

## **The Concept of Knowledge in the Qur'an: A Perspective from Majid Irsan al Kailany**

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### **Abstract**

This paper delves into the concept of knowledge as portrayed in the Quran, utilizing the perspective of Majid Irsan al Kailany, a renowned Islamic scholar known for his profound works in philosophy and Islamic education. The primary objective is to elucidate the Quranic viewpoint on knowledge, its purpose, sources, and implications, as interpreted by Majid Irsan al Kailany. The study employs a qualitative approach, analyzing relevant Quranic verses and interpreting them through the lens of Majid Irsan al Kailany's scholarly works, particularly his treatise on Islamic philosophy and education. The analysis involves identifying key themes related to knowledge, exploring their significance, and understanding their implications in the context of Islamic teachings. The analysis reveals several key findings. Firstly, the Quran underscores the importance of knowledge as a means to draw closer to Allah, emphasizing its spiritual dimension. Secondly, the Quran is depicted as a comprehensive source of knowledge encompassing various aspects of life and the universe, beyond mere moral guidance. Thirdly, belief in Allah and the Quran is highlighted as a fundamental prerequisite for the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge. Lastly, a profound understanding and practical application of Quranic teachings are deemed essential in obtaining beneficial knowledge. The study concludes that according to Majid Irsan al Kailany's perspective, the Quran promotes knowledge as a spiritual endeavor to understand the greatness of Allah and His creation. It emphasizes the Quran's role as a multifaceted source of knowledge and underscores the importance of belief, deep understanding, and practical application of its teachings in acquiring beneficial knowledge for human life.

**Keywords:** *Quran, Science, Majid Irsan al Kailany, Belief, Teachings of the Quran*

## INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an, as the primary source of Islamic teachings, presents various concepts and perspectives on life, morality, and knowledge. In the context of knowledge, the Qur'an provides a profound understanding of the nature, purpose, and importance of knowledge from a religious perspective. However, interpretations and understanding of the concept of knowledge in the Qur'an have been the subject of debate among Islamic scholars. (Rahman, 1980)

In an effort to deepen our understanding of this concept, contemporary studies of the Qur'an have shown diverse perspectives. One of the figures who has made significant contributions in this field is Majid Irsan al Kailany, a Islamic scholar renowned for his profound works on the Qur'anic text. (Nasr, 1968). (Al Kailany, 2003)

In this paper, we will explore the concept of knowledge in the Qur'an from the perspective of Majid Irsan al Kailany. This exploration will help in further understanding how the Qur'an views and interprets knowledge, as well as the implications of such understanding in the context of contemporary Islamic life and thought. (Esack, 1997).

Through analysis of the works of Majid Irsan al Kailany and relevant Qur'anic texts, this paper aims to provide deeper insights into the concept of knowledge in the Qur'an, and contribute to the academic discourse on the relationship between religion and knowledge. Thus, this research is not only significant in understanding Islamic thought, but also in the context of intercultural and interreligious dialogue that is increasingly relevant in this era of globalization.

## THEORETICAL REVIEW

### The Concept of Knowledge

The concept of knowledge is fundamental to human understanding and progress. It encompasses the accumulation, comprehension, and application of information and skills acquired through experience, education, observation, and reasoning (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Understanding the concept of knowledge involves examining its nature, sources, types, and significance in various contexts (Audi, 2002).

Knowledge can be understood as a body of information and skills acquired through learning and experience. It is dynamic and evolving, subject to revision and refinement based on new discoveries and interpretations (Dretske, 1981). Knowledge

can be explicit, such as facts and theories, or tacit, involving practical know-how and intuition (Polanyi, 1966).

Knowledge can be derived from various sources, including empirical evidence, reasoning, intuition, tradition, and authority (Chisholm, 1989). Empirical knowledge is based on observation and experimentation, while rational knowledge is derived through logical deduction and inference (Russell, 1912). Intuitive knowledge arises from instinct or insight, while traditional knowledge is passed down through cultural or societal norms (Geertz, 1983). Authority-based knowledge relies on the expertise or credibility of sources such as experts or texts (Zagzebski, 1996).

Knowledge can be categorized into different types based on its subject matter, context, and level of abstraction. This includes factual knowledge (information about the world), procedural knowledge (knowing how to do something), conceptual knowledge (understanding concepts and principles), and meta-knowledge (knowledge about knowledge itself) (Bloom, 1956). Knowledge can also be classified as theoretical (concerned with understanding phenomena) or practical (related to applying knowledge to solve problems) (Ryle, 1949).

Knowledge plays a crucial role in human development, innovation, and societal progress. It empowers individuals to make informed decisions, solve problems, and adapt to changing circumstances (Drucker, 1993). Knowledge is also a driver of economic growth, technological advancement, and cultural enrichment (Bell, 1973). Additionally, knowledge fosters critical thinking, creativity, and lifelong learning, contributing to personal fulfillment and social cohesion (Gardner, 1983). The concept of knowledge is multifaceted and dynamic, encompassing the acquisition, comprehension, and application of information and skills. Understanding the nature, sources, types, and significance of knowledge is essential for fostering intellectual curiosity, innovation, and human flourishing (Senge, 1990).

### **Biography of Majid Irsan al Kailany**

Majid Irsan al Kailany was born in Irbid, Jordan, in 1356 H/1937 AD. In 1383 H/1963, he obtained his Bachelor's degree (License/Lc) in History from Cairo University, and completed a Diploma in Education from the University of Jordan in 1389 H/1969 AD. Later, in 1393 H/1986, he successfully completed his Master's degree in Islamic History from the American University branch in Beirut. In the same year, he also earned a Master's degree in Philosophy of Education from the University of Jordan.

With his intellectual abilities, he then pursued his Ph.D. in the Faculty of Education at the University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, United States, in 1401 H/1981 AD. He passed away in 2015 AD. (Kailany, 2003)

Throughout his career, he held various academic positions, including: Lecturer in the History of Education at the Women's Specialized Faculty, Saudi Arabia., Director of the Center for Arabic Studies at the Department of Foreign Languages, University of Pittsburgh, United States., Director of the Education Studies Center at the Ministry of Education, Jordan., Professor of Islamic Education and Philosophy of Education at the Faculty of Education, King Abdul 'Aziz University, and Umm al-Qura University, Saudi Arabia.,

His works on Islamic education include: "Ahdaf al Tarbiyah al Islamiyyah fi Tarbiyah al Fard wa Ikhtaj al Ummah wa Tanmiyah al Ukhuwwah al Insaniyyah" (The Vision and Mission of Islamic Education in Educating Individuals, Building Communities, and Developing Human Brotherhood)., His dissertation: "Al Fikr al Tarbawi 'Inda Ibn Taimiyyah" (Islamic Educational Thought from the Perspective of Ibn Taymiyyah)., "Hakadza Zhahara Jil Shalah al Din wa Hakadza'dat al-Quds" (The Emergence of the Saladin Generation and the Return of Al-Aqsa Palestine)., "Tathawwur Mafhum al Nazhariyyat al Tarbawiyyah al-Islamiyyah" (The Evolution of the Concept of Islamic Educational Epistemology)., "Falsafah al Tarbiyah al Islamiyyah: Dirasah Muqaranah baina Falsafah al Tarbiyah al Islamiyyah wa al Falsafat al Tarbawiyyah al Mu'ashirah" (Philosophy of Islamic Education: A Comparative Study between Islamic Educational Philosophy and Contemporary Educational Philosophy).

His other works include: "Muqawwimat asy-Syakhsyiyah al-Islāmiyyah" (The Elements of Islamic Personality)., "Al-Ummah al-Muslimah" (The Muslim Ummah)., "Risalat al-Masjid" (The Message of the Mosque)., "Hayatu al-Insan fi al 'alami al 'rabi" (Human Life in the Arab World)., "At-Tarbiyah wa al Mustaqbal fi al Mujtama'at al Islamiyyah" (Education and the Future in Islamic Societies)., "Al-Khatharu ash Shahyuni fi al lami al Islami" (The Jewish Danger in the Islamic World)., "Ushulu al Aqli al Amriki wa Tathbiqatihu al Iqtishadiyyah wa as Siyasiyyah wa al Askariyyah" (Methods of American Logic and Its Applications in Economic, Political, and Military Affairs)., "Shina'atu al Qarar al-Amriki" (The Nature of American Decision-Making)., These works reflect Majid Irsan al Kailany's extensive contributions to the fields of education, philosophy, and Islamic studies. (Kailany, 2015).

## **METHOD**

This research employs a literature review method to gather and analyze relevant information regarding the concept of knowledge in the Quran, from the perspective of Majid Irsan al Kailany. This study is an analytical descriptive research aiming to describe and analyze the concept of knowledge in the Quran from Majid Irsan al Kailany's perspective. The primary data collection tool in this research is scholarly literature related to Majid Irsan al Kailany's works, particularly those concerning the concept of knowledge in the Quran. Data are obtained from books, scholarly journals, theses, dissertations, and relevant articles on the research topic.

The collected data will be analyzed qualitatively by identifying main themes related to the concept of knowledge in the Quran, as well as Majid Irsan al Kailany's approaches and interpretations of this concept. Analysis techniques include synthesis, classification, and interpretation of data. The primary source in this research is Majid Irsan al Kailany's book on Islamic philosophy of education. Secondary sources include literature and analyses discussing Majid Irsan al Kailany's works, as well as other sources supporting understanding of the concept of knowledge in the Quran.

By utilizing this literature review method, it is expected that this research will provide an in-depth understanding of the concept of knowledge in the Quran from Majid Irsan al Kailany's perspective, and contribute to the development of thought and scholarly discourse in this field.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Purpose and Source of Knowledge**

Ayat 19 of Surah Muhammad in the Quran states:

فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْبِكَ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مُتَقَلَّبَكُمْ وَمَثْوَاكُمْ

"So know, [O Muhammad], that there is no deity except Allah and ask forgiveness for your sin and for the believing men and believing women. And Allah knows of your movement and your resting place."

In the book "Philosophy of Islamic Education", Majid Irsan al Kailany views this verse from the perspective of knowledge. According to Majid Irsan al Kailany's perspective, the purpose of knowledge is to guide humanity towards a deeper understanding of their Lord, Allah SWT. In the context of this verse, the primary aim of

recognizing that there is no deity except Allah is to lead humans towards recognition and obedience to Him.

This verse also elucidates the source of knowledge. According to Majid Irsan al Kailany, the true source of knowledge is Allah SWT. He emphasizes that all knowledge acquired by humans originates from Allah, whether through direct revelation or through the signs of His creation in the universe. In the context of this verse, Majid Irsan al Kailany perceives seeking forgiveness from Allah not only as a moral obligation but also as a step towards drawing closer to the true source of truth and knowledge.

The next verse is Surah Al-Mulk, verse 26:

قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ

"Say, 'The knowledge (of the Hour) is only with Allah. And I am only a clear warner.'"

Majid Irsan al Kailany explains that verse 26 of Surah Al-Mulk highlights the importance of understanding that knowledge, especially knowledge about the Day of Judgment in this verse, belongs solely to Allah SWT. He emphasizes that the main purpose of knowledge is to draw closer to Allah and attain true guidance. In the context of this verse, it is to deepen understanding of the teachings of Islam and prepare oneself spiritually and morally to follow them. This verse also explains that the primary source of knowledge is Allah SWT Himself. He is the possessor of true knowledge and imparts knowledge to humans through His revelation.

The next verse is Surah Luqman, verse 27:

وَلَوْ أَنَّ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ أَقْلَامٌ وَالْبَحْرُ يَمُدُّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ سَبْعَةُ أَبْحُرٍ مَا نَفِدَتْ كَلِمَاتُ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

"And if whatever trees upon the earth were pens and the sea [was ink], replenished thereafter by seven [more] seas, the words of Allah would not be exhausted. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise."

In verse 27 of Surah Luqman, Allah SWT declares His greatness by analogy, stating that even if all the trees on earth were pens and the sea was ink, replenished by

seven more seas, the words of Allah would not be exhausted. Majid Irsan al Kailany emphasizes that the primary purpose of knowledge is to draw closer to Allah SWT and understand His greatness. Knowledge is not only to comprehend the physical world but also to deepen one's recognition of the Creator's magnificence. The goal of knowledge is to deepen our understanding of His creation and strengthen our faith and devotion to Him. This verse also explains that the source of knowledge is Allah Himself. He is the limitless and infinite source of knowledge, and all knowledge possessed by humans is a gift from Him. In the context of this verse, knowledge of the greatness of Allah is boundless and will never be exhausted, considering His unlimited power and wisdom.

### **The concept of the field of knowledge**

The concept of the field of knowledge can be found in several verses in the Qur'an, including in Surah Fussilat, verse 53:

سُرِّيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

"We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth. But is it not sufficient concerning your Lord that He is, over all things, a Witness?"

In verse 53 of Surah Fussilat, Allah declares that He will show humanity signs of His greatness in all corners of the universe and within themselves. The purpose is for people to understand that the Qur'an is true. From the perspective of the broad field of knowledge, Majid Irsan al Kailany explains that the signs of Allah's greatness mentioned in this verse encompass all aspects of the universe. This includes fields of natural sciences such as astronomy, geology, biology, and physics. Humans are asked to observe and study these phenomena as signs of Allah's greatness. In addition to studying the universe, knowledge about human beings is also emphasized in this verse. Humans are asked to reflect on the wonders of their own creation, both physically and spiritually. This includes fields such as medicine, psychology, and social sciences that study the complexity of humans as creatures created by Allah. All of this is aimed at understanding the signs of His greatness in the universe and within human beings, in the hope that humans can strengthen their faith and recognize the truth of the Qur'an as a true guide in life. Knowledge becomes a means to enhance understanding of Allah's creation and strengthen spiritual ties with Him.

The next verses are from Surah Al-Alaq, verses 1-5: "Recite in the name of your Lord who created - Created man from a clinging substance. Recite, and your Lord is the most Generous - Who taught by the pen - Taught man that which he knew not." From the perspective of Majid Irsan al Kailany, these verses highlight the creation of humans from a clinging substance and knowledge about the process of human creation. Thus, the relevant field of knowledge is biology, which studies life processes, including the formation of the human fetus from small cells. Furthermore, verses 4 and 5 emphasize that Allah teaches humanity through His revelation. This indicates the field of knowledge about religion and Islamic sciences. The knowledge of religion and the revelation of Allah SWT are integral parts of human education and formation as better beings.

The next verse is from Surah Ali Imran, verse 190:

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ

"Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding."

In this verse, Allah states that in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of the night and the day, there are signs of His greatness for those who possess understanding. From the perspective of Majid Irsan al Kailany, this verse highlights the importance of studying and understanding the universe. The relevant field of knowledge here is natural science or science, which studies the structure, processes, and phenomena of nature. In Majid Irsan al Kailany's view, humans are invited to observe and study the beauty, complexity, and harmony in the creation of the heavens and the earth as signs of Allah's greatness. This verse also emphasizes the importance of understanding the phenomenon of the alternation of night and day. The relevant field of knowledge here is astronomy, which studies the movements of celestial bodies and celestial phenomena, including the alternation of night and day. Humans are encouraged to understand the natural mechanisms that regulate the alternation of night and day as evidence of Allah's power and wisdom.

### **The tool for acquiring knowledge**

The tool for acquiring knowledge in Surah Al-An'am, verse 104:

قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَصَائِرٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ أَبْصَرَ فَلِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ عَمِيَ فَعَلَيْهَا ۗ وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيظٍ

"Indeed, there has come to you from your Lord enlightenment. So whoever will see does so for [the benefit of] his soul, and whoever is blind [does harm] against it. And [say], 'I am not a guardian over you.'"

In Surah Al-An'am, verse 104, Allah states that clear proofs have come from Him to humanity. This verse emphasizes that those who accept and understand these proofs will benefit themselves, while those who do not see them will incur loss. From the perspective of Majid Irsan al Kailany, it highlights the importance of accepting clear proofs as a source of knowledge. This includes observation and understanding of the signs of Allah's greatness in the universe, as well as acceptance of His revelation contained in the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet. The verse emphasizes that those who see (use their intellect) will benefit themselves. Thus, the use of intellect or sound reasoning is the primary tool for acquiring knowledge. Humans are invited to use their intellect critically and rationally in seeking and understanding the truth. Although humans are expected to use their intellect in seeking knowledge, Allah emphasizes that Prophet Muhammad is not their guardian. This indicates that while there is guidance from Allah through His revelation, the ultimate responsibility for seeking and understanding knowledge lies with the individual themselves.

Next is Surah Al-Qasas, verse 43:

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا أَهْلَكْنَا الْقُرُونَ الْأُولَىٰ بَصَائِرٍ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

"And We certainly gave Moses the Scripture after We had destroyed the former generations as enlightenment for the people and guidance and mercy that they might be reminded."

In Surah Al-Qasas, verse 43, Allah states that He gave the Book (the Torah) to Prophet Moses after destroying the former generations. The Book was given as a beacon for people, as guidance, and as mercy, so that they may be reminded. Majid Irsan al Kailany emphasizes that the Quran is the primary source of knowledge for humanity. The Quran not only contains moral and spiritual guidance but also profound knowledge about various aspects of life and the universe. Humans are invited to study the Quran carefully as the main source of knowledge. This verse indicates that one of the tools for acquiring knowledge is by studying history, especially the history of previous nations and the lessons that can be learned from it. From Majid Irsan al Kailany's perspective,

studying history is important to understand recurring patterns in human life and to draw lessons from past experiences.

Next is Surah Al-Jasiyah, verse 20:

هَذَا بَصَائِرُ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ

"This [Quran] is enlightenment for mankind and guidance and mercy for a people who are certain [in faith]."

In Surah Al-Jasiyah, verse 20, Allah declares that the Quran is a guidance for mankind, providing guidance and mercy for those who believe. Majid Irsan al Kailany asserts that the Quran is the primary source of knowledge for humanity. It contains not only moral and spiritual guidance but also vast knowledge about various aspects of life, the universe, and humanity. Therefore, reading, understanding, and reflecting upon the Quran are crucial initial steps in the pursuit of knowledge.

This verse emphasizes that the Quran is guidance and mercy for those who believe. From Majid Irsan al Kailany's perspective, belief is a crucial foundation in the pursuit of knowledge. Belief in Allah and the truth of the Quran motivates individuals to learn and understand the deeper messages contained within it. Majid Irsan al Kailany emphasizes the importance of understanding the Quran deeply to acquire beneficial knowledge. This involves a process of careful study, reflection, and practical application of the teachings of the Quran in everyday life.

## DISCUSSION

In this paper, the concept of knowledge in the Quran is explored using the perspective of Majid Irsan al Kailany, an Islamic scholar known for his profound works in the fields of philosophy and Islamic education. Based on the analysis of Quranic verses considered relevant to the concept of knowledge, as well as the interpretations and thoughts of Majid Irsan al Kailany documented in his works, several important findings can be identified.

Firstly, the Quran consistently emphasizes the importance of knowledge as a means to draw closer to Allah. The analyzed verses highlight that knowledge is not merely a practical need for humans in their daily lives but also a spiritual call to understand the greatness of Allah through His creation. Secondly, Majid Irsan al Kailany interprets that the Quran is not only a source of moral and spiritual guidance but also a comprehensive source of knowledge about various aspects of life and the

universe. In his perspective, reading and understanding the Quran are crucial initial steps in the pursuit of profound knowledge.

Furthermore, in Majid Irsan al Kailany's view, belief in Allah and the Quran is a crucial foundation in the pursuit of knowledge. This belief motivates individuals to learn and understand the deeper messages contained within it. A profound understanding of the teachings of the Quran is also a significant focus in Majid Irsan al Kailany's thought. This deep understanding involves a process of careful study, reflection, and practical application of the teachings of the Quran in everyday life.

Thus, through the analysis of relevant Quranic verses and the views of Majid Irsan al Kailany, this paper portrays the concept of knowledge in the Quran as a spiritual call to understand the greatness of Allah. It also emphasizes the importance of belief, profound understanding, and practical application of the teachings of the Quran in the pursuit of beneficial knowledge for human life.

In this study, the results of the analysis show several similarities with previous studies that have addressed similar themes, especially in emphasizing the importance of knowledge in the Quran as a means to draw closer to Allah. These findings are consistent with previous research that highlights the scientific aspects in the Quran. Some previous studies have revealed that the Quran contains many verses that promote scientific knowledge and research. For example, research by [researcher's name] (year) indicates that the Quran consistently emphasizes the importance of observation and rational thinking in understanding the wonders of Allah's creation. These findings support our research results indicating that the Quran encourages humanity to develop knowledge as a form of reverence for the greatness of Allah. Additionally, the results of this study are also in line with the interpretations of other Islamic scholars such as [another scholar's name], who emphasizes that the Quran is not only a source of moral guidance but also a comprehensive source of knowledge about various aspects of life and the universe.

## **CONCLUSION**

In this study, the concept of knowledge in the Quran has been explored through the perspective of Majid Irsan al Kailany. Firstly, the Purpose and Source of Knowledge in the Quran. Through the analysis of Quranic verses and the interpretation of Majid Irsan al Kailany, it was found that the primary purpose of knowledge in the Quran is to draw closer to Allah. The Quran promotes knowledge as a means to understand the

greatness of Allah through His creation. The source of knowledge in the Quran is Allah's revelation manifested in the form of the Quran. Secondly, the Field of Knowledge. From Majid Irsan al Kailany's perspective, the field of knowledge in the Quran is very broad and encompasses all aspects of life and the universe. The Quran is not only a source of moral guidance but also a comprehensive source of knowledge about various aspects of life and the universe, including natural, social, and human sciences. Thirdly, the Tools to Acquire Knowledge. The Quran is stated to be a guide, a directive, and a mercy for those who believe. Belief in Allah and the Quran is a crucial foundation in the pursuit of knowledge. Furthermore, a profound understanding of the teachings of the Quran, reflection, and practical application of its teachings in everyday life are also important tools in acquiring knowledge according to Majid Irsan al Kailany's perspective.

Thus, the conclusion of this study is that the concept of knowledge in the Quran, according to Majid Irsan al Kailany's perspective, emphasizes the importance of knowledge as a means to draw closer to Allah, the breadth of the field of knowledge covered in the Quran, and the importance of belief, profound understanding, and practical application of the teachings of the Quran in seeking knowledge beneficial to human life. This research is expected to contribute to our understanding of the relationship between religion and science, as well as the relevance of the Quran in the context of modern life.

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