

THE INTEGRATION OF ISLAM AND MODERN SCIENCES: PROBLEMS AND THOUGHTS FROM KALĀM PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

The project of integrating modern science with Islam has emerged as a significant intellectual endeavor over the past several decades, attracting substantial scholarly attention across various disciplines. While some Muslim scholars have framed this project under the banner of the Islamization of Knowledge (IOK), others have advanced alternative models such as "Islamic science" or theistic interpretations of scientific findings. Despite the noble objectives of demonstrating compatibility and revitalizing Islamic intellectual heritage, contemporary attempts at harmonization -particularly concerning biological evolution-raise profound theological, epistemological, and hermeneutical challenges that have yet to be adequately addressed. This study critically examines the theological implications of contemporary integrative models from the perspective of Ash'arī kalām, focusing on the works of

leading proponents such as Nidhal Guessoum, David Solomon Jalajel, and Shoaib Ahmed Malik. Employing a qualitative content analysis methodology, the article analyzes classical theological and juridical texts alongside contemporary scholarship to identify and evaluate the underlying assumptions and methodological commitments of these integrative approaches. The study identifies three major theological problems arising from contemporary harmonization efforts: (i) the problem of the authority of revelation (*nahy*), wherein speculative scientific claims are given precedence over definitive scriptural texts in cases of apparent conflict; (ii) the problem of hermeneutic approach, where figurative interpretation (*ta'wil*) is applied to explicit verses (*mush*) concerning Prophet Adam and the origin of humanity without satisfying the rigorous conditions established in *uṣūl al-fiqh*; and (iii) the problem of exception in scientific interpretation, exemplified by the methodological arbitrariness of "Adamic exceptionalism," which posits a miraculous exception to evolutionary processes for Prophet Adam while failing to provide a consistent theological rationale. The study argues that these problems stem from a fundamental failure to ground integrative models in the epistemic and doctrinal foundations of traditional Islamic sciences, resulting in proposals that are theologically problematic and epistemologically inconsistent. The article concludes by urging for the development of a more rigorous and coherent framework for reconciling Islam and modern science, one that is firmly grounded in the principles of *kalām*, *uṣūl al-fiqh*, *manṭiq*, *uṣūl al-tafsīr*, *ʿulūm al-ḥadīth*, and Arabic linguistics. Such a framework, it is argued, is essential for achieving a genuinely non-problematic reconciliation that preserves the integrity of Islamic theology while engaging

constructively with contemporary scientific knowledge, thereby fostering a more intellectually robust and theologically faithful engagement between the two domains.

Keywords: *Integration of Islam and Modern Science, Kalām, Ash‘arī Theology, Human Evolution, Adamic Exceptionalism, Hermeneutics, Uṣūl al-Fiqh, Islamiẓation of Knowledge*

INTRODUCTION

The recent interest in the field of Islam and modern science has been increase significantly over the past few decades. As noted by Shoaib Ahmed Malik (2026), this particular discussion is still emerging as a formal academic field compared to the well-established Christian literature on science and religion, which the field of Islam and Science is relatively young. While Nidhal Guessoum (2021) observes that most modern developments are concentrated in the West, a substantial number of landmark advancements continue to emerge from the Muslim world. A prominent example is Basil Altaie's project on *Daqiq al-Kalām*, which has produced several highly influential texts, including *God, Nature and The Cause* (2016), *Islam and Natural Philosophy: Principles of Daqiq al-Kalam* (2023), and *The Natural Philosophy of Imam al-Ghazali* (2024). It is also worth to mention that this development is evident through the publications in *Zygon* journal, which particularly focuses on publishing works related to religion and science.

In light of this widespread interest, Guessoum (2021) identifies three primary factors driving contemporary engagement with this field: i) first, a renewed general interest in Islam, largely catalyzed by recent global political events; ii) second, a substantial demographic increase in the number of Muslims residing or raised in the West, who observe that classical Islamic civilization remains largely unacknowledged there; and iii) third, significant advancements in the scholarship of both the history of Islamic science - particularly astronomy- and the relevance of the Islamic cultural context to the broader science-and-religion discourse. From Guessoum's analysis, it is

suggested that there were two dominant paradigms in this field, namely the Islamization of Knowledge (IOK) project and the scientific miracle (*al-i'jāz al-'ilmi*) approach in understanding al-Quran. The brief history of these two paradigms will be discussed in the next section.

However, both the harmonising approach and the more critical engagement between Islam and modern science continue to attract substantial scholarly criticism, as each raises significant theological, philosophical, and hermeneutical challenges. Even within the harmonising school itself, there exists considerable diversity of opinion regarding how Islamic doctrine should engage with contemporary scientific theories. One of its leading proponents, Nidhal Guessoum (2011), argues that the theory of biological evolution should be accepted as an established scientific account and reconciled with Islamic theology through a non-literal interpretation of the Qur'an.

Guessoum's position has, however, generated significant criticism from scholars working within more traditional theological frameworks. Among the most comprehensive responses is Tahseen N. Khan's *The Provenance of Man* (2024), which offers a sustained critique of Guessoum and other Muslim proponents of evolution from the perspective of Ash'arī *kalām*. Rather than disputing the empirical findings of biology alone, Khan examines the theological and metaphysical implications of evolutionary interpretations of the Qur'an, arguing that such readings raise important questions concerning scriptural hermeneutics, prophetic anthropology, and the consensus of Muslim on Adam as a father of human beings. His critique illustrates that Guessoum's attempt to harmonise Islam with modern science is itself contested within the Islamic intellectual tradition and remain the subject of ongoing theological debate. The following discussion therefore examines Guessoum's model of integrating Islam and modern science in greater detail before assessing its strengths and limitations from the perspective of Ash'arī *kalām*.

Against this intellectual backdrop, the present study argues that attempts to integrate Islam and modern science may carry significant theological implications if they are not grounded in sound Islamic theological

principles. Although many contemporary efforts at harmonisation are motivated by the legitimate objective of demonstrating the compatibility between Islam and scientific knowledge, such endeavours require continuous critical evaluation and refinement to ensure that theological commitments are not inadvertently compromised. Accordingly, any meaningful reconciliation between Islam and modern science must be developed with careful attention to the epistemological and doctrinal foundations of the Islamic theological tradition.

This study therefore seeks to identify and critically examine several theological issues arising from contemporary models of integration, reconciliation, and harmonisation between Islam and modern science from the perspective of *kalām*, with particular emphasis on the Ash‘arī tradition. Rather than attempting to provide definitive solutions to these complex questions, the study aims to highlight key areas requiring further theological reflection and to offer several conceptual considerations that may contribute to future discussions. In doing so, it seeks to encourage a more rigorous engagement between contemporary scientific discourse and classical Islamic theology.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the ongoing development of a theologically coherent framework for engaging modern science within the Islamic intellectual tradition. It proceeds from the premise that Islam and science need not exist in inherent conflict; rather, genuine reconciliation is possible when both disciplines are approached with methodological rigour and theological fidelity. Methodologically, this research adopts a qualitative design employing content analysis of relevant primary and secondary sources, including classical theological works, contemporary scholarly publications, and studies on Islam and science. This research is did not focus on every scholar that contributes in this field. Instead, it only briefly discuss ideas of some leading figures in this field such as Nidhal Guessoum, David Solomon Jalajel and also Shoaib Ahmed Malik.

ISLAM AND MODERN SCIENCE: A BRIEF INTELLECTUAL HISTORY

The relationship between Islam and the natural sciences predates the emergence of the modern academic discipline known as *Islam and Science*. From Islam's formative period, Muslim scholars regarded the study of the natural world as an important avenue for understanding divine creation, resulting in a sophisticated scientific tradition that developed alongside theology (*kalām*), philosophy, and jurisprudence. Nevertheless, the contemporary discourse of Islam and Science only began to emerge as a distinct field during the 1970s and 1980s, when Muslim intellectuals sought systematic responses to the philosophical and epistemological challenges posed by modern science (Shoaib, 2026). This period witnessed the crystallisation of two dominant paradigms. The first was the Islamisation of Knowledge (IOK) programme, championed by Ismail Raji al-Faruqi and later extended into discussions of the Islamisation of science by Taha Jabir al-'Alawani and other proponents. The second was the *i'jāz 'ilmī* (scientific miracles) approach, popularised through the influential writings of Maurice Bucaille, which argued that the Qur'an -and later the Sunnah- contains scientifically verifiable knowledge inaccessible at the time of revelation (Guessoum, 2011). Running parallel to these developments was the emergence of the concept of "Islamic science," articulated by thinkers such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, and Ziauddin Sardar, each proposing distinct philosophical frameworks for integrating scientific inquiry with the Islamic worldview.

As the field expanded, its scholarship diversified considerably in both aims and methodologies. Contemporary studies may broadly be categorised as constructive, normative, corrective, exploratory, descriptive, or comparative. Constructive works seek to formulate new conceptual models for relating Islamic theology to contemporary scientific knowledge, whereas normative studies prescribe how science ought to be pursued within an Islamic intellectual framework. Corrective studies address perceived misunderstandings concerning either Islam or science, exploratory works investigate emerging questions and interdisciplinary frontiers, descriptive

research documents historical or contemporary developments, and comparative studies situate Islamic perspectives alongside secular or other religious approaches. Collectively, these diverse contributions reflect differing assumptions regarding the relationship between Islam and modern science. Some scholars advocate harmonisation and complementarity, maintaining that scientific discoveries can enrich theological reflection when interpreted appropriately. Others defend methodological independence, while a further group argues that certain scientific theories and theological commitments remain in unavoidable tension. Consequently, the field is characterised less by a unified paradigm than by a spectrum of competing intellectual positions that continue to shape contemporary scholarship (Bigliardi, 2014; Guessoum, 2011).

The two dominant paradigms that shaped the field during its formative decades have themselves become subjects of sustained critique. According to Guessoum (2011), the influence of the Islamisation of Knowledge movement has largely diminished over the past two decades for two principal reasons. First, Ziauddin Sardar's alternative conception of Islamic science presented a significant intellectual challenge to both Nasr's perennial philosophy of sacred science and the broader Islamisation project. Second, despite its ambitious epistemological programme, the IOK movement produced relatively few substantive scholarly works capable of advancing its original agenda, causing the debate gradually to lose momentum. By contrast, the *i'jāz 'ilmi* movement has continued to expand through conferences, publications, and international institutions, particularly those organised by the World Authority on Scientific I'jaz in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Proponents argue that scientific discoveries increasingly confirm the miraculous nature of revelation and have even contributed to conversions among scientists and academics. Nevertheless, the approach has also attracted considerable criticism from Muslim and non-Muslim scholars alike for its selective use of scientific evidence, its tendency to conflate scientific theories with scriptural exegesis, and its vulnerability to changes in scientific consensus (Guessoum, 2011; Bigliardi, 2014).

More recently, the discourse has entered what Guessoum (2011) describes as a new phase, characterised by the emergence of Muslim scholars who broadly accept the methodological foundations and empirical achievements of modern science while seeking to construct a scientifically informed Islamic theology. Stefano Bigliardi (2014) identifies Mehdi Golshani, Basil Altaie, Bruno Abd-al-Haqq Guiderdoni, and Nidhal Guessoum as representative figures within this harmonising school of thought. Rather than advocating an alternative Islamic science, these scholars seek to interpret contemporary scientific knowledge through a coherent theistic worldview. Guessoum, in particular, argues that theological discourse should not remain the exclusive domain of the '*ulamā*' but should actively incorporate insights from scientists on issues central to Islamic theology, including cosmology, biological evolution, divine action, miracles, and the efficacy of prayer. His proposal for a "theistic science" therefore represents not a rejection of modern science but a theological interpretation that preserves scientific rigour while situating scientific knowledge within a broader metaphysical framework. Even within this harmonising paradigm, however, significant disagreements remain regarding evolution, methodological naturalism, miracles, and divine action, indicating that the future development of the field will likely involve continued internal debate rather than convergence upon a single consensus (Bigliardi, 2014; Guessoum, 2011).

The institutional consolidation of Islam and Science as a recognised academic discipline reached an important milestone in 2023. Cambridge University Press launched the *Islam and Science Elements* series under the co-editorship of Nidhal Guessoum and Stefano Bigliardi, while Palgrave Macmillan inaugurated its *Islam and Science* monograph series, edited by Shoaib Ahmed Malik, alongside the publication of an encyclopaedia devoted to the field. These initiatives signal the growing recognition of Islam and Science as a coherent multidisciplinary area of research and provide important platforms for sustained scholarly engagement with contemporary scientific, philosophical, and theological questions. Against this backdrop, the present study does not seek to adjudicate among the competing paradigms that

continue to shape the field. Rather, its objective is to equip readers with the conceptual vocabulary and analytical frameworks necessary to navigate these debates critically, enabling a more informed engagement with the diverse intellectual trajectories that constitute the contemporary discourse on Islam and modern science.

CONTEMPORARY MODELS OF INTEGRATING ISLAM AND MODERN SCIENCE

As indicated in the earlier section, Nidhal Guessoum (2011) is one of the proponents of the evolution and he believes that the evolution theory, even it is controversial to be accepted among majority of Muslims, is coherent and correspond to the teaching of Islam. He also quotes al-Qaraḍāwī's speech regarding to Darwinian theory:

"Even research into the beginning of creation [is allowed in Islam], as long as one keeps in mind that we are looking into creation, meaning that there is a Creator; even if we assume that species evolved from species, this is only by the will of the Creator, according to the laws of the Creator...If Darwin's theory is proven, we can find Qur'anic verses that will fit with it..."

We do not intend to discuss on the authenticity of this attribution to al-Qaraḍāwī, nor we intend to scrutinize the truth value of this statement. But rather, we want to show that Guessoum's quoting of this speech indicates that he sees evolution theory is acceptable as long as we have a theistic -or even Quranic- worldview in interpreting this theory. In other his other work, Guessoum (2015) also writes:

"Is there a contradiction then between suggesting a theistic worldview and a thoroughly rigorous pursuit of science with its naturalistic methodology and its established results and theories? I believe not.

Methodological naturalism, contrary to philosophical naturalism, is a neutral standpoint and approach, and it has proven to be fruitful in science. In my view, it has no metaphysical implications. On the other hand, theologies that are fully consistent with modern science and methodological naturalism are far from trivial and require some sophisticated work. But they can be constructed. As long as the exploration of the world remains "evidentiary-based," everyone should be satisfied."

Guessoum's concluding remarks encapsulate the central methodological commitment of his harmonising approach to Islam and modern science. He distinguishes methodological naturalism from philosophical naturalism, arguing that the former is merely a scientific method for investigating the natural world through empirical evidence without making any metaphysical claims about the existence or non-existence of God.

Consequently, he maintains that Muslims can fully accept the established methods, theories, and findings of modern science while remaining committed to a theistic worldview. This methodological framework is clearly reflected in Guessoum's treatment of biological evolution. Instead of rejecting evolution because of apparent conflicts with a literal reading of the Qur'an, he argues that the relevant Qur'anic passages should be interpreted through a contextual and multilayered hermeneutic that allows them to be reconciled with evolutionary theory. In this way, evolution becomes a representative case of his broader project: preserving the methodological integrity of modern science while reconstructing Islamic theology so that it remains coherent within an evidence-based understanding of the natural world.

He also contends that:

"There are a number of verses in the Qur'an that can be (and have been) interpreted as lending support to

evolution, both the human part of it and the general biological one."

As for the human evolution, some related verses are:

"And He created you in stages" (71:14) and "He it is Who created you from clay, then He decreed a term/era..." (6:2)

While for the biological evolution are:

"Say (O Muhammad): Travel in the land and see how He originated creation, then Allah bringeth forth the later growth. Lo! Allah is Able to do all things." (29:20) and "Do the unbelievers not know that the heavens and the earth were of one piece, then We parted them, and We made every living thing of water? Will they then not believe? (21:30).

Guessoum concludes his discussion of evolution in *Islam's Quantum Question* by criticising Muslim opponents of evolution for what he considers an overly literalist approach to scriptural interpretation. He writes:

"Finally, evolution is highly important in the science-religion/Islam debates, for it is there that one sees the clear difference between those who adopt a simplistic, literalistic reading of the scriptures (in all areas of life and thought) and those who accept the application of hermeneutics and the principle of multiple, multilayered reading of the texts."

This statement suggests that Guessoum associates rejection of evolution primarily with literalist hermeneutics, whereas acceptance of evolutionary theory is linked to a more contextual and multilayered interpretation of revelation. The contrast in his terminology is itself revealing, as it reflects an evaluative distinction between the two interpretive approaches and underscores his preference for the latter.

Other than Guessoum which are less 'radical' than him, David Solomon Jalajel through his book entitled *Islam and Biological Evolution* (2009), his article entitled *Tawaqquf and Acceptance of Human Evolution* (2018), and Shoaib Ahmed Malik with his book entitled *Islam and Evolution: Al-Ghazālī and the Modern Evolutionary Paradigm* (2021), and his article entitled *Adam, Eve, and Human Evolution: Is There a Conflict ?* (2023), are not in the same page with Guessoum's view, by which they view that Adam and Eve's miraculous creations do not necessarily undermine the scientific evidence for evolution as claimed by Guessoum. Shoaib (2023) also remarks that Guessoum's rejection of miracles is the reason behind his negative views on Jalajel's which he sees his thesis as one that "fully contradicts not only the whole scientific perspective on the subject but tons of empirical evidence as well".

Both of Jalajel and Shoaib view that some version of evolution theory can be reconciled with traditional sunni theological framework (which includes Ash'arism, Māturīdism and Atharism), or at least we can arrive at an opinion that does not warrant such a frankly unnecessary rejection evolution (Shoaib, 2020). So, what kind of framework they are proposing for this problem? According to Shoaib (2020), Jalajel proposes a novel theological framework for reconciling the Qur'anic account of Adam with the scientific theory of human evolution through the principle of theological *tawaqquf* (suspension of judgement). He distinguishes this from the legal use of *tawaqquf*, which is a temporary suspension of judgement while awaiting stronger evidence. In theology, however, *tawaqquf* is a permanent epistemological stance adopted when revelation is silent on a particular issue. In such cases, Muslims are neither permitted to affirm nor deny a proposition in the name of Islam because doing so would attribute to God what He has not revealed. Jalajel illustrates this principle with examples such as dinosaurs and quantum mechanics, arguing that since neither the Qur'an nor the Sunnah explicitly addresses these matters, belief, disbelief, or suspension of judgement are all equally compatible with Islamic doctrine.

Applying this principle to human origins, Jalajel argues that while the miraculous creation of Adam is explicitly affirmed by Islamic scripture and therefore cannot be denied, the Qur'an does not state whether Adam was the

first human being on Earth. Consequently, Muslims should adopt theological *tawaqquf* on this question, leaving open the possibility that other humans already existed before Adam's descent and may have arisen through evolutionary processes. Under this model, Adam remains a miraculous creation and an object of faith, while the scientific account of common ancestry is not necessarily excluded. Jalajel therefore neither rejects evolution nor incorporates Adam into the evolutionary process; instead, he separates the theological affirmation of Adam from scientific explanations of human origins. This approach seeks to preserve both the integrity of scriptural teachings and the explanatory scope of evolutionary science without forcing either to resolve questions on which the other remains silent.

Based on this principle, Jalajel suggests there is no inherent theological conflict between Islam and evolution, by which he argues that it is only Adam and Eve that miraculous creations while there is nothing in Islamic scripture that denies the possibility of there being pre/co-Adamic human beings could have been products of evolution (Shoaib, 2021). Shoaib states:

"So Adam and Eve's descendants could have integrated with these other humans, thus forging a human lineage with an evolutionary history. Subsequently, Muslims can happily accept evolution as devout Muslims save for Adam and Eve who were excluded from the process."

Shoaib appreciates his novel approach and he insists that not only he is the sole proponent of Adamic exceptionalism (2021), he also believes that Jalajel has by far one of the most innovative proposals that safeguards both the Islamic narrative and respect for the natural sciences (2020).

While Guessoum holds the position of no exceptions in evolution, meaning that every creature including humans and even Prophet Adam are products of evolution, Jalajel holds the position of Adamic exceptionalism

which excludes Adam from being a product of evolution¹. From the perspective of Adamic exceptionalism, Adam is not a product of evolution due to his miraculous creation while accepting the existence of pre/co-Adamic human beings which may have interbred with the descendents of Adam and subsequently resulting the human population of today. For Jalajel, there is no scripture evidence that rejects this possibility and Shoaib argues that the hermeneutic framework of prominent Ash‘arite theologian, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d.505 AH) also aligns with Adamic exceptionalism and Human exceptionalism positions. However, Shoaib (2021) argues:

"Since scripture is a weighty import in al-Ghazālī’s framework, the closest alignment one can get between Islam and evolution would be Adamic exceptionalism as argued by Jalajel."

Below are the tables related to this discussion:

Table 1: Adopted Classification in Evolution

Position	Are non-humans products of evolution?	Are humans products of evolution?	Is Adam a product of evolution?
Creationism	No	No	No

¹ Two additional positions are also commonly identified within contemporary discussions on Islam and evolutionary theory, namely creationism and human exceptionalism. Creationism, in this context, refers to the view that rejects evolutionary explanations altogether in favour of a direct and special divine creation of all biological species. Human exceptionalism, by contrast, affirms that human beings (including Adam) are not products of evolutionary processes, while often remaining open to, or at least silent on, the possibility that non-human life forms may have arisen through evolution. However, both positions lie beyond the primary focus of the present study. As such, they will not be examined in detail, since the main analytical concern here is directed toward contemporary attempts at reconciling evolutionary theory with Islamic theology rather than positions that categorically reject such reconciliation or limit its scope in a more restrictive manner. Accordingly, they are mentioned only to clarify the broader intellectual landscape within which the current debate is situated.

Human Exceptionalism	Yes	No	No
Adamic Exceptionalism	Yes	Yes	No
No exceptions	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 2: Summary of al-Ghazālī's compatibility with common descent according to Shoaib Malik (2021)

Position	Metaphysical Compatibility ²	Hermeneutic Compatibility ³
Creationism	Yes	Yes
Human Exceptionalism	Yes	Yes
Adamic Exceptionalism	Yes	Yes
No exceptions	Yes	No

Based on the foregoing discussion, it is evident that contemporary attempts to reconcile Islam with evolutionary theory remain highly contested, even among scholars who broadly advocate a harmonising approach to Islam and modern science. The positions advanced by Nidhal Guessoum on the one hand and David Solomon Jalajel and Shoaib Ahmed Malik on the other illustrate that there is no single, unified model of reconciliation. Rather, these scholars differ significantly in their hermeneutical assumptions and theological methodologies, leading to competing accounts of how revelation and evolutionary science should be related.

Guessoum's approach begins from the premise that the established findings of modern science, including biological evolution, should be

² He refers metaphysical compatibility to the omnipotence of God, whether it is logically possible for God to create such manner or not. In other words, whether it is logical to occur or not based on logical reasoning (*dalil 'aqli*).

³ He refers hermeneutic compatibility to al-Ghazālī's hermeneutic framework in understanding scripture evidences. In other words, whether it is mentioned or not in the scripture (*dalil naqli*).

accepted and that Qur'anic texts should consequently be interpreted through a contextual and multilayered hermeneutic capable of accommodating those findings. By contrast, Jalajel and Malik adopt a more text-sensitive approach that seeks to preserve the integrity of scriptural evidence while simultaneously acknowledging the explanatory power of contemporary science. Their use of the principle of theological *tawaqquf* attempts to create conceptual space for evolutionary explanations without requiring Scripture either to affirm or deny scientific claims on matters about which revelation remains silent. Although this proposal is more cautious in its treatment of scriptural interpretation, it nevertheless represents a novel theological strategy for reconciling Islam and evolution.

Despite its originality, the *tawaqquf* approach has itself become the subject of scholarly criticism. In a recent study, Stefano Bigliardi (2025) characterises this proposal as a "failed silver bullet" and argues that it amounts to little more than an "optical illusion," suggesting that it ultimately fails to resolve the underlying theological and epistemological tensions between Islamic doctrine and evolutionary theory. This critique is significant because it demonstrates that even the most recent harmonising models continue to face substantial academic challenges. The following section therefore examines these criticisms in greater detail in order to assess the theological adequacy of contemporary integrative approaches from the perspective of *kalām*.

THEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS IN CONTEMPORARY INTEGRATIVE MODELS: AN ASH‘ARĪ KALĀM PERSPECTIVE

Based on the preceding discussion, this study has identified at least three problems arising from the models under consideration: (i) the problem of the authority of revelation (*wahy*) in the context of the perceived conflict between Islam and science, (ii) the problem of hermeneutical approach in interpreting revealed texts, and (iii) the problem of “exception” in scientific interpretation. As for the first, the issue of reconciling Islam and science is closely tied to the question of how the authority of revelation should be properly situated. From

the Ash‘arī kalām perspective, the authoritative sources of knowledge are generally confined to three: truthful report (*ḵabar ṣādiq*), sensory perception (*al-ḥawās*), and intellect (*al-‘aql*) (Ibn Fūrak, 2022). However, knowledge derived from these sources does not necessarily possess uniform epistemic strength, nor is it equally applicable across all domains. What is established as certain through sensory perception, for instance, may not hold in non-empirical domains such as the nature of God and His attributes. For this reason, Islamic theologians (*mutakallimūn*) and logicians (*manāṭiqah*) have devoted considerable attention to the analysis of syllogistic premises (*manwād al-aqīsah*), since faulty conclusions often arise from flawed or improperly constructed premises. A prominent Persian logician, Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 766 AH), in his commentary on *al-Risālah al-Shamsiyyah* (1929), states:

كما يجب على المنطقي النظر في صورة الأقيسة، كذلك يجب عليه النظر في موادها الكلية حتى يمكنه الاحتراز عن الخطأ في الفكر من جهتي الصورة والمادة.

Trans: Just as it is obligatory for a logician to analyze the form of a syllogism, it is likewise obligatory for them to analyze its universal matter, so that they may avoid error in thought regarding both form and matter (premise).

Al-Ghazālī (2019), in his theological summa *al-Iqtisād fī al-I‘tiqād*, raises a hypothetical question that may be posed by an interlocutor: “How do our opponents ascertain the truth value of the premises in our syllogism? From where are the first principles that must necessarily be accepted ultimately derived?” In response, al-Ghazālī enumerates six categories of axioms (although he acknowledges the existence of others) that may function as premises in theological argumentation: (i) *al-ḥisṣiyāt* (sensory data), (ii) *al-‘aql al-mahḍ* (purely rational or self-evident axioms), (iii) *al-mutamātirāt* (mass-transmitted reports or events), (iv) propositions established through prior demonstrative proof, (v) *al-sam‘iyyāt* (scripturally revealed facts), and (vi) the

opponent's own accepted premises, particularly when the issue arises within a contested worldview. However, not all of these axioms are self-evident (*badīhī*), as some are inferential (*naẓarī*) in nature, though they may nonetheless be provisionally accepted (*musallam*) within the context of a given dialectical exchange.

This raises the question of the proper epistemic status of revelation (*wahy*) from the perspective of Ash'arī kalām. In *al-Mustaṣfā min 'Ilm al-Uṣūl*, al-Ghazālī (1993) argues that the task of the theologian (*mutakallim*) is to investigate being as such (*al-wujūd bi-mā huwa wujūd*) though strictly within the parameters of Islamic doctrine (*'alā qānūn al-Islām*), in contrast to the approach of the philosophers. The ultimate aim of this inquiry is to establish the existence of God, His divinity, and the truthfulness of prophethood. Once the truth of prophethood has been firmly established, the role of rational theological inquiry effectively comes to an end, as the authority of revelation is thereby secured.. Al-Ghazālī says:

عِنْدَ هَذَا يَنْقَطِعُ كَلَامُ الْمُتَكَلِّمِ وَيَنْتَهِي تَصَرُّفُ الْعَقْلِ، بَلَّ الْعَقْلُ يَدُلُّ عَلَى صِدْقِ النَّبِيِّ.
ثُمَّ يَغْرِلُ نَفْسَهُ وَيَعْتَرِفُ بِأَنَّهُ يَتَلَقَّى مِنَ النَّبِيِّ بِالْقَبُولِ مَا يَقُولُهُ فِي اللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ مِمَّا
يَسْتَقِيلُ الْعَقْلُ بِدَرْكِهِ وَلَا يَقْضِي أَيْضًا بِاسْتِحْالَتِهِ فَقَدْ يَرُدُّ الشَّرْعُ مِمَّا يَقْضِي الْعَقْلُ عَنْ
الِاسْتِفْلَالِ بِإِذْرَاكِهِ إِذْ لَا يَسْتَقِيلُ الْعَقْلُ بِإِذْرَاكِ كَوْنِ الطَّاعَةِ سَبَبًا لِلْسَّعَادَةِ فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَكَوْنِ
الْمَعَاصِي لِلشَّقَاوَةِ، لَكِنَّهُ لَا يَقْضِي بِاسْتِحْالَتِهِ أَيْضًا، وَيَقْضِي بِوُجُوبِ صِدْقِ مَنْ دَلَّتْ
الْمُعْجَزَةُ عَلَى صِدْقِهِ، فَإِذَا أُخْبِرَ عَنْهُ صَدَقَ الْعَقْلُ بِهِ بِهَذِهِ الطَّرِيقِ فَهَذَا مَا يَحْتَوِيهِ عِلْمُ
الْكَلَامِ

Trans: At this point, the discourse of the *mutakallim* comes to an end, and the operation of reason reaches its limit. Indeed, the role of reason is to establish the truthfulness of the Prophet. Once this has been accomplished, reason withdraws itself and acknowledges that it receives, with acceptance, whatever the Prophet says concerning God and the Hereafter matters that

reason is incapable of independently apprehending, yet neither judges to be impossible. The revealed law (*shar'*) may thus convey matters whose independent comprehension lies beyond the capacity of reason. For reason cannot, by itself, know that acts of obedience are the cause of happiness in the Hereafter, or that acts of disobedience lead to misery. Nevertheless, it does not judge such claims to be impossible. Rather, reason concludes that it is necessary to affirm the truthfulness of the one whose veracity has been established by a miracle. Consequently, when such a person reports these matters, reason assents to them by virtue of this very proof. This is the extent of what the science of *kalām* encompasses.

While in his *al-Iqtīṣād*, he writes:

وَأَمَّا الْمَعْلُومُ بِمَجَرَّدِ السَّمْعِ، فَيُخَصِّصُ أَحَدَ الْجَائِزِينَ بِالْوُقُوعِ، فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ مَوَاقِفِ الْعُقُولِ،
وَأَمَّا يَعْرِفُ مِنَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى بِوَحْيٍ وَهَامٍ.

Trans: As for that which is known solely through revelation (*sam'*), it serves to determine which of two equally possible alternatives has in fact occurred. This lies beyond the scope of reason's independent judgment and can only be known from God through revelation and divine intuition.

كُلُّ مَا وَرَدَ السَّمْعُ بِهِ يَنْظَرُ، فَإِنْ كَانَ الْعَقْلُ مُجَوِّزًا لَهُ، وَجِبَ التَّصَدِيقُ بِهِ قَطْعًا إِنْ كَانَتْ
الْأَدْلَةُ السَّمْعِيَّةُ قَاطِعَةً فِي مَنَتِهَا وَسَنَدِهَا لَا يَتَرَقُّ إِلَيْهَا اِحْتِمَالٌ، وَوَجِبَ التَّصَدِيقُ بِهَا
ظَنًّا إِنْ كَانَتْ ظَنِيَّةً... وَأَمَّا مَا قَضَى الْعَقْلُ بِاسْتِحْثَالِهِ، فَيُجِبُّ فِيهِ تَأْوِيلٌ مَا وَرَدَ السَّمْعُ بِهِ،
وَلَا يَتَصَوَّرُ أَنْ يَشْتَمِلَ السَّمْعُ عَلَى قَاطِعٍ مُخَالِفٍ لِلْمَعْقُولِ، وَظَوَاهِرُ أَحَادِيثِ التَّشْبِيهِ أَكْثَرُهَا
غَيْرُ صَحِيحَةٍ، وَالصَّحِيحُ مِنْهَا لَيْسَ بِقَاطِعٍ، بَلْ هُوَ قَابِلٌ لِلتَّأْوِيلِ.

Trans: Everything conveyed by revelation must be examined. If reason deems it possible, then it must be

affirmed with certainty whenever the revelatory evidence is definitive (*qat'ī*) both in its transmission and its indication, leaving no room for doubt. If, however, the revelatory evidence is speculative (*ẓannī*), then it must be accepted with corresponding probability. As for that which reason judges to be impossible, any scriptural text that appears to affirm it must be interpreted figuratively (*ta'wīl*). It is inconceivable that revelation should contain any definitive proof that contradicts what is established by reason. The apparent meanings of the ḥadīths concerning divine anthropomorphism (*tashbīḥ*) are, for the most part, not authentic; and those that are authentic are not definitive, but rather admit of figurative interpretation.

From the quoted passages, it is evident that al-Ghazālī's approach to reconciling reason and revelation is grounded in the logical status of the subject under consideration. When a matter belongs to the realm of contingents (*al-mumkināt* or *al-jā'izāt*), such that reason judges both its affirmation and negation to be equally possible, revelation serves to determine which of these possibilities is actual. Accordingly, if revelation affirms the occurrence or reality of such a contingent matter, it becomes obligatory to affirm it as well, since revelation is from God. As God's speech is necessarily true and incapable of containing falsehood or asserting what is logically impossible, revelation provides decisive knowledge regarding matters that reason alone cannot independently determine. The logical reasoning behind this theological stance as stated by Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī (d.631 AH) in his *Ghāyah al-Marām fī 'Ilm al-Kalām* (1971) is:

إِنَّ الْقَوْلَ بِاسْتِحَالَةِ الْكَذِبِ فِي حَقِّ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى بِمَّا لَا يَسْتَعِدُّ إِلَى سَمْعٍ وَلَا إِلَى التَّحْسِينِ
وَالْتَفْيِيحِ وَإِنْ حَصَرَ مَدْرَكَ ذَلِكَ فِي هَذَيْنِ بَاطِلٍ بِلِ الْمَدْرَكَ فِي ذَلِكَ أَنْ يُقَالَ قَدْ ثَبَتَ
كَوْنُ الْبَارِي تَعَالَى عَالِمًا مُتَكَلِّمًا وَأَنَّ كَلَامَهُ فِي نَفْسِهِ وَاحِدٌ وَذَلِكَ لَا يَقْبَلُ الصَّدْقُ وَالْكَذِبُ

وَأَمَّا يَقْبَلُ ذَلِكَ مِنْ جِهَةٍ كَوْنِهِ خَبْرًا وَخَبْرِيَّةً لَهُ مِنْ جِهَةٍ مُتَعَلِّقَةٍ لَا غَيْرَ فَلَوْ تَعْلُقُ خَبْرَهُ بِشَيْءٍ مَا عَلَى خِلَافٍ مَا هُوَ عَلَيْهِ لَمْ يَحِلَّ إِذَا أَنْ يَكُونَ ذَلِكَ فِي خَالَةِ الْغَفْلَةِ وَالذَّهْوِلِ أَوْ مَعَ الْعِلْمِ بِهِ فَإِنْ كَانَ مَعَ الْغَفْلَةِ فَيَلْزَمُ مِنْهُ إِبْطَالُ الدَّلِيلِ الْقَاطِعِ عَلَى كَوْنِهِ عَالِمًا وَإِنْ كَانَ ذَلِكَ مَعَ الْعِلْمِ بِهِ عَلَى مَا هُوَ عَلَيْهِ فَلَا مَحَالَةَ أَنْ تَعْلُقَ الْحَبْرُ بِمَا هُوَ مَعْلُومٌ غَيْرَ مُسْتَحِيلٍ بَلْ وَاجِبٌ عَلَى نَحْوِ تَعْلُقِ الْإِرَادَةِ وَالْقُدْرَةِ بِمُتَعَلِّقَاتِهَا كَمَا يَبَيِّنُهُ وَعِنْدَ ذَلِكَ فَلَوْ تَعْلُقُ الْحَبْرُ بِالْمَعْلُومِ عَلَى خِلَافٍ مَا هُوَ عَلَيْهِ لَمْ يَحِلَّ إِذَا أَنْ يَصَحَّ تَعْلُقُ الْحَبْرُ بِهِ عَلَى مَا هُوَ عَلَيْهِ أَوْ لَا يَصَحُّ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَصَحَّ فَهُوَ مُحَالٌ وَإِنْ صَحَّ لَزِمَ مِنْهُ جَوَازُ تَعْلُقِ الْحَبْرِ بِشَيْءٍ وَاحِدٍ عَلَى مَا هُوَ بِهِ وَعَلَى خِلَافٍ مَا هُوَ بِهِ وَهُوَ مُحَالٌ إِذَا الْحَبْرُ يَسْتَدْعِي مَخْبَرًا عَنْهُ إِذَا الْحَبْرُ وَلَا مَخْبَرٌ مُحَالٌ وَإِذَا اسْتَدْعَى مَخْبَرًا فَأَلْوَاجِبُ أَنْ يَكُونَ مُتَصَوِّرًا فِي نَفْسِهِ فَإِنْ تَعْلُقَ الْحَبْرُ بِمَخْبَرٍ غَيْرِ مُتَصَوِّرٍ نَازِلٍ مِنْزَلَةَ الْحَبْرِ وَلَا مَخْبَرٍ وَعِنْدَ ذَلِكَ فَلَا يَخْفَى أَنَّ الْمَخْبَرِ عَنْهُ هَهُنَا غَيْرُ مُتَصَوِّرٍ إِذَا الْجَمْعُ بَيْنَ الشَّيْءِ وَنَقِيضِهِ مُحَالٌ فَلَا يَتَصَوَّرُ أَنْ يَقُومَ بِنَفْسِ الْقَائِلِ الْإِخْبَارِ عَنْهُ فَلَوْ تَعْلُقُ خَبْرَ الْبَارِي تَعَالَى بِالشَّيْءِ عَلَى خِلَافٍ مَا هُوَ عَلَيْهِ لِلزَّمِ مِنْهُ هَذَا الْمَحَالُ وَهُوَ مُنْتَعٍ وَهَذَا ظَاهِرٌ لَا مَرَأَ فِيهِ وَلَا شُبْهَةَ أَوْ ظَنٍّ يَعْزِيهِ وَإِذَا ثَبَتَ امْتِنَاعُ قِيَامِ الْحَبْرِ الْكَاذِبِ بِنَفْسِ الْبَارِي وَأَنْ يُظْهِرَ الْمَعْجِزَةَ عَلَى يَدِ النَّبِيِّ نَازِلَ مِنْزَلَةَ الْإِخْبَارِ بِالتَّصْدِيقِ فَلَوْ لَمْ تَكُنْ دَالَّةً عَلَى وَفْقِ مَا قَامَ بِالنَّفْسِ مِنَ الْحَبْرِ الصَّادِقِ وَإِلَّا لَمَا كَانَتْ نَازِلَةً مِنْزَلَةَ التَّصْدِيقِ وَهُوَ مُنْتَعٍ لَمَا سَبَقَ

Trans: The assertion that falsehood is impossible with respect to God Most High is not founded upon revelation (*sam*), nor upon the doctrine of moral goodness and evil (*tahsīm* and *taqbiḥ*). Indeed, restricting its basis to these two is mistaken. Rather, its true foundation is as follows:

It has already been established that God, the Exalted, is knowing (*‘alim*) and speaking (*mutakallim*), and that His speech (*kalām*) is one and subsists in His essence. In itself, this speech is neither truthful nor false; rather, truthfulness and falsehood apply to it only insofar as it functions as informative discourse (*khābar*), and its informative character derives solely from its relation to

that which it signifies. If His informative speech were to correspond to something contrary to the way that thing actually is, then one of two alternatives would necessarily follow: either this would occur in a state of ignorance or inadvertence, or it would occur while He fully knew the matter. If it occurred through ignorance or forgetfulness, this would invalidate the conclusive proof establishing that God is all-knowing. But if it occurred while He knew the matter exactly as it is, then it necessarily follows that His report must correspond to what is known. Indeed, this is not merely possible but necessary, in the same way that the divine will and power necessarily relate to their proper objects, as we have previously demonstrated. Furthermore, if His report were to relate to something contrary to its actual reality, then either the report could also correctly relate to the thing as it truly is, or it could not. If it could not, this is impossible. But if it could, then it would follow that one and the same report could simultaneously relate to a single object both as it truly is and as it is not. This is impossible. For a report necessarily presupposes something reported about (*mukhbbar* 'anhu); a report without any object of report is inconceivable. Since a report requires an object, that object must itself be intelligible and conceivable. If a report were directed toward something inconceivable, it would amount to a report without any object at all. In the present case, however, the alleged object of the report is itself inconceivable, because the conjunction of a thing with its own contradictory is impossible. Consequently, it is impossible for such a report to subsist in the speaker's mind. Therefore, if God's report were to concern a thing contrary to the way it actually is, this impossibility would necessarily follow. Since that is impossible, falsehood

cannot pertain to God's speech. This conclusion is evident, admits of no dispute, and is not susceptible to doubt or uncertainty. Once it has been established that false reporting cannot subsist in the essence of God, and that the manifestation of a miracle at the hands of a prophet is equivalent to God's declaration of that prophet's truthfulness, it follows that the miracle must correspond to the truthful divine report subsisting in God's eternal speech. Otherwise, it could not function as divine authentication (*taṣḍīq*) of the prophet. Such a supposition is impossible for the reasons already established.

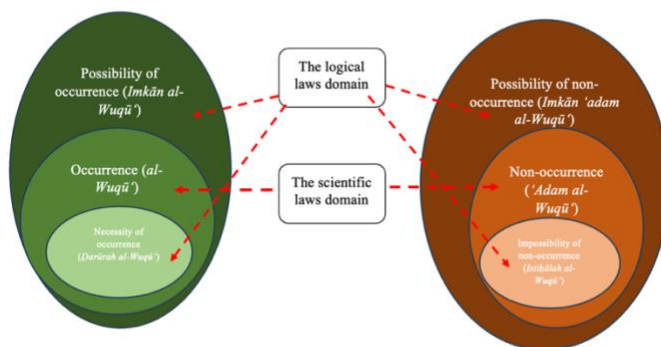
The passage argues that the impossibility of falsehood in God's speech is established through reason rather than revelation or the doctrine of intrinsic moral values (*taḥṣīn* and *taqbiḥ*). Since God has already been rationally demonstrated to be omniscient and possessed of eternal speech, any informative divine speech must necessarily correspond to His perfect knowledge. Were God to report something contrary to reality, this would either imply ignorance -thereby contradicting His omniscience- or entail the impossible coexistence of contradictory propositions. Consequently, falsehood is metaphysically impossible for God. On this basis, al-Āmidī concludes that miracles, as divine acts of authentication, necessarily testify to the truthfulness of the prophets, since a God incapable of falsehood cannot endorse a false claimant to prophethood. This argument establishes the rational foundation for the certainty of prophetic revelation independently of scriptural authority.

Hence, there are two integral steps in affirming a proposition derived from revelation. First, one must determine the logical status of the subject in question whether it is necessary (*wājib*), possible (*mumkin*), or impossible (*mustaḥīl*). If it is either necessary or possible, its affirmation becomes obligatory. However, if it is logically impossible, then, provided that its attribution is established through a definitive source such as the Qur'ān or

mutawātir ḥadīth, it must be interpreted figuratively (*majāz*) in accordance with the principles of *uṣūl al-fiqh*. With regard to contemporary scientific findings, particularly those concerning historical accounts such as human evolution, these are generally situated within the realm of possibility (*imkān*), since the creation of human beings is ultimately an act of God. It is important to note, however, that the realm of possibility encompasses two dimensions: (i) actual occurrence (*al-wuqūʿ*) and (ii) non-occurrence (*ʿadam al-wuqūʿ*).

As noted by the last Ottoman Shaykh al-Islām, Muṣṭafā Ṣabrī Efendī (d. 1954), scientific methods can only establish the occurrence of events; they are incapable of determining either logical necessity or logical impossibility (Muṣṭafā Ṣabrī, 2007). This limitation stems from the fact that such methods are grounded in observation and experimentation, which yield patterns of regularity and habitual succession, but do not in themselves entail metaphysical or causal necessity. This distinction is also relevant to logical arguments for the existence of God, which proceed by reasoning from contingent creation to necessary existence⁴: The following diagram illustrates the domain distinction between logical laws and empirical laws:

Diag. 1: The domain distinction between logical laws and empirical laws



⁴ This diagram was inspired by Tahseen N. Khan during his presentation at Academy of Islamic Studies University Malaya in 2024.

Herein lies the dilemma for Muslim proponents of evolution: the scientific method can only reliably infer the occurrence of human evolution insofar as it is based on observable evidence, yet its epistemic reach remains limited to what can be empirically detected and verified. Muḥammad al-Dusūqī (2022) in his gloss on the commentary of al-Taftāzānī's summary of logic by al-Khabīṣī says:

قال في شرح المواقف: اعلم أنّ الحِسَّ لا يفيد إلا حكمًا جزئيًا كقولنا: هذه النار حارة، وأما الحكم بأن كل نار حارة، فمستفاد من الإحساس بجزئيات كثيرة مع الوقوف على العلة.

Trans: He states in *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*: "Know that sense perception (*ḥiss*) yields only particular judgments, such as our statement, 'This fire is hot.' As for the judgment that 'Every fire is hot,' this is derived from the perception of numerous particular instances together with the recognition of the underlying cause."

Here, al-Dusūqī cites al-Jurjānī's explanation regarding the limitation of sensory indication (*al-dalālah al-ḥissīyyah*), namely that the senses apprehend only particular instances of knowledge (for example, one sees a specific MacBook in front of oneself). The statement "this fire is hot" is significant in this regard, since the demonstrative pronoun (*ism al-ishārah*), such as "this" (*ḥadhihi*), indicates the particularity of the perceptual judgment delivered by sense experience. By contrast, to generalize such a judgment (e.g., "every fire is hot"), two conditions must be fulfilled: (i) repeated sensory observation of a sufficiently large number of particular instances, and (ii) apprehension of the underlying causal factor governing the recurrence of the observed phenomenon. When these conditions are met, the resulting conclusion is considered certain (*yaqīnī*). This certainty arises specifically from the grasp of the causal principle inferred through repeated observation, which transforms mere induction into demonstrative knowledge. Al-Dusūqī further explains on the certainty of empirical experiments (*al-tajribāt*):

أي المفيدة لليقين بواسطة قياس خفي، وهو أنّ الوقوع المتكرر على النهج الواحد
لا بد له من سبب وإن لم تعرف ماهية ذلك السبب.

Trans: That is, they yield certainty by means of an implicit syllogism, namely: a phenomenon that occurs repeatedly in the same manner must have an underlying cause, even if the nature of that cause is not itself known.

Another glosser of al-Khabīṣī's commentary, an Egyptian-Azharian theologian, Ḥasan al-ʿAṭṭār (2022) also states:

ولا بد من انضمام قياس خفي، وهو أنّ الواقع المتكرر على نهج واحد دائماً أو أكثرًا لا
يكون اتفاقًا، بل لا بد من سبب وإن لم تعرف ماهية ذلك السبب، وكلما علم وجود
السبب، علم جود المسبب قطعاً.

Trans: It is necessary to supplement this (*al-tajribah*) with an implicit syllogism, namely: that a phenomenon which repeatedly occurs in the same manner, either invariably or in the vast majority of cases, cannot be attributed to mere coincidence. Rather, it must have an underlying cause, even if the nature of that cause is unknown. Whenever the existence of the cause is established, the existence of its effect is known with certainty.

Based on this explanation, a scientific judgement can only yield certainty if the observations carried out repeatedly and they entail the same conclusion, consistently (*dā'im*) or even in the vast majority of cases (*akthari*) as mentioned by al-ʿAṭṭār, while the observer acquires or recognizes the underlying cause which is the implicit syllogism (*qiyās khaṭī*). This implicit syllogism is "a phenomenon that occurs repeatedly in the same manner must have an underlying cause". In the perspective of Ashʿarī Kalām, the

underlying cause is the God's established customary practice or the habitual law (*Sunnatullāh*/*Ḥukm al-‘Ādah*), by which whenever an ill person takes medication, it is God's established customary practice to create recovery. Accordingly, God alone is the true agent of healing. However, human beings are able to know that, according to His customary order, the taking of medicine is regularly accompanied by the creation of healing. This mode of inference is referred to as *dalālat al-iqtirān* (indication by concomitance or constant conjunction).

A prominent Azharian theologian, Muḥammad Rabīʿ al-Jawharī (2018) says:

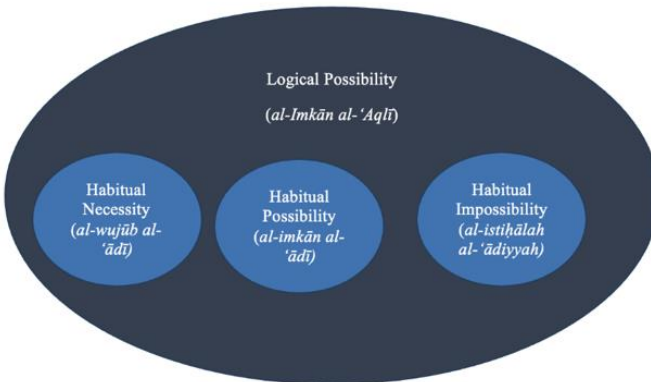
يرى المتكلمون أنّ الموجد للممكنات جميعها بإرادته واختياره هو الله تعالى، ولا تأثير لغيره في الإيجاد لا بالاختيار ولا بالتعليل ولا بالطبع. والله تعالى ليس علة لوجود الأشياء بل هو فاعل بالاختيار، إن شاء فعل، وإن شاء ترك. وكذلك صفاته تعالى لا يقال لها علة، ولم ينكروا بعض الممكنات يقال لها علة وبعضها يقال له معلول. وعرفوا العلة بأنها الأمر الذي جرت عادة الله تعالى أن يخلق الشيء عقب تحققه، وعرفوا المعلول بأنه ما يوجد عقب تحقق العلة كالشبع عقب الأكل والريّ عقب الشرب. وذلك بدون تأثير المتقدم في المتأخر، وإنما هو جريان العادة.

Trans: The mutakallimūn maintain that God alone is the creator of all contingent beings (*mumkināt*), bringing them into existence by His will and free choice. Nothing besides Him has any causal efficacy in producing existence, whether through voluntary agency, necessary causation, or natural force. Accordingly, God is not described as the cause (*‘illah*) of the existence of things; rather, He is an agent who acts by free choice (*fā‘il bi’l-ikhtiyār*): if He wills, He acts, and if He wills, He refrains. Likewise, His attributes are not designated as causes. **Nevertheless, the mutakallimūn did not deny that certain contingent beings may conventionally be described as causes**, while others are described as

effects (*ma'lūlāt*). They defined a cause as that upon whose occurrence God has customarily (*'ādatan*) created another thing immediately thereafter. Correspondingly, an effect is that which comes into existence following the occurrence of the cause, such as satiety after eating or the quenching of thirst after drinking. **This succession, however, does not result from any causal efficacy of the antecedent over the consequent**; rather, it is simply the operation of God's established custom (*jaryān al-'ādah*)

Thus, it is concluded through Ash'arī framework that the scientific laws are in the realm of logical contingency and possibility (*al-imkān al-'aqlī*) and subjected to Allah's customary practice. More particularly, they are in the realm of habitual or nomic laws which also are divided into three categories: i) necessity, ii) impossibility, and iii) possibility. Nevertheless, these three categories are fall into the realm of logical possibility. The following diagram illustrates this discussion further:

Diag. 2: The relationship between the logical possibility and the habitual laws



Returning to the earlier discussion of the dilemma faced by Muslim proponents of evolution, the tension arises when scientific findings are taken to imply either (i) the necessity of a given event while revelation appears to affirm its contrary, or (ii) the impossibility of an event while revelation affirms its occurrence. An example of the first case is the claim that scientific laws necessitate human evolution, whereas revelation explicitly states that all human beings descend from Prophet Adam, peace be upon him. An example of the second is the claim that physical laws render human travel at hyper-sonic speed impossible, while revelation affirms the Prophet Muhammad's, peace be upon him, ascension in the event of *al-Isrā' wa al-Mi'rāj*. In light of such apparent conflicts, two interrelated problems emerge, as previously outlined in this section: (i) the problem of the authority of revelation (*nahy*) in the context of the Islam–science relationship, and (ii) the problem of “exception” in scientific interpretation.

As for the first issue, several questions may be raised against Muslim proponents of human evolution. First, on what epistemic basis do they consider it necessary to reinterpret Qur'ānic verses concerning human creation and Adam so as to render them compatible with evolutionary theory? If the answer is that scientific findings constitute logically conclusive evidence (*qaṭ'i 'aqli*), then, from an epistemological standpoint, this position is untenable, since, as argued earlier, all scientific laws operate within the domain of logical contingency. If, on the other hand, the answer is that scientific findings remain conjectural (*ẓanni 'aqli*) yet are still deemed sufficient to justify allegorical reinterpretation of Qur'ānic verses, then such an approach appears to contravene the established principles of interpreting scriptural texts within *uṣūl al-fiqh*. A prominent Persian Ash'arī theologian, jurist and exegete, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī in his pivotal work of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, namely *al-Maḥṣūl fī 'Ilm al-Uṣūl* writes:

والتأويل عبارة عن احتمال يعضده دليل يصير به أغلب على الظن من المعنى الذي دل عليه الظاهر

Trans: *Ta'wīl* (figurative interpretation) is an interpretive possibility supported by evidence that renders it more probable than the meaning indicated by the apparent wording (*ẓāhir*).

From this quote, it is evident that figurative interpretation only can be used in the apparent verse (*al-ẓāhir*), not in the explicit verse (*al-naṣṣ*) where it can only be interpreted in one meaning and can't be interpreted figuratively. 'Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d.756 AH) in his commentary on Ibn al-Ḥājj's summary of uṣūl al-fiqh (2000) writes:

فالظاهر في اللغة هو: الواضح ومنه الظاهر، وفي الاصطلاح: ما دل على معنى دلالة ظنية وعلى هذا فالنص وهو ما دل دلالة قطعية

Trans: Linguistically, *ẓāhir* (the apparent) means "that which is clear or manifest," from which the word *ẓahr* ("back" or "surface") is derived. Technically, it refers to an expression that indicates a meaning with probabilistic (*ẓanni*) signification. Accordingly, a *naṣṣ* (explicit text) is that which indicates a meaning with definitive (*qaṭ'i*) signification.

He also divides *al-ta'wīl* into three types:

التأويل ثلاثة أقسام: لأنه قد يكون قريباً فيترجح لقرينه بأدنى مرجح، وقد يكون بعيداً فيحتاج لبُعده إلى المرجح الأقوى ولا يترجح بالمرجح الأدنى، وقد يكون متعذراً لا يحتمله اللفظ فلا يكون مقبولاً بل يجب ردُّه والحكمُ ببطالانه.

Trans: Figurative interpretation (*ta'wīl*) is classified into three categories. The first is a *proximate interpretation*, which is sufficiently close to the apparent meaning (*ẓāhir*) that even minimal corroborative evidence is enough to render it preferable. The second is a remote

interpretation, which departs more substantially from the apparent meaning and therefore requires compelling evidence before it can be accepted. The third is an *untenable interpretation*, one that the linguistic expression cannot possibly accommodate. Such an interpretation is inadmissible and must be dismissed as invalid.

Based on the quoted passages, it is evident that figurative interpretation (*ta'wīl*) is generally restricted to (i) texts of apparent meaning (*ẓawāhir*) and (ii) cases of remote interpretation (*ta'wīl ba'id*), which require strong supporting evidence. Such interpretation is admissible only in relation to *ẓawāhir*, since an explicit text (*naṣṣ*) conveys a meaning with definitive signification (*qaṭ'i al-dalālah*) and, as such, is not open to allegorical reinterpretation. An example of this is the Qur'ānic affirmation of divine oneness in Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ, which is universally understood as unequivocal and not subject to figurative reading. However, it is not sufficiently addressed whether the Qur'ānic verses invoked by proponents of evolution, including those associated with Adamic exceptionalism, legitimately fall within the scope of *ta'wīl* under this framework. This issue is crucial, as one of the central reasons for the reluctance among the majority of Muslims to accept evolutionary theory lies in the fact that the Qur'ānic discourse, together with Prophetic traditions, appears to indicate in a decisive manner the miraculous creation of Adam and his status as the sole origin of humankind. Muṣṭafā Ṣabrī (2008) says:

والمدعي يستند إلى عدم كون النفس الواحدة في قوله تعالى في أول سورة النساء "يا أيها الناس اتقوا ربكم الذي خلقكم من نفس واحدة" نصًا في أبينا آدم وفيه أن قوله تعالى بعد "وخلق منها زوجها وبث منهما رجالا كثيرا ونساء" يدل دلالة قطعية على أن المراد من نفس واحدة سيدنا آدم.

Trans: The proponent of Darwinian evolution bases their argument on the assertion that the phrase "a single soul"

(*nafs wāḥidah*) in God's statement at the beginning of Surah al-Nisa' "*O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from a single soul*" -is not an explicit (*naṣṣ*) reference to our forefather Adam. However, the subsequent words of the verse "*and created from it its mate, and from the two of them spread many men and women*" provide definitive (*qaṭʿi*) evidence that the intended meaning of "a single soul" is indeed our master Adam.

Another decisive evidence in this matter is Abū Manṣūr al-Baghdādī (2020), a prominent Ashʿari theologian, records a consensus (*ijmāʿ*) of Muslims regarding to Adam as the first human and its origin:

وأنكرت المجوس كلها ما عليه المسلمون وأهل الكتاب في انتساب الناس إلى آدم وحواء
وما ذكروه من خلق آدم عليه السلام من التراب وخلق حواء من ضلع آدم وانتشار النسل
منهما بعد ذلك.

Trans: The *Majūs*, without exception, denied the doctrine affirmed by both Muslims and the People of the Book regarding the descent of humankind from Adam and Eve. They also rejected the accounts that Adam, peace be upon him, was created from dust, Eve from Adam's rib, and that all subsequent human beings originated from the two of them.

Not only al-Baghdādī, Ibn Qaṭṭān al-Fāsī (2004) also writes:

وأجمع المسلمون على أن الله تعالى خصّ آدم عليه السلام بأن خلقه بيده وأسجد له
وملائكته وجعله أبًا .

Trans: There is consensus among Muslims that God, exalted be He, singled out Adam, peace be upon him, by creating him directly with His own hand, ordering the angels to prostrate to him, and appointing him as the father of humanity.

Interpreting the first verse of al-Nisa', al-Rāzī (2000) says:

ثَبَّتَ بِالذَّلِيلِ الْقَاطِعَةِ أَنَّهُ يَمْتَنِعُ الْقَوْلُ بِوُجُودِ حَوَادِثٍ لَا أَوَّلَ لَهَا، وَإِذَا ثَبَّتَ هَذَا ظَهَرَ
وُجُوبُ انْتِهَاءِ الْحَوَادِثِ إِلَى حَدِيثٍ أَوَّلٍ هُوَ أَوَّلُ الْحَوَادِثِ، وَإِذَا كَانَ كَذَلِكَ فَلَا بُدَّ مِنْ
انْتِهَاءِ النَّاسِ إِلَى إِنْسَانٍ هُوَ أَوَّلُ النَّاسِ، وَإِذَا كَانَ كَذَلِكَ فَذَلِكَ الْإِنْسَانُ الْأَوَّلُ غَيْرُ مَخْلُوقٍ
مَعَ الْأَبَوَيْنِ فَيَكُونُ مَخْلُوقًا لَا مَحَالَةَ بِفُتْرَةِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى. فَقَوْلُهُ: وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ إِشَارَةً
إِلَى ذَلِكَ الْإِنْسَانِ الْأَوَّلِ، وَالْمُفَسِّرُونَ أَجْمَعُونَ عَلَى أَنَّ الْمُرَادَ مِنْهُ هُوَ آدَمُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ

Trans: It has been established through conclusive proofs that it is impossible for there to exist an infinite regress of events (*hawādith*) with no beginning. Once this is established, it becomes evident that events must necessarily terminate in a first event, which is the very first of all events. And if this is the case, then humanity must likewise trace back to a first human being, who is the first of humankind. If that is so, then this first human cannot have been created through the mediation of parents; rather, he must have been created—without exception—by the power of God Most High. **Thus, the divine statement, “And We have certainly created man...” is an indication of that first human being, and the exegetes are unanimously agreed that the intended referent of this verse is Adam, peace be upon him.**

On the authority of Muslim scholars consensus, al-Ghazālī (2019) states:

لا معنى للتحكم بإنكار ما فهمه أهل الإجماع من القرآن

Trans: There is no justification for arbitrarily denying what the consensus of scholars (*ahl al-ijmāʿ*) have understood from the Qurʾān.

Having said that, this leads to the third problem outlined earlier in this section, namely the hermeneutical approach to interpreting revealed texts. Proponents of Adamic exceptionalism tend to focus primarily on the principle of *tawaqquf*, while not engaging rigorously with issues of consensus (*ijmāʿ*) or with the classification of relevant verses as either definitive texts (*nuṣūṣ*) or merely apparent ones (*ẓawāhir*) in their interpretation of passages concerning Adam and human beings. If these verses are regarded as *ẓawāhir*, then an important question arises: what is the *qarīnah* (indicator) or *murajjih* (preponderant evidence) that justifies their figurative interpretation?

Furthermore, what is the epistemic status of such an indicator does it reach a level sufficient to warrant an acceptable interpretive justification, as discussed by al-Ījī and other jurists, or is it insufficient for that purpose? On this basis, it may be argued that although the position of Adamic exceptionalism might assist some Muslim proponents of evolution in reconciling Islam with evolutionary theory, it nonetheless fails to satisfy the majority of Muslims, particularly those who regard *uṣūl al-fiqh* as the authoritative framework for interpreting revelation. Indeed, some of its more radical implications -such as the proposed interbreeding between the descendants of Adam and pre- or co-Adamic hominids- introduce more problems than they resolve in relation to the traditional understanding of Adam as the father of all humankind, a view upheld by Muslim consensus (*ijmāʿ*). Attempts to reinterpret Adam's role as the progenitor of humanity through such scenarios challenge the established principles of *taʾwīl*, which is only valid in relation to probabilistic texts, while *ijmāʿ* is regarded in *uṣūl al-fiqh* as a definitive form of revealed proof (*naqli qatʿi*).

Another question that may be raised against proponents of Adamic exceptionalism concerns the basis of the exception they posit within their theoretical framework. Why is Adam, peace be upon him, treated as an exception within a generally evolutionarily informed account of human origins? According to Shoaib's neo-Ash'arite framework, this is justified on two grounds: (i) its metaphysical possibility (*mumkin 'aqli*), and (ii) the absence of explicit scriptural statements affirming human evolution. However, when this framework is subjected to closer scrutiny, several significant difficulties emerge.

First, one may ask whether science -as a methodological enterprise- can accommodate miraculous events such as the special creation of Adam or other extraordinary occurrences like the Mi'rāj. If the answer is affirmative, then the claim is problematic, since such events are neither empirically accessible nor derivable from physical theories. If the answer is negative, then proponents of this view must nevertheless allow for exceptions to established natural regularities, which is precisely what their own notion of "exception" entails. The difficulty arises when this framework is presented as a means of interpreting Islamic doctrines through the lens of modern science, potentially in order to accommodate scientific sensibilities. In doing so, however, it risks creating further tensions, since many Islamic doctrines -such as the Mi'rāj- are likewise not scientifically explicable.

Moreover, when proponents of Adamic exceptionalism argue against human exceptionalists regarding the possibility of interbreeding between the descendants of Adam and pre-or co-Adamic hominids -an idea that challenges the consensus (*ijmā'*) that Adam is the sole progenitor of humankind- they often appeal to genetic evidence. Yet recent developments in genetics have themselves been shown to raise serious difficulties for such interpretations, as noted by Bigliardi (2025). Human exceptionalists, in turn, may respond by acknowledging that genomic data could be interpreted in multiple ways, while maintaining the primacy of scriptural evidence discussed earlier. If Adamic exceptionalists insist that scientific laws rule out alternative readings, human exceptionalists may reply that such laws are themselves

suspended in this particular case on the same grounds invoked by Adamic exceptionalists -namely, metaphysical possibility (*mumkin* 'aqlī)- with the added support of scriptural testimony.

In this sense, if Adamic exceptionalists can accept the miraculous and scientifically inexplicable creation of Adam on the basis of logical possibility and revelation, then consistency would seem to require that they also entertain the alternative position advanced by human exceptionalists concerning Adam as the sole origin of humankind. This suggests that the adoption of Adamic exceptionalism may be, to some extent, methodologically arbitrary (*tahakkum*). Consequently, it appears to satisfy neither those who prioritise evolutionary science nor those who adhere strictly to its denial.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has critically examined the contemporary project of integrating Islam and modern science, with a specific focus on the theological challenges that arise from attempts to reconcile evolutionary theory with Islamic doctrine. By analyzing the works of scholars like Nidhal Guessoum, David Solomon Jalajel, and Shoaib Ahmed Malik, the article demonstrates that the field is characterized by diverse and competing models of reconciliation, rather than a unified consensus. The discussion highlights that even well-intentioned harmonization efforts, such as Guessoum's advocacy for a non-literal hermeneutic or Jalajel's proposal of "Adamic exceptionalism," carry profound theological implications when assessed from the perspective of Ash'arī kalām. The central findings of the paper underscore that any serious integration must grapple with fundamental issues concerning the nature of causality, the authority of revelation, and the proper methodology for interpreting scriptural texts in light of scientific claims, revealing that the current discourse often prioritizes scientific findings without sufficiently grounding them in established Islamic theological principles.

The analysis identifies three primary theological problems in contemporary integrative models, from an Ash'arī kalām perspective. First, the *problem of the authority of revelation (wahy)* arises when scientific theories,

which are epistemologically speculative (*ẓanni*) and confined to the realm of logical possibility, are given precedence over definitive scriptural texts (*nuṣuṣ*) that are established as certain (*qatʿi*). This challenges the foundational theological principle that once prophethood is affirmed, revelation serves as the ultimate arbiter in matters it explicitly addresses. Second, the *problem of hermeneutic approach* is evident in the uncritical application of figurative interpretation (*taʾwīl*) to verses that many scholars consider explicit (*naṣṣ*), such as those concerning the creation of Adam and the origin of humanity. This approach often bypasses the rigorous conditions for *taʾwīl* outlined in *uṣūl al-fiqh*, where it is only permissible for apparent texts (*ẓawābir*) and requires strong corroborative evidence, thereby undermining the integrity of established interpretive canons. Third, the *problem of exception in scientific interpretation* is manifested in the methodological arbitrariness of proposals like Adamic exceptionalism, which posits a miraculous exception to evolutionary processes for Prophet Adam. This raises the critical question of why this single exception is justified while other theological events, such as the *Miʿrāj*, remain scientifically inexplicable, and whether such an approach inadvertently capitulates to a scientific worldview while failing to fully satisfy either the demands of evolutionary science or the doctrinal commitments of traditional Islamic theology.

Given these challenges, this study urges for the development of a rigorous and coherent framework for reconciling Islam and modern science one that is firmly grounded in the principles of traditional Islamic sciences rather than being solely driven by the need to accommodate contemporary scientific paradigms. Any future project of integration must be built upon a solid foundation that includes *uṣūl al-fiqh* to properly weigh scriptural evidence, *kalām* to address the metaphysical and causal dimensions, *manṭiq* to ensure epistemological soundness, and the full spectrum of textual sciences such as *uṣūl al-tafsīr*, *ʿulūm al-ḥadīth*, and Arabic linguistics. Only by engaging with these disciplines with the same intellectual rigor and fidelity as classical scholars did can a theologically coherent, intellectually robust, and non-problematic reconciliation between Islam and modern science be achieved.

Such an approach would ensure that Islamic theology is not inadvertently compromised in the pursuit of demonstrating compatibility, thereby fostering a discourse where both domains can inform each other without clashing on foundational principle

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