembles that of a whole toward its part—through which it attains completion—and that of an origin toward its branch, from which it extends. Through the interplay of *mawaddah* and *rahmah*, each partner seeks and complements the other, culminating in their union, from which offspring emerge. God designates this phenomenon as a sign (*āyah*) for those who reflect. Thus, when marriage gives rise to tranquility, love, and compassion, it signifies divine will toward union. Conversely, when tranquility diminishes, love wanes, and compassion fades, the relationship correspondingly deteriorates and loses its original harmony ('Arabī, n.d.-a, 428; Ghurāb 1989, 347).

The verse, “*And He has placed between your affection (mawaddah) and mercy (rahmah)*” (Q.S. Ar-Rūm [30]: 21), highlights a distinction between love and compassion. Al-Fakhr al-Rāzī (1999f, 92) presents several interpretations: some say *mawaddah* refers to the bond between spouses, while *rahmah* is linked to children. Others believe *mawaddah* arises when one needs another; *rahmah* emerges when someone needs you. For example, a person loves his child out of attachment but helps an enemy in distress out of compassion, not love. Al-Fakhr al-Rāzī also notes that marriage is rooted in harmony (*tajānis*), which brings tranquility (*sakīnah*). From this harmony arises both love and compassion as key aspects of human relationships.

Al-Fakhr al-Rāzī (1999f, 92) says *mawaddah* comes first and becomes *rahmah*. Even as spouses age or fall ill, care and protection remain. The phrase indeed, in that are signs has two meanings: first, the creation of spouses shows divine power; second, the love and compassion between them is also a sign. The first meaning highlights human creation as proof of divine power and knowledge, even in childbirth, which, without divine help, would be dangerous. The second meaning is similar: compassion among spouses often exceeds that among relatives. Since sexual desire can fade but compassion endures, this compassion must come from God. If relationships depended only on desire, they would quickly end due to anger or change. Enduring compassion, which leads people to protect their families in hardship, is a divine gift that can be understood through reflection.

The thought of Ibn ‘Arabī and al-Fakhr al-Rāzī on love shows two complementary views: one rooted in Sufi metaphysics, the other in rational philosophy. Ibn ‘Arabī sees compassion as an expression of Divine Mercy (*al-Raḥmān*) that connects all beings. For him, love and compassion go beyond personal relationships; they are cosmic principles reflecting the Divine. Compassion, as part of *takhalluq* (internalizing divine attributes), is inclusive and non-discriminatory.

In contrast, al-Fakhr al-Rāzī offers a structural and psychological view. He sees *mawaddah* as love based on need and intimacy, and *raḥmah* as compassion that responds to others’ needs. He highlights how *mawaddah* develops into *raḥmah*, showing that marital relations are based not just on desire but on harmony (*tajānis*), which brings tranquility (*sakīnah*). Ibn ‘Arabī views compassion as a metaphysical principle behind all relationships, while al-Rāzī sees it as a rational, relational force in human life. Both agree that *raḥmah* is more than emotion; it is a divine gift that sustains relationships and shows the Divine’s presence in society.

The ideas of Ibnu Arabi and Fakhr al-Din al-Razi on *mawaddah* and *raḥmah* provide a strong foundation for the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC). Ibn ‘Arabī views compassion as an expression of universal divine mercy, seeing humans as reflecting divine love. This supports an inclusive, compassionate ethic. Al-Rāzī explains that human relationships progress from *mawaddah* to *raḥmah* and are grounded in a harmony that leads to *sakīnah*. Thus, love shifts from emotion to ongoing ethical commitment.

Love of the Homeland

The Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) seeks to instill a love of the homeland as an integral dimension of faith by reinforcing *ukhuwah waṭaniyyah* (national solidarity) and internalizing the principle *ḥubb al-waṭan min al-īmān*. This orientation is actualized through respect for ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity within a unifying framework, as well as through active contributions to safeguarding national sovereignty and advancing societal development (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam 2025, 30).

Ali (2021, 125) argues that patriotism aligns with the objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah*) in advancing human welfare. While love for the homeland is generally regarded as *mubāḥ* (permissible), it may become obligatory when the state encounters threats that necessitate the preservation of public welfare and the protection of human life. Bitschnau and Mußotter (2024, 71) argue that understanding patriotism and nationalism is essential to address the complex relationship between the nation as an imagined entity and the individuals who form their identities through it. Finally, Ficek (2021, 109) concludes that patriotism is principally understood as love of the homeland, manifested mostly in national life and cultivated through both national and religious education within humanity. Fundamentally, patriotism is rooted in love for God, which subsequently radiates toward all members of society and the structures of the nation-state. Genuine love for the homeland is grounded in a profound attachment to everything that emerges from one’s own identity—namely, what is authentic and local—without

being confined by space and time. Therefore, the creative force of true patriotism represents one of the highest forms of love.

Ibn 'Arabī (2001, 279–80) gives several Qur'anic spiritual and logical reasons why people feel a natural love for their homeland. First, from a logical point of view, it is natural for people to feel close to their homeland. For example, Hippocrates said that sick people recover better with medicine from their own country because people are drawn to what they love and return to what gives them life.

Second, the Qur'anic perspective underscores the profound attachment of humans to their origin. God states: "*If We had prescribed for them, 'Kill yourselves' or 'Leave your homes,' they would not have done so, except for a few among them*" (Q.S. An-Nisā' [4]: 66). This equates exile from one's homeland with self-destruction because of its severity. The verse "*Why should we not fight in the way of God when we have been driven out of our homes and our children?*" (Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 246) also highlights the deep emotional and existential bond between humans and their homeland.

Third, various ethical maxims further affirm this inclination: maturity of intellect is reflected in one's longing for one's birthplace and attachment to one's native land; without such love, societies would fall into ruin and neglect; and among the signs of wisdom are kindness toward others, attachment to one's homeland, and the ability to adapt within one's social context. The sages often liken those who live in foreign lands to orphans, afflicted by misfortune and deprived of the protection and care of both father and mother.

On the other hand, al-Fakhr al-Rāzī (1999g, 300) offers a Qur'anic–Sufistic interpretation of *watan* (homeland). In his view, God is the ultimate homeland. He interprets the verse, "*And that you worship Me—this is the straight path*" (Q.S. Yāsīn [36]: 61), by likening people to travelers (*musāfir*). There are two conditions: (1) a traveler returning home, and (2) a traveler as a merchant. In both cases, the final destination is God. Those returning home seek enduring security. Yet only God offers true and everlasting sovereignty. Worldly dominions are transient, so their safety is not lasting. By contrast, God's sovereignty is eternal, and all else perishes. Based on this, God becomes the true homeland and final abode. As merchants, people seek destinations where their efforts yield profit. God promises that righteous deeds will be rewarded generously. Thus, God is also the aim of this commercial journey. In conclusion, God is the ultimate end of all human journeys, and worship is the act of turning toward Him. Whoever sets a clear goal, oriented to God, is on the straight path.

The picture of a person as a traveler shows that life is a journey with a goal: God. Going back to the 'homeland' means returning to our true beginning: God. Just as loving our birthplace gives us comfort, reaching our true homeland means walking the straight path God sets out.

From a philosophical perspective, the essence of the human soul (*rūḥ*) does not belong to physical things that are created, decay, or can be divided. Rather, the soul belongs to angelic realities, the celestial realm, and beings of purity. When the soul attaches to the body, it focuses on managing physical functions, forgetting its

original *waṭan* (homeland) and true abode. It then resembles the body: its strength and capacity diminish, and it loses the ability to attain higher realities. If the soul focuses on *maʿrifat Allāh* (knowledge of God) and love for Him, and is not absorbed in bodily concerns, it gains an influx of celestial light. The soul is then strengthened and can influence the material world, as celestial spirits do. This state is called *karāmah* (spiritual distinction or miraculous grace) (Rāzī 1999e, 436).

Al-Fakhr al-Rāzī (1999g, 430–31) explains in Q.S. Az-Zumar [39]: 10, arguing that no one is excused from pursuing righteous action. He refutes the claim that attachment to homeland justifies neglect, reminding us that God’s earth is vast and full of places fit for worship. Therefore, individuals should migrate if needed to environments more conducive to devotion, following prophets and the righteous who emigrated for greater piety. Ultimately, good deeds and obedience are the truest expression of love for one’s ultimate homeland, God—even if this means leaving one’s physical homeland. Still, al-Fakhr al-Rāzī (1999a, 339) acknowledges, in agreement with rational thinkers, that leaving one’s homeland and familiar comforts is among the hardest experiences.

The thought of Ibn ‘Arabī and Fakhr al-Din al-Razi on *waṭan* reveals two complementary approaches. Ibn ‘Arabī emphasizes a mystical–ontological dimension: love of the homeland expresses the human being’s longing for God as its origin. Al-Rāzī treats the concept within a rational–teleological framework, seeing God as the ultimate end of human existence, attainable through effort, obedience, and spiritual purification. Despite these differences, both conclude that love for the true homeland is, in essence, love for God as both origin and end of human existence.

The Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) teaches that loving one’s homeland is part of faith, expressed through national unity, respect for differences, and service to the community. This aligns with the views of Ibn Arabi and Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, who see the homeland as both a longing for God (our real home) and the final aim in life. The KBC uses these ideas by teaching that love for our physical homeland should connect to a deeper love for God as our true home.

Conclusion

The perspectives of Ibn Arabi and Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, taken together, offer a comprehensive and integrative framework for understanding love as a foundational principle in Islamic thought and education. While Ibn ‘Arabī articulates love within an ontological–metaphysical paradigm—where love functions as the very principle of divine self-disclosure (*tajallī*) and the unifying link between *al-Ḥaqq* and creation—al-Rāzī develops a rational, psychological, and ethical model, situating love within the dynamics of the human soul, moral responsibility, and teleological orientation toward divine perfection. Despite these epistemological differences, both converge on the assertion that love is inherent to the structure of existence and the primordial nature (*fiṭrah*) of the human being.

This convergence appears across several domains: epistemology (the theory of knowledge), ecology (the study of the relationships between living things and their

environments), social ethics (principles guiding human interpersonal conduct), and spirituality (the search for ultimate meaning). In the pursuit of knowledge, love acts as a spiritual ascent, as Ibn 'Arabī describes, and as a rational motivation, as al-Rāzī explains. Within environmental ethics, love becomes reverence for nature as a sign of the divine and a moral imperative to prevent *fasād* (corruption or harm). In social relations, through *mawaddah* (affectionate love) and *rahmah* (compassionate mercy), love shifts from emotional attachment to a lasting ethical commitment rooted in divine mercy. Similarly, *waṭan* (homeland) is reinterpreted as both an existential longing for God and the ultimate goal of human life.

Within this framework, the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) emerges as a pedagogical synthesis that unifies metaphysical and ethical insights into a single educational paradigm. This approach reimagines education as a transformative process that fosters spiritual awareness, ethical responsibility, ecological consciousness, and social harmony, rather than simply transmitting knowledge. The study shows that divine love is not just a theological concept; it is a foundational principle with the potential to holistically reshape contemporary Islamic education.

It is recommended to bring together Sufi metaphysics and rational theology in educational theory and to examine more examples than just Ibn Arabi and Fakhr al-Din al-Razi. On a practical level, the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) should be implemented through step-by-step lessons covering spiritual, ethical, and environmental topics. Teachers should participate in training programs to better understand and teach these ideas. Also, incorporating values of love and compassion across all subjects is important for helping students develop a well-rounded view. Continued research is needed to determine whether KBC helps students grow in character, care for the environment, and develop spiritually.

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