

## Between Algorithm and Ijtihad: The Epistemic Limits of Artificial Intelligence in Qur'anic Scholarship

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### Abstract:

The advancement of Artificial Intelligence in the contemporary period has profoundly reshaped numerous dimensions of human civilization, including the field of Qur'anic scholarship and exegesis. While AI improves accessibility and effectiveness in the examination of sacred texts, it simultaneously generates epistemological, theological, and ethical questions concerning interpretive authority, the legitimacy of derived meanings, and the risk of diminishing the spiritual essence of the Qur'an. This study seeks to investigate the role of Artificial Intelligence within the epistemological framework of Qur'anic exegesis and to evaluate its theological and ethical consequences within Islamic intellectual discourse. The research adopts a qualitative, library-based methodology grounded in a critical hermeneutic perspective, examined through the lens of tafsīr epistemology and maqāṣid al-sharī'ah. The results reveal that Artificial Intelligence operates as a supplementary epistemic tool with the capacity to broaden linguistic examination, intertextual analysis, and the systematic organization of tafsīr resources. Nevertheless, Artificial Intelligence is deficient in historical awareness, moral deliberation, and purposeful engagement with meaning, all of which constitute indispensable components of Islamic interpretive epistemology. Consequently, interpretive authority continues to reside within human agency, as the interpreter who synthesizes divine revelation, rational inquiry, and socio-cultural realities. The application of Artificial Intelligence in the interpretation of the Qur'an must be consonant with the principles of *hifẓ al-dīn* and *hifẓ al-'aql* in order to uphold the sanctity of religious doctrine and the intellectual integrity of Islamic scholarly tradition.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, *Tafsīr* Epistemology, Qur'anic Interpretation, Islamic Ethics.

## Introduction

The Fourth Industrial Revolution has posed considerable challenges as communities navigate an increasingly intricate and interconnected global landscape.<sup>1</sup> The rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has profoundly shaped numerous fields, among them education, economics, healthcare, and industry.<sup>2</sup> In 2022, OpenAI launched ChatGPT, a conversational application that draws upon information gathered from academic journals, articles, and digital news platforms. By processing data and synthesizing knowledge, the system is able to deliver swift and precise answers to user questions based on information it has previously learned.<sup>3</sup> Beyond this, Artificial Intelligence exhibits the capacity to address complex problems and devise solutions that advance technological progress, human growth, and the well-being of society. Since its origins, the core purpose of Artificial Intelligence has remained unchanged—the creation of machines capable of replicating human intellectual and cognitive functions.<sup>4</sup>

In contemporary times, these developments have also reshaped the social and religious fabric of communities. Interaction patterns that were once considered traditional have progressively given way to more modern forms of engagement.<sup>5</sup> This shift is evident in the growing influence of Artificial Intelligence, particularly within the domain of sacred text analysis.<sup>6</sup> Research conducted by Dedo Williams suggests that Artificial Intelligence has assumed a notable role in textual examination, scholarly inquiry, and the interpretation of sacred scriptures.<sup>7</sup> In a similar vein, Farzan Madadzadeh contends that Artificial Intelligence can serve as a more advanced analytical instrument for uncovering deeper and more intricate meanings within Qur'anic verses.<sup>8</sup>

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- <sup>1</sup> Gina Paola Barrera Castro et al., "Harnessing AI for Education 4.0: Drivers of Personalized Learning," *Electronic Journal of e-Learning* 22, no. 5 (2024): 1–14.
  - <sup>2</sup> Putri Sofiatul Maola, Indira Syifa Karai Handak, and Yusuf Tri Herlambang, "Penerapan Artificial Intelligence Dalam Pendidikan Di Era Revolusi Industri 4.0," *Educatio: Jurnal Ilmu Kependidikan* 19, no. 1 (2024): 61–72.
  - <sup>3</sup> Firouzeh Taghikhah et al., *Artificial Intelligence and Sustainability: Solutions to Social and Environmental Challenges*, *Artificial Intelligence and Data Science in Environmental Sensing* (Elsevier Inc., 2022), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-323-90508-4.00006-X>.
  - <sup>4</sup> Margaret A., Goralski, and Tay Keong Tan, "Artificial Intelligence and Sustainable Development," *The International Journal of Management Education* 18, no. 1 (2020).
  - <sup>5</sup> Taghikhah et al., *Artificial Intelligence and Sustainability: Solutions to Social and Environmental Challenges*.
  - <sup>6</sup> Yuli Andriansyah, "The Current Rise of Artificial Intelligence and Religious Studies : Some Reflections Based on ChatGPT," *Millah: Journal of Religious Studies* 21, no. 1 (2023).
  - <sup>7</sup> Dedo Williams Johannes Yao, "The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Shaping Religion and Social Studies," *Convergence Chronicles* 5, no. 1 (2024): 334–342, <https://globalweb1.com/index.php/ojs/article/view/1%0Ahttps://globalweb1.com/index.php/ojs/article/download/1/151>.
  - <sup>8</sup> Farzan Madadzadeh and Sajjad Bahariniya, "The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Understanding and Interpreting the Quran," *JCHR: Journal of Community Health Research* 12, no. 2 (2024): 310–311.

The use of technology in the context of Islamic ethics is guided by a normative framework rooted in *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, *‘adl*, and *iḥsān*.<sup>9</sup> The incorporation of Artificial Intelligence into Qur’anic scholarship may yield *maṣlaḥah* when used to enrich academic discourse and broaden access to knowledge, yet it risks producing *mafsadah* if treated as the ultimate authority in matters of interpretation.<sup>10</sup> In light of this, the present study regards Artificial Intelligence as a supplementary epistemic tool rather than a replacement for the role of the *ulama* and the broader Islamic scholarly tradition in engaging with the Qur’an in the modern age.

Scholarship on Artificial Intelligence from an Islamic standpoint has grown considerably and may be grouped into two prevailing orientations: normative-legal inquiry and technological-utilitarian inquiry. Normative-legal scholarship tends to approach Artificial Intelligence as a subject of Islamic jurisprudence, with an emphasis on ethical legitimacy, moral frameworks, and the legal governance of technological practice. Mulki Firdaus Alamsyah examines the ethical dimensions of AI within Islamic legal thought,<sup>11</sup> E. Haikcal Firdan El-Hady underscores the importance of Islamic ethics in steering the use of technology,<sup>12</sup> and Sudirman investigates the relationship between Islamic law and AI in navigating ethical, legal, and practical concerns.<sup>13</sup> Although these studies offer valuable perspectives on the regulatory and moral aspects of AI, they remain largely normative in nature and do not address the epistemological consequences of AI in Qur’anic interpretation — such as its potential bearing on the construction of meaning, hermeneutical authority, or interpretative reasoning.

By contrast, technology-oriented scholarship emphasizes the practical deployment of Artificial Intelligence as an analytical instrument in the study of Qur’anic texts. Moh. Mauluddin examines the prospects and obstacles of integrating AI into Qur’anic studies,<sup>14</sup> Abu Bakar explores the connections between Qur’anic teachings and foundational AI concepts through thematic inquiry,<sup>15</sup> and Opi Yensi critically assesses AI technologies—particularly chatbot platforms such as ChatGPT

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<sup>9</sup> Uthman Mohammed Mustapha Kannike and Abdulgafar Olawale Fahm, “Exploring the Ethical Governance of Artificial Intelligence from an Islamic Ethical Perspective,” *Jurnal Fiqh* 22, no. 1 (2025): 134–161.

<sup>10</sup> Lukman Hakim and Muhamad Risqil Azizi, “Otoritas Fatwa Keagamaan dalam Konteks Era Kecerdasan Buatan (Artificial Intelligence/AI),” *Ar-Risalah: Media Keislaman, Pendidikan dan Hukum Islam* 21, no. 2 (2023): 164–174.

<sup>11</sup> Mulki Firdaus Alamsyah and Ahmad Remanda, “Ethics of the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the Paradigm of Islamic Law,” *Sicopus: Solo International Collaboration and Publication of Social Sciences and Humanities* 4, no. 1 (2026): 91–104.

<sup>12</sup> Sudirman, Sutiah, and Supriyono, “Islamic Law in the Era of Artificial Intelligence : A Systematic Literature Review,” *International Journal of Engineering, Science and Information Technology* 5, no. 4 (2025): 321–328.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Moh. Mauluddin, “Kontribusi Artificial Intelligence (AI) Pada Studi Al-Qur’an di Era Digital; Peluang Dan Tantangan,” *Madinah: Jurnal Studi Islam* 11, no. 1 (2024): 99–113.

<sup>15</sup> Abubakar and Arif Ridha, “Al-Qur’an dan Kecerdasan Buatan (Suatu Kajian Tematik),” *AlWajid: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur’an dan Tafsir* 5, no. 2 (2024): 190–203.

and Meta AI—in supporting Qur’anic scholarship.<sup>16</sup> Further studies address the digitalization of Qur’anic exegesis and the reconfiguration of interpretative authority in the digital age, including Abd Basid’s work on AI-assisted contextual interpretation<sup>17</sup> and Mohd Shafiq bin Sahimi’s research on safeguarding the authenticity of interpretation.<sup>18</sup> While such studies advance technical efficiency and analytical capacity, they frequently neglect the theological, ethical, and epistemological consequences—particularly the manner in which AI may alter the structure of interpretative authority and the dynamics among text, interpreter, and socio-cultural setting.

Taken together, these trends reveal a substantial gap in the existing literature. Normative studies offer essential ethical and legal direction yet fall short in accounting for AI’s function as an epistemic agent within Qur’anic interpretation. Technological studies strengthen analytical capabilities yet give insufficient attention to AI’s impact on interpretative authority and the generation of meaning. This gap highlights the need for scholarship that situates AI within the epistemological framework of Qur’anic exegesis, exploring its potential as a complementary instrument while critically interrogating its theological and ethical implications. In response to this gap, the present study seeks to embed AI within the epistemological structure of Qur’anic interpretation, thereby contributing to a richer and more nuanced understanding of both technological innovation and Islamic scholarly tradition.

Accordingly, this study aims to address the identified gap by situating Artificial Intelligence within the epistemological perspective of Qur’anic interpretation and examining its theological and ethical ramifications within Islamic thought. Building on this foundation, the study seeks to analyze the position of Artificial Intelligence in the epistemology of Qur’anic exegesis, along with the theological and ethical implications of Islamic principles in the application of Artificial Intelligence to interpretative practice. The originality of this research lies in its analysis of Artificial Intelligence as an epistemic entity within the structure of meaning production in Qur’anic interpretation, employing a critical hermeneutical approach alongside the ethical framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah*.

This study adopts a qualitative library-based research design grounded in a critical philosophical hermeneutic approach, enabling reflective examination of meaning production by taking into account historical context, scholarly tradition, and epistemic power structures within Qur’anic interpretative practices. The data sources

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<sup>16</sup> Opi Yensi, Dina Istiqomah, and Laksamana Naufal Hadi, “Penggunaan Artifical Intellegance (AI) dalam Kajian Al-Qur’an: Analisis Atas Potensi dan Keterbatasannya,” *Istinarah: Riset Keagamaan, Sosial dan Budaya* 7, no. 1 (2025): 87–99.

<sup>17</sup> Abd Basid et al., “Teks Kitab Suci Dan Mesin : Menakar Kerja Mesin Kecerdasan Buatan Dalam Memfasilitasi Pemahaman Al-Qur’an,” *Ta’wiluna: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur’an, Tafsir dan Pemikiran Islam* 5, no. 3 (2024): 641–653.

<sup>18</sup> Mohamad Fikri Mohd Bakri Muhammad Hazim Mohd Azhar, Khadher Ahmad, and Muhammad Ikhlas Rosele, “Ethics and Limits of Artificial Intelligence ( AI ) in Quranic Exegesis According to the Epistemological Framework of Islamic Knowledge,” *QURANICA, International Journal of Quranic Research* 14, no. Special Issue (2025): 97–124.

are drawn from both primary and secondary materials. Primary sources consist of selected works of Qur'anic exegesis spanning classical, modern, and contemporary traditions, chosen on the basis of their scholarly significance, methodological diversity, and relevance to the study of Artificial Intelligence in textual interpretation. Secondary sources encompass academic articles, books, and documents that address Artificial Intelligence in Islamic studies, philosophy of technology, epistemology, and Islamic ethics.

Data collection is carried out through a systematic documentary study, reviewed both thematically and chronologically. Data analysis proceeds through three operational stages. The first involves epistemological mapping to identify the assumptions, roles, and limitations of Artificial Intelligence within Qur'anic interpretative practices. The second involves comparative analysis to examine the similarities and differences between traditional exegesis and AI-assisted interpretation, with a focus on meaning production and interpretative authority. The third involves critical reflection to assess the ethical and theological implications through the lens of the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* framework, drawing on insights from hermeneutics, Islamic epistemology, and the philosophy of technology. Analytical rigor and validity are maintained through theoretical triangulation, which integrates multiple perspectives to yield thorough and well-reasoned interpretations.

### Artificial Intelligence as an Epistemic Instrument in Qur'anic Interpretation

In the realm of Qur'anic interpretation, Artificial Intelligence occupies the role of an epistemic tool rather than an interpretive agent. Its application within Qur'anic scholarship is confined to a supplementary analytical capacity and does not serve as an arbiter of meaning.<sup>19</sup> Through linguistic and semantic analysis, Artificial Intelligence may aid scholars in detecting patterns of language, nuanced semantic content, and cross-referential connections among Qur'anic verses.<sup>20</sup> In this regard, Artificial Intelligence is restricted to the technical examination of linguistic structures and inter-verse connections, falling short of grasping the deeper significations or the spiritual dimensions of the Qur'an. This is in accordance with the findings of Muhammad Andryan Fitryansyah, who demonstrates that while Artificial Intelligence improves the efficiency and accessibility of Islamic textual scholarship, an overdependence on such technology risks eroding conventional interpretive approaches and may undermine contextual richness and spiritual integrity.<sup>21</sup> This view resonates with Campbell's contention that religious values, communal traditions, and group identity mediate engagement with technology and

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<sup>19</sup> Rey Ty, "Impact of AI-Powered Technology on Religious Practices and Ethics: The Road Ahead," *Asian Research Center For Religion and Social Communication* 21, no. 2 (2023): 339–374.

<sup>20</sup> Madadzadeh and Bahariniya, "The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Understanding and Interpreting the Quran."

<sup>21</sup> Muhammad Andryan Fitryansyah and Fatimah Nur Fauziah, "Bridging Tradition and Technology: AI in the Interpretation of Nusantara Religious Manuscripts," *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan* 22, no. 2 (2024): 317–346.

shape the meanings it yields.<sup>22</sup> Such a position simultaneously guards against the misappropriation of algorithmic systems and reaffirms that Qur'anic interpretation remains a morally human undertaking in engaging with the divine text.

These epistemological ramifications confirm that Artificial Intelligence is incapable of supplanting the mufassir as the interpretive subject. Within Islamic exegetical epistemology, interpretive legitimacy is rooted in the synthesis of divine revelation, rational inquiry, and the lived historical experience of the interpreter.<sup>23</sup> Artificial Intelligence functions primarily at the syntactic and statistical levels; as Luciano Floridi explains, AI systems manipulate symbols without grasping meaning in semantic or existential terms.<sup>24</sup> Consequently, the deployment of Artificial Intelligence in Qur'anic exegesis ought to be treated as an auxiliary instrument operating within the bounds of human epistemic authority. This stance is consistent with the Extended Mind Theory advanced by Clark and Chalmers, which conceives of technology as an extension of human cognitive faculties in a supplementary capacity, while the acts of comprehension and meaning-construction remain the province of the human thinking subject.<sup>25</sup>

Moreover, al-Suyūṭī maintains that the legitimacy of an interpretation is determined by its epistemological sources (maṣādir al-ma'rifah), its methodological approach (manhaj), and the epistemic authority it invokes.<sup>26</sup> The tafsīr tradition holds that interpretive validity rests upon the integrated use of the Qur'an, hadith, athar, rational reasoning, and historical context.<sup>27</sup> This framework corresponds to Muhammad Abid al-Jābirī's epistemological tripartite of bayānī, burhānī, and 'irfānī, according to which a valid tafsīr must demonstrate accountability at the textual, rational, and ethico-spiritual levels.<sup>28</sup> Following Hans-Georg Gadamer, understanding of the Qur'anic text arises through a merging of horizons between the text, its interpreter, and historical circumstance, necessitating existential engagement, fidelity to tradition, and critical pre-understanding.<sup>29</sup> Ali further

<sup>22</sup> Heidi Campbell, *Exploring Religious Community Online: We Are One in the Network* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2005).

<sup>23</sup> Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh Az-Zarkashī, *Al-Burhān Fī 'Ulūm Al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1988).

<sup>24</sup> Luciano Floridi, *The Fourth Revolution: How the Infosphere Is Reshaping Human Reality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>25</sup> Andy Clark and David Chalmers, "The Extended Mind," *Analysis* 58, no. 1 (1998): 7–19.

<sup>26</sup> Jalāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Itqān Fī 'Ulūm Al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2014).

<sup>27</sup> Abdullah Saeed, *Interpreting The Qur'an Towards a Contemporary Approach* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

<sup>28</sup> Muhammad 'Ābid Al-Jabirī, *Bunyah Al-'Aql Al-'Arabī: Dirasah Taḥlīlīyah Naqdiyyah Li Nizām Al-Ma'rifah Fī Al-Ṭaqāfah Al-'Arabiyyah* (Beirut: Markaz Dirāsah al-Waḥdah al-'Arabiyyah, 1986).

<sup>29</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, Terj. Ahmad Sahidah (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2020).

cautions that Artificial Intelligence carries a risk of misrepresenting Islamic teachings, expressing concern over the automation of matters pertaining to faith.<sup>30</sup>

The integration of Artificial Intelligence into Qur'anic interpretation gives rise to deeper theological and ethical tensions, particularly in relation to theological principles that uphold human reason as a divine gift and ethical norms rooted in Islamic values such as justice and truthfulness.<sup>31</sup> Husain al-Dzahabi contends that Qur'anic interpretation depends on scholarly authority, moral uprightness, and an awareness of the revelatory context.<sup>32</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer likewise explains that textual understanding invariably involves a dialogical exchange between the horizon of the text and that of the reader.<sup>33</sup> As such, the normative and hermeneutical dimensions of Qur'anic interpretation remain contingent upon human reflection, reason, and sensitivity. Within the Islamic tradition, the Qur'an is held to be the uncreated and eternal speech of God, with interpretation anchored in reverence for the Divine, scholarly propriety and discipline, and sacred knowledge as both an ethical and epistemological cornerstone.<sup>34</sup>

In light of this, Artificial Intelligence may function as a technological medium that broadens interpretive possibilities through semantic mapping, intertextual analysis, and large-scale data processing. Nevertheless, given that AI lacks historical consciousness and ethical accountability, its outputs must be subjected to critical scrutiny and verification by human interpreters. Mahdi Kais further observes that, even when theologically oriented, AI tends to produce shallow interpretations that may deviate from established hermeneutical standards. The system remains unable to grasp the Qur'an's multifaceted layers of meaning, encompassing legal rulings, mystical dimensions, and ethical guidance, that have been safeguarded through centuries of tafsīr scholarship.<sup>35</sup>

### Artificial Intelligence, Meaning Production, and Interpretive Authority

In the domain of Qur'anic exegesis, the production of meaning cannot be separated from questions of interpretive authority and scholarly legitimacy.<sup>36</sup> The

<sup>30</sup> Ali Talib Maha, Zainab Abdullah Habtiter, Hazem Adnan Ahmed, and Yassin Khudair Mijbel, "Employing Artificial Intelligence Applications in the Service of Islamic Religion and Belief," *International Conference on Intelligent Systems* (2025): 167–176.

<sup>31</sup> Junaid Nadir and Amana Raquel, "Artificial Intelligence and the Qur'an: A Theological Analysis of Machine Learning and Ethical Challenges," *Al-Awan* 1, no. 2 (2023): 34–47.

<sup>32</sup> Muḥammad Sayyid Ḥusain al-Dhahabī, *Tafsīr Wa Al-Mufasssirūn* (Kairo: Maktabah wa Habbah, n.d.).

<sup>33</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London: Continuum, 1975).

<sup>34</sup> Ahmad, Hishomudin and Norfarhana Ahmad Ghafar, "AI as Interpretive Aid in Qur'anic Stylistics: Ethical Foundations for Digital Hermeneutics," *International Journal of Arts and Social Science* 8, no. 9 (2025): 9–24.

<sup>35</sup> Mahdi Kais Abdulkarim Al-Janabi, "Artificial Intelligence in Quranic Exegesis: A Critical Analytical Study of ChatGPT Technology," *QURANICA: International Journal of Quranic Research* 16, no. 2 (2024): 112–144.

<sup>36</sup> Agung Nugroho Reformis Santono, Anshori, and Nginayaturrohmah, "Penafsiran Al-Qur'an: Mencari Keseimbangan Antara Teks Dan Konteks Dalam Menafsirkan Al-Qur'an," *Nun: Jurnal Studi Al Qur'an dan Tafsir di Nusantara* 10, no. 2 (2024): 124–142.

integration of Artificial Intelligence into tafsīr practice carries significant consequences for these dynamics, especially concerning how meaning is constructed and how interpretive authority is allocated. Dilthey argues that understanding a text is deeply intertwined with the interpreter's subjectivity and their embeddedness in a particular historical moment.<sup>37</sup> Gadamer further contends that meaning arises from the meeting of the text's horizon and that of the interpreter, what he terms *Horizontverschmelzung*.<sup>38</sup> This encounter necessarily involves historical consciousness, pre-existing prejudices (*Vorurteil*), and the interpreter's lived existential experience as constitutive elements of genuine understanding. Artificial Intelligence, by contrast, possesses no such historical or existential horizons. Its outputs amount to a reassembly of patterns drawn from existing tafsīr collections, translations, and broader Islamic textual sources.<sup>39</sup> This situation can give rise to an appearance of objectivity, since AI-generated interpretations seem neutral and methodical, yet they are inherently shaped by selective datasets and particular epistemological presuppositions. As a result, interpretive authority migrates away from scholarly expertise toward the technological credibility of algorithms, risking the erosion of critique, contextualization, and interpretive accountability.

A further consequence of this configuration is a reconfiguration of the relationship among subject, text, and interpretive authority. Farid Essack argues that interpretive authority is always grounded in the interpreter's capacity to navigate the historical gap between the text and the contemporary moment through methodologically self-aware reflection.<sup>40</sup> By contrast, AI's production of meaning operates through probabilistic mechanisms that detect recurring linguistic and conceptual patterns within available Islamic textual data. Rather than generating new meaning through genuine historical engagement, AI tends to reinforce dominant interpretations already enshrined within the canonical written tafsīr tradition. Consequently, AI-mediated interpretation gravitates toward affirming mainstream Islamic thought while limiting the space for critical, contextual, and emancipatory readings that arise when an interpreter actively engages with particular social realities.

This situation stands in marked contrast to the tafsīr tradition across both classical and contemporary periods. Qur'anic interpretation has historically been deeply responsive to the social, political, and cultural conditions surrounding the mufasssīr. Tafsīr functions as a contested terrain, mirroring the interpreter's engagement with the realities of their era.<sup>41</sup> As an illustration, in classical tafsīr, Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī reads Q.S. al-Aḥzāb verse 57 as a condemnation of idol-making,

<sup>37</sup> Wilhelm Dilthey, *The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences*, ed. Rudolf A. Makkreel, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002).

<sup>38</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*.

<sup>39</sup> Rosa Lestari, Ludfi, and Suhaili, "The Crisis of Knowledge Authority in Quranic Interpretation: Reflections on the Philosophy of Science on Misinformation in The Era of Social Media," *Almubin: Islamic Scientific Journal* 8, no. 1 (2025): 107–118.

<sup>40</sup> Farid Essack, *Qur'an, Liberation, & Pluralism: An Islamic Perspective of Interreligious Solidarity Against Oppression* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1997).

<sup>41</sup> Nehru Millat Ahmad, *Kritik Sosial Dalam Tafsir Al-Iklil* (Kendal: Eksystika, 2023).

understood as an affront to God insofar as it attempts to replicate the living creatures He alone has fashioned.<sup>42</sup> In the modern period, Sayyid Quṭb interprets Q.S. al-Nisā verse 58 as a rebuke of leaders who neglect their obligations and whose rulings fall short of justice.<sup>43</sup>

Similarly, within the Nusantara tafsīr tradition, Misbah Musthofa engages the Qur'an to interrogate and dismantle Javanese Muslim religious practices he regards as syncretic and lacking Qur'anic foundation, among them the tahlīl tradition—as exemplified in his reading of Q.S. al-Baqarah verse 140.<sup>44</sup> This example demonstrates that Qur'anic interpretation is born of the mufasssīr's historical awareness and interpretive boldness, qualities that Artificial Intelligence is incapable of replicating, given that algorithm-driven tafsīr tends to consolidate canonized dominant meanings and suppress critical and emancipatory readings. This contrast highlights the fundamental divergence between AI-generated interpretation and the interpretive practice of human mufasssīr.

To begin with, AI's rendering of Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī's interpretation of Q.S. al-Aḥzāb verse 57 frames “harming God and His Messenger” not as any form of physical injury, but as acts, utterances, or convictions that run contrary to God's commands, such as repudiating His teachings or ascribing unworthy attributes to Him. This reading differs substantially from Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī's original interpretation, which frames harming God in terms of concrete acts such as an artist producing statues or paintings in the likeness of living beings, thereby presuming to rival God's own creative act.<sup>45</sup>

Furthermore, AI's treatment of Sayyid Quṭb's commentary on Q.S. al-Nisā' verse 58 centers on the obligation to render trusts to their rightful owners and to administer justice impartially, presenting the verse as a moral cornerstone for a fair and accountable society. Sayyid Quṭb's own tafsīr, however, insists that fulfilling trusts demands unconditional justice toward all human beings regardless of their faith, complexion, or ethnic background. Muslims are obligated to enact justice and adjudicate human affairs even in matters that fall outside the explicit scope of Islamic law or formal leadership structures. Though this responsibility is demanding, a true leader must possess an elevated character, understanding leadership as a sacred trust oriented toward the liberation of all people.<sup>46</sup>

As for AI's reading of Misbah Musthofa's interpretation of tahlīl in Q.S. al-Baqarah 140, it presents the verse as affirming that the earlier prophets were servants of God who proclaimed tawḥīd, rather than as bearers of sectarian religious identities as construed by certain communities. Misbah Musthofa's own tafsīr, however,

<sup>42</sup> Muhammad bin Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' Al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Al-Qur'ān* (Mekah: Dar al-Tarbiyah wa al-Turath, n.d.).

<sup>43</sup> Sayyid Quṭb, *Tafsir Fi Dzīl Al-Qur'an* (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2000).

<sup>44</sup> Nehru Millat Ahmad et al., “Deconstruction of Local Culture: Misbah Musthofa's Critique in Tafsir Al- Iklīl Fī Ma'āni Al- Tanzīl on the Traditions of Javanese Islamic Societies,” *Tribakti: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman* 37, no. 1 (2026): 111–132.

<sup>45</sup> Muhammad bin Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' Al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Al-Qur'ān*.

<sup>46</sup> Quṭb, *Tafsir Fi Dzīl Al-Qur'an*.

cautions that Muslims ought not to blindly follow (taqlīd) the practices of earlier generations. Righteous deeds performed by an individual accrue benefit to that person alone, not to others, and one bears no accountability for the conduct of past generations. This applies equally to practices such as tahlīl performed alongside Qur’anic recitation and communal food offerings—well-intentioned though they may be, their acceptance before God is not guaranteed.<sup>47</sup>

The epistemological gulf between Artificial Intelligence and human mufassir becomes apparent when examining their respective processes of meaning production. AI operates through probabilistic models that reconstruct meaning by identifying dominant patterns within data corpora, whereas mufassir produce meaning through a reflective interplay among the text, its historical circumstances, and lived social experience. This suggests that AI-driven tafsīr runs the risk of entrenching canonized dominant meanings within the written tafsīr tradition, potentially narrowing the scope for contextual and critical readings. As Abdul Mustaqim emphasizes, a mufassir must be attuned to the needs of society and alert to emerging social issues and transformations. Interpretation that is rooted in social realities positions the Qur’an as a living revelation that continues to guide the Muslim community.<sup>48</sup> In this sense, tafsīr is by nature dialogical and contextual, with Qur’anic meaning perpetually renewed through readings that respond to social change and contemporary challenges.

Conceiving of the Qur’an as a living revelation gives rise to a notion of interpretive authority grounded in the mufassir’s scholarly competence and sense of social responsibility. Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd regards the Qur’an as a text alive within social and cultural spaces, whose meaning is perpetually generated through human engagement with historical context.<sup>49</sup> Interpretive authority is thus dynamic and subject to critical reassessment as social realities evolve. Yet when *tafsīr* authority becomes dependent on Artificial Intelligence, there is a genuine risk of displacing interpretive legitimacy from scholarly practice to technological authority, wherein algorithms operate by reinforcing dominant meanings.

Beyond this, the incorporation of Artificial Intelligence into tafsīr studies signals an epistemic shift in the practice of Qur’anic meaning-making. AI is capable of processing extensive tafsīr corpora, charting intertextual connections, and systematically identifying linguistic structures. These capacities position AI as an epistemic instrument that augments human analytical power in engaging with the Qur’an’s linguistic architecture. Nevertheless, these capabilities remain technical and data-dependent, devoid of historical consciousness, spiritual discernment, and moral responsibility — all of which are indispensable features of interpretive practice within the Islamic tradition.

<sup>47</sup> Misbah Musthofa, *Al-Iklil Fi Ma’ani Al-Tanzil* (Surabaya: Al-Ihsan, 1985).

<sup>48</sup> Abdul Mustaqim, *Epistemologi Tafsir Kontemporer* (Yogyakarta: LkiS, 2010).

<sup>49</sup> Nasr Hāmid Abū Zayd, *Mafhūm Al-Naṣṣ: Dirāsah Fī ‘Ulūm Al-Qur’ān* (Kairo: al-Hay’ah al-Miṣriyyah al-‘Āmmah li al-Kitāb, 1990).

## Ethics of Qur'anic Interpretation with Artificial Intelligence

The application of Artificial Intelligence in Qur'anic tafsīr ought to be assessed through the lens of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. Ethical frameworks for AI-assisted interpretation may be anchored in foundational principles such as *ḥifẓ al-dīn* and *ḥifẓ al-'aql*. *Ḥifẓ al-dīn* demands that the deployment of AI must not undermine the sacredness or authoritative standing of religious teachings, as expressed in God's declaration in Q.S. al-Ḥijr verse 9: "Indeed, it is We who have revealed the Qur'an, and indeed, We are its guardian." Al-Sha'rāwī regards the preservation of the Qur'an as an exceptionally rigorous matter, rooted in the *tawqīfī* principle, meaning it must conform precisely to the revealed text and its ordained form. Any alteration, even one motivated by reverence for the Prophet, is regarded as a departure from authenticity. This highlights that the Qur'an's grandeur resides in both its teachings and its preservation mechanism, which encompasses a divine dimension alongside the collective responsibility of the community to protect the integrity of revelation. Within Muslim communities, individuals frequently commit themselves to memorizing the Qur'an from an early age, with some completing the memorization as young as seven; nevertheless, the ability to explain the meaning of specific words is not always present.<sup>50</sup>

This reality points to the necessity of an approach that harmonizes textual preservation with substantive comprehension, especially in the age of modern technological application. Q.S. al-Baqarah verse 30-33 illuminates both the epistemological standing of human beings as knowledge-endowed creatures and the normative implications for protecting religion within the scope of *ḥifẓ al-dīn*. Al-Ṣābūnī interprets Verse 30 as underscoring humanity's unique status as God's vicegerent on earth, vested with knowledge and moral accountability. The angels acknowledge the boundaries of their own understanding, while God reveals the wisdom underlying the creation of humankind. This reading stresses the equilibrium between human authority, divinely bestowed knowledge, and awareness of creaturely limitations as the ethical and epistemological cornerstone of knowledge governance.<sup>51</sup>

This reading further reflects the capacity of human intellect in the domain of knowledge, encompassing the development of algorithm-based technological understanding. In Q.S. al-Baqarah verse 31, God imparts to Prophet Adam the names of entities and material species—including plants, inanimate objects, human beings, and animals—which form the building blocks of the world. Adam then conveys these names and examples to the angels, thereby introducing humanity to them. The angels respond: "O Lord, You are exalted; we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed, You are All-Knowing, All-Wise."<sup>52</sup>

The angels' declaration in Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]:32, "Subḥānaka lā 'ilma lanā illā mā 'allamtanā," encapsulates the Islamic epistemological worldview that regards

<sup>50</sup> Muhammad Mutawallī Al-Sya'rāwī, *Tafsīr Al-Sya'rāwī* (Kairo: Maṭābi' Akhbār al-Yaum, 1997).

<sup>51</sup> Muḥammad 'Alī Al-Ṣābūnī, *Ṣafwat Al-Tafsīr* (Kairo: Dār al-Ṣābūnī li al-Ṭabā'ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī', 1997).

<sup>52</sup> Wahbah Zuhaili, *Tafsīr Al Munir* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 2003).

all knowledge as a manifestation of divine will. This verse furnishes a theological basis for constructing a technology ethics rooted in intellectual humility and moral accountability. Such principles serve as a safeguard against potential theological distortions stemming from excessive dependence on Artificial Intelligence, including the perpetuation of algorithmic bias, the oversimplification of the Qur'an's layered meanings, and the tendency to vest epistemic authority in technology. The incorporation of AI into tafsīr and broader Islamic scholarship must therefore function within a framework of scholarly and spiritual oversight, ensuring that technological advancement reinforces religious comprehension while preserving the continuity of revelation and the Islamic intellectual heritage.

This viewpoint may be understood as reflecting humanity's duty in upholding *ḥifẓ al-dīn*—specifically by rejecting assertions of technological absolutism that would position Artificial Intelligence as a new locus of authority in religious interpretation. Such assertions, reminiscent of transhumanist narratives that envision the creation of unbounded superintelligence, are considered incompatible with Qur'anic principles affirming the inherent limits of human knowledge. Anke Iman Bouzenita explains that within the transhumanist paradigm, the term “singularity” denotes a hypothetical future stage in which the boundaries separating humans from machines, AI included, become fully dissolved into human existence.<sup>53</sup> In this setting, the concept of *khilāfah* operates as a critical counterpoint by framing humans as stewards and custodians of the earth, entrusted with its moral, spiritual, and social dimensions in accordance with Qur'anic directives.<sup>54</sup>

With respect to Qur'anic interpretation, scholarly authority remains an indispensable component in upholding the validity of exegesis and legal reasoning, in alignment with *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*—particularly the principle of preserving the intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*). *Ḥifẓ al-'aql* encapsulates the imperative to protect human intelligence and rational soundness. It holds particular importance because reason serves as the foremost means of averting errors in judgment and countering the spread of misinformation, particularly in the contemporary post-truth environment.<sup>55</sup> From an Islamic standpoint, the protection of the intellect extends beyond prohibiting harmful substances such as alcohol or narcotics, encompassing deliberate efforts to cultivate a culture of sound, critical, and reflective thinking.<sup>56</sup> This principle carries growing relevance in contemporary life, where fabricated information or hoaxes can circulate with alarming ease, as illustrated in Q.S. al-Ḥujurāt, verse 6: “O you who

<sup>53</sup> Anke Iman Bouzenita, “Transhumanism – Old Challenges in a New Garb?,” *Journal of Islam in Asia* 21, no. 2 (2024): 172–193.

<sup>54</sup> Dimas Maulana Rahman and Miftahurrahmat, “Analisis Filsafat Posthumanisme Dalam Konsep Khalifah Menurut Al- Qur'an,” *Nihayah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 1, no. 1 (2025): 55–67.

<sup>55</sup> Arif Al-Wasim, “Maqāṣid Syari'ah Menjawab Tantangan Post-Truth Era: Urgensi Hifẓ al-'Aql Sebagai Penyaring Informasi,” *International Journal Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* 21, no. 2 (2019): 143–157.

<sup>56</sup> Misliana and Komarudin Sassi, “Eksplorasi Dimensi-Dimensi Al-Qur'an Dalam Hifdz Al-Aql (Analisis Tematik Al-Isra' Ayat 9),” *Inspirasi Edukatif: Jurnal Pembelajaran Aktif* 6, no. 3 (2025): 755–66.

believe, if a corrupt person brings you news, verify it carefully, so that you do not inflict harm upon a people without knowing the facts, and thus regret your actions.”

Al-Qurtubī explains that the concept of *tabayyun* constitutes a universal principle governing the reception of information. Verification is a binding obligation upon every person to avert social harm resulting from the spread of false or misleading content.<sup>57</sup> While this verse initially addresses the duty of scrutinizing news, it is equally applicable to Qur’anic interpretation conducted with the assistance of Artificial Intelligence. AI is capable of rapidly delivering textual analysis, thematic categorization, or compilations of *tafsīr* data; however, its outputs still necessitate human scrutiny and validation to confirm accuracy, contextual appropriateness, and conformity with Islamic ethical standards.<sup>58</sup> This approach is consistent with *ḥifẓ al-’aql*, as humans continue to exercise reason and critical discernment in evaluating, comprehending, and internalizing Qur’anic messages, thereby producing interpretations that are both meaningful and ethically grounded. This is exemplified in Q.S. al-Zumar [39]:9, which demonstrates that those endowed with reason are capable of drawing lessons from worldly occurrences.

Furthermore, the *maqāṣid al-sharī’ah* as ordained by God can be traced through two principal sources: the Qur’an and Sunnah as authoritative bases for *istinbāt al-aḥkām*, and through rational reasoning (*’aql*). Knowledge of *maqāṣid al-sharī’ah* drawn from the Qur’an and Sunnah is accessible through four methodological approaches: *ibārāt al-nass* (explicit meaning), *ishārāt al-nass* (implicit meaning), *dalālāt al-nass* (inferred meaning), and *iqtidhā’ al-nass* (intended meaning). These approaches enable the *mufasssīr* to uncover the underlying purpose and wisdom of the verses, grasping the text in both its literal and its contextual and ethical dimensions. This process stands in marked contrast to AI-assisted interpretation, which does not possess these four methodological tools.

Moreover, reason is likened to a source of light, while revelation functions as a guiding lantern; together, they illuminate the path for humanity. Reason may direct humans toward what is good, but absent the guidance of revelation, it remains vulnerable to misguidance owing to its inherent logical constraints and the influence of the ego.<sup>59</sup> From the standpoint of *ḥifẓ al-’aql*, the use of Artificial Intelligence can bolster critical thinking, facilitate a more profound engagement with *tafsīr*, and ensure that Qur’anic understanding remains consonant with divine wisdom and the objectives of *sharī’ah*. Within this framework, AI functions as an intellectual instrument, while revelation remains the orienting lantern for human reason. Only through the integration of both can knowledge and interpretation yield genuine benefit, prevent misguidance, avert erroneous algorithmic interpretations, and bring human beings closer to God.

<sup>57</sup> Abū Abdillāh Muḥammad bin Aḥmad bin Abi Bakr Samsu al-Dīn Al-Qurtubī, *Al-Jāmi’ Al-Aḥkām Al-Qur’an* (Kairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyah, n.d.).

<sup>58</sup> Yusuf Al-Qardhawī, *Al-’Aql Wa Al-’Ilm Fī Al-Qur’ān Al-Karīm* (Kairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 1998).

<sup>59</sup> Iskandar et al., “Saluran Ilmu Menurut Ibnu Taimiyah Dan Relevansinya Dengan Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam Di Era Post-Truth,” *Jurnal Kajian Islam Modern* 11, no. 2 (2024): 120–140.

## Conclusion

This study shows that Artificial Intelligence serves as a supplementary epistemic tool in the interpretation of the Qur'an, with the capacity to broaden linguistic examination, trace intertextual connections, and systematically organize tafsīr data. That said, AI is devoid of historical awareness, ethical reflection, and purposive intent—qualities that form the bedrock of interpretive epistemology within the Islamic scholarly tradition. Interpretive authority continues to rest with human beings as agents who synthesize divine revelation, rational thought, and socio-cultural realities. The results confirm that human interpreters preserve their authoritative role by uniting divine guidance, intellectual reasoning, and awareness of historical and cultural contexts in order to produce tafsīr that is authentic, contextually grounded, and ethically sound.

The application of AI must be governed by the principles of ḥifẓ al-'aql and ḥifẓ al-dīn so as to protect human cognitive capacity and uphold the sanctity of religious doctrine. Although AI strengthens critical inquiry and supports engagement with Qur'anic studies, sound interpretation continues to necessitate human validation in order to guard against hermeneutical missteps or the uncritical entrenchment of dominant readings. This research advances the development of tafsīr epistemology by framing AI as an epistemic actor that shapes the construction of meaning and the allocation of interpretive authority. It further highlights the indispensable role of scholarly and spiritual supervision in AI-assisted Qur'anic studies. Future investigations are encouraged to empirically explore the deployment of AI in digital tafsīr practices and its implications for the shifting of religious authority within digital public spheres.

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