

The Qur'ānic Concept of Ḥikmah: A Comparative Study of al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, and al-Ghazālī

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Abstract

The article explores the Qur'ānic notion of ḥikmah in the classical Islamic intellectual tradition from its Qur'ānic roots to its philosophical development and ethical-spiritual integration. The study concentrates on three philosophers and theologians, namely al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā and al-Ghazālī, with their various philosophies and theological concepts. Their thought patterns do differ, but they have a similar goal: to make ḥikmah not only a possession of knowledge or abstract rationality, but a faculty that unites sound knowledge with good action and moral quality. The analysis starts with the main passages in the Qur'ān in which the term ḥikmah is mentioned, focusing on Qur'ān 2:269, 31:12, 33:34 and the phrase al-Kitāb al-Ḥikmah at various places. These verses give the conceptual framework that enables us to explain the concept of ḥikmah as a gift from God that is connected to knowledge, good judgment, moral discernment, and guidance. A study based on this textual bedrock investigates the understanding of al-Fārābī of ḥikmah as the perfection of the rational faculty and the attainment of ultimate truth, the further development of this philosophical account by Ibn Sīnā, who combines the metaphysical with the ethical dimension of wisdom, and the re-interpretation of ḥikmah by al-Ghazālī in the Qur'ānic ethical and spiritual paradigm that brings together reason, revelation and spiritual purification. The article does not aim to put these viewpoints in opposition as ideas, but as complementary stages in the intellectualization of the Qur'ānic idea of the ideal of ḥikmah. The comparative approach shows how the philosophical investigation and ethical-spiritual reflection enhance the understanding of the way of knowing, doing and arriving at human flourishing called ḥikmah. In this way, it can serve as a reminder of the continued importance of the classical Islamic tradition of thought for modern debates on wisdom, moral development and utilitarian ethics.

Keywords: Ḥikmah, Quranic Exegesis, al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, al-Ghazālī, Islamic Ethics

I. Introduction

One of the ethical and epistemological terms that influence the Qur'ānic worldview is a particularly unique one, namely, *ḥikmah*, not only because it is a linguistic expression of the word "wisdom", but because it is also an ethical and intellectual ideal through which the Qur'ānic speaks of the connection between divine revelation and human understanding and right action. It occurs many times in contexts related to prophecy, revelation, education, moral judgment, and social guidance, suggesting that wisdom in the Qur'ānic context is not just a theoretical knowledge, but rather the practical application of God's guidance in human life.¹

The term *ḥikmah* is translated in modern academic literature as “wisdom”, “sound judgment”, “practical reason”, “discernment”, or “the application of knowledge”. These renderings have included certain aspects of its meaning, but none have conveyed the conceptual richness attributed to *ḥikmah* in the Qur’ānic. The term *ḥikmah* is derived from the trilateral root ḥ-k-m (ح-ك-م), referring to judgment, restraint, governance, precision and justice.² The meanings are connected, making wisdom seem not only a cognitive ability but also a learned ability to see through to discernment and to turn knowledge into moral behavior. It encompasses all three aspects, intellectual, ethical, and spiritual—in one concept, all of which are connected to the concept of human excellence.

Hikmah is explained by the commentators with regard to the revelation of Qur’ān and guidance from the Prophet; by the philosophers in the context of intellectual perfection, and by the theologians and spiritual thinkers in the field of moral perfection and purification of the soul. This diversity of interpretation is not intended to represent conceptual flaws; it is to show the richness of the concept of the Qur’ān, which has meaning in different areas of Islamic thinking. The significance of the *ḥikmah* in the modern field is particularly evident in the discussions surrounding ethics, education, leadership and human flourishing. In today’s era where knowledge is within everyone’s reach and morality is still uncertain, knowledge vs wisdom has become more important than ever before. Contemporary societies tend to identify intellectual achievement with technological development or acquisition of information, while the Qur’ānic conception of *ḥikmah* has always been correlated with responsibility, justice, and moral accountability. The classical Islamic discussion on wisdom, then, is not just of historical importance, but can also be viewed from a normative perspective to be reconsidered in light of current intellectual and moral dilemmas.

The present study holds that it is precisely because of its integrative nature that *ḥikmah* has continued to be significant. Wisdom is not described as a purely intellectual achievement, nor a purely mystical experience, but rather Qur’ān *ḥikmah* is the power that comes from God and which makes knowledge into a moral judgment, spiritual elevation, and rightful action. Although their intellectual approaches differed, this synthesis is the concept that serves as the basis for the theories of wisdom of later Muslim philosophers and theologians.

2. Review of Scholarship and Research Gap

The term *ḥikmah* has been the subject of continued scholarly interest over the course of Islamic intellectual history. Classical Muslim scholars studied it in a variety of disciplines such as the exegesis of the Qur’ān (*tafsīr*), philosophy (*falsafah*), theology (*kalām*), jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and Sufism (*taṣawwuf*). This diversity has continued to inspire a lot of academic research in the modern period, and scholars have examined the subject of *ḥikmah* in linguistic, theological, philosophical, ethical and educational ways. So far, these studies have greatly contributed to the understanding of the concept, but they are mostly limited to specific disciplinary approaches, and they leave little space for an in-depth analysis of the way in which the concept of *ḥikmah* was elaborated in various aspects of the classical Islamic intellectual tradition. The semantic aspects of *ḥikmah* have been studied extensively in the field of Qur’ānic studies. Toshihiko Izutsu has shown that important concepts of the Qur’ānic text are only meaningful in the context of other ethical and theological concepts.³ In this context, *ḥikmah* is part of a semantic field that includes the terms knowledge (*‘ilm*), justice (*‘adl*), guidance (*hudā*), and piety (*taqwā*). Similarly, Fazlur Rahman asserts the Qur’ān is always about wisdom as an attitude of practice and ethics, and not a quest of reason.⁴ Recent research has explored the significance of *ḥikmah* for moral education, prophetic teaching, and the ethics of the Qur’ān, emphasizing its influence on personal character and social responsibility.⁵ These studies have provided a deeper understanding of the use of *ḥikmah* in the Qur’ānic context but have tended to focus on the text of the Qur’ān and not much on the conceptual structure of the text and its impact on the later philosophical and ethical reflections.

A second body of scholarship is Islamic philosophy-based on *ḥikmah*. In general, studies of al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā focus on the concept of wisdom in the context of their discussions of metaphysics, epistemology, political philosophy, and the perfection of the rational soul. Ibn Sīnā builds on the idea of *ḥikmah* by associating it with the perfection of the intellect and the perfection of metaphysics and ethics. At the same time, Al-Fārābī regards it as the highest intellectual virtue leading to demonstrative knowledge and to ultimate happiness. The philosophical investigations have significantly contributed to the development of Islamic philosophical thought.⁶ However, they tend to discuss philosophers outside of a framework of concepts stemming from the Qur’ānic term *ḥikmah*. The continuity between the Qur’ānic discourse and the philosophical elaboration is therefore only partially explored.

The studies of al-Ghazālī offer another focus. His critique of the philosophers and his synthesis of theology, ethics and Sufism have been the subjects of extensive studies by modern scholars. Frank Griffel has demonstrated that al-Ghazālī’s conception of philosophy was not just oppositional but a man of thought, one who reshaped philosophical thought within a larger theological and spiritual framework.⁷ In al-Ghazālī’s writings, *ḥikmah* acquires an explicitly ethical and spiritual orientation, linking intellectual knowledge with sincerity, purification of the soul, and obedience to

divine revelation. Although these studies illuminate al-Ghazālī's contribution to Islamic ethics, they seldom place his understanding of *ḥikmah* in direct conversation with the philosophical perspectives of al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā or with the Qur'ānic foundations from which all three ultimately derive their conceptual vocabulary.

The current research claims that these scholarly traditions ought to be seen not as independent intellectual pursuits, but rather as interconnected efforts to elaborate on the Qur'ānic notion of *ḥikmah* in various methodological frameworks. Thus, such unified analysis provides a much more solid understanding of the phenomenon of *ḥikmah* than research dealing separately with tafsīr, philosophy, and ethical spirituality.

3. Conceptual Foundations of *Ḥikmah* in the Qur'ān

3.1 Lexical Dimensions of *Ḥikmah*

To the Arabic lexicographers, the root of the term *ḥikmah* is ḥ-k-m (ح-ك-م), always connected with the prevention of error and directing action in the right and good course. Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī sees *ḥikmah* as reaching the truth through knowledge and reasoning, and acting in accordance with this truth, thus bringing together the ability to think intellectually and the power of taking action.⁸ Moreover, according to the etymology of the word, it means judgment performed in accordance with justice and restraint, and according to the word *ḥikām*, the perfect performance, the proper way to do something and accuracy.⁹ Thus, it means a judgment those results in action, rather than the word meaning abstract knowledge.

3.2 *Ḥikmah* in the Qur'ānic Conceptual Framework

The Qur'ān uses the term *ḥikmah* in various contexts, relating it directly to revelation, prophecy, morality, and ethical behaviour. The original form i-e *ḥikmah* has occurred twenty times, while derivatives of the word were utilized around two hundred times.¹⁰ The Qur'ān understands *ḥikmah* not as an abstract theoretical concept, but as a gift from God allowing humans to understand and use the revelation properly. One of the most outstanding characteristics of the discourse employed in the Qur'ān is frequent pairing of *al-Kitāb* with *al-ḥikmah*. Such a pairing can be found in multiple passages that describe the mission of the prophet, for example, in verses 129 and 151 of chapter 2, in verse 164 of chapter 3, in verse 113 of chapter 4, or in verse 2 of chapter 62. In these passages, God is said to be teaching not only *al-Kitāb*, but also *al-ḥikmah*, implying that there is a correlation between these two notions; thus, the Book is incomplete without the wisdom which is needed for its comprehension and implementation.¹¹ Different Islamic scholars understood this relationship in different ways, but the reiterated use of this conjunction signifies that revelation in itself does not grasp the Qur'ānic understanding of divine guidance. In addition to revelation, there is also a gift that has been given to a person by God and which makes it possible to comprehend and use revelation properly.

The centrality of *ḥikmah* becomes even more explicit in Qur'ān 2:269:

"He grants wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever has been granted wisdom has certainly been granted abundant good."

This verse is one of the widest Qur'ānic proclamations regarding wisdom. The verse does not limit *ḥikmah* to theoretical knowledge, a juridical term, or a metaphysical one. On the contrary, it defines wisdom as a special gift from God. With the open wording of the verse, Muslim scholars of various trends in religious thought were able to consider different aspects of *ḥikmah* while remaining within the Qur'ānic structure. As a result, this verse has attracted the attention of Islamic thinkers when discussing issues related to wisdom.¹²

A complementary perspective appears in the account of Hazarat Luqmān:

*"Indeed, We granted Luqmān wisdom: 'Be grateful to Allah.'"*¹³

The narrative immediately links wisdom with gratitude (*shukr*), indicating that wisdom manifests itself not merely in intellectual achievement but in moral disposition and spiritual awareness. Hazarat Luqman's advice to his son is a perfect example of how *ḥikmah* is related to faith, humility, justice, moderation, patience, and responsible actions in society. Consequently, it is not possible to set wisdom apart from real life, but it is vital to experience the practice of ethical conduct.¹⁴

Likewise, Qur'ān associates *ḥikmah* with the prophetic method of inviting others to God's path:

*"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in the best manner."*¹⁵

In this place, wisdom is a principle of communication and moral engagement. The verse illustrates that *ḥikmah* is not just knowledge of truth but also discernment as to how truth is communicated. Persuasion, compassion, intellectual purity, and ethical sensitivity are all aspects of wisdom, and strengthen the Qur'ānic insight that right knowledge and right action are one. Together, the above verses indicate that the Qur'ān offers a holistic concept of human excellence, one that encompasses intellectual knowledge, moral discernment, and spiritual awareness, all under the umbrella of *ḥikmah*. Its core orientation is consistent: wisdom is a divinely empowered gift which enables the understanding,

embodiment and translation of revealed knowledge into right living. However, it is still broad enough to support a variety of intellectual interpretations.

This holistic perspective is the norm from which the philosophical ideas of al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā and al-Ghazālī can be understood.

4. Al-Fārābī and the Philosophical Elaboration of *Hikmah*

4.1 Reframing *Hikmah* within Islamic Philosophy

Muslim philosophers attempted to represent *Hikmah* on the basis of philosophy. Hence, while working with Greek philosophy, they did not necessarily part with the Islamic way of thinking but rather tried to explain the religious truth through logic and proof. Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (d. 339/950) was one of the most notable and first philosophers whose doctrine justified the idea of *ḥikmah* as the basis of understanding what it means to be a human and how to build the virtuous society.¹⁶ While the Qur'ān expresses wisdom through stories, guidance of the prophets, and moral advice, al-Fārābī presents wisdom as a philosophical subject about the perfection of human knowledge. Wisdom is not only considered divine wisdom but also the result of the intellectual journey.¹⁷ This philosophical reinterpretation highlights the larger purpose of Islamic philosophy, which is to show that authentic reason and genuine revelation ultimately arrive at the same truth. Despite al-Fārābī's use of concepts borrowed from Aristotelian and Neoplatonic traditions, he keeps reinterpreting such concepts, putting them in the framework of Islamic scholarship with a focus on the ultimate goal of knowledge, which is to attain human happiness and achieve virtue. Thus, wisdom is neither abstract speculation nor only theoretical knowledge; it is the highest type of knowledge since it guides people towards fulfilling the nature of human existence.¹⁸

4.2 *Hikmah*, Intellect, and Human Perfection

Al-Fārābī saw no difference between wisdom and the perfection of the human intellect. Humans have the power to go from potential to actual, from knowing to knowledge, from understanding to understanding through intellectual development, and in the end, wisdom. Al-Fārābī believes that true happiness can only be achieved through the perfection of theoretical and practical virtues in *Tahṣīl al-Sa'ādah* (Attainment of Happiness).¹⁹ Value of knowledge, then, is not a condition of intellectual curiosity, but a condition of the human person, capable of being lived in line with truth. The separation of theoretical wisdom and practical wisdom is one of the main features of al-Fārābī's philosophy. Theoretical wisdom is the knowledge of ultimate realities such as God, the cosmos and the metaphysics of the order of existence. Practical wisdom, however, has to do with the management of human actions and the achievement of moral good in society. These two dimensions are analytically separable but can't be disentangled. A vacant moral conscience is no better than a vacant mind, and a moral conscience without real understanding is as without direction as it is without strength.²⁰ The fusion of knowledge and action is reminiscent of a basic aspect of the Qur'ānic notion of *ḥikmah*. In the preceding section we saw that Qur'ānic wisdom can be seen throughout in terms of righteous living, gratitude, justice and moral judgement, not simply through gaining knowledge. Al-Fārābī re-states this principle philosophically, claiming that the perfection of knowledge is only accomplished through actions that are good and serve the common good. This philosopher's view of wisdom by no means, then, supplants the Qur'ānic understanding; rather, it is a rational narration of the intellectual mechanisms that make the Qur'ānic understanding work in people's lives.

One of the most remarkable features of al-Fārābī's philosophy is that he made it clear that wisdom has a social element. Human perfection is not possible outside of a virtuous political community, and people can only reach their full potential within a virtuous community. He proposes that the best of societies is that led by a virtuous ruler, both intellectually and morally, who can lead others to happiness and justice.²¹ It is not only in the theoretical realm of knowledge that the philosopher-ruler is to be wise, but also in the ability to put universal truths into practice as a ruler. In this way, *ḥikmah* is not only a private intellectual accomplishment but the basis of ethical leadership and social harmony. This social aspect is one of the most significant contributions al-Fārābī made to the Qur'ānic notion of *ḥikmah* from the point of view of the present study. In the Qur'ān, wisdom is repeatedly linked to prophets who were charged to bring guidance to their people. Still, in the works of al-Fārābī, the concept of wisdom is applied to the field of political philosophy by claiming that the authority of leadership is not based on force, but on wisdom. His philosophical interpretation thus extends the implications of the ideal of the Qur'ān without altering its moral thrust.

5. Ibn Sīnā (980-1037AD) and the Metaphysical Deepening of *Hikmah*

5.1 From Intellectual Perfection to Metaphysical Realization

Ibn Sīnā built on al-Fārābī's intellectual foundations and greatly enlarged his connotations in terms of philosophy. His contribution is not only the refinement of the previous philosophical concepts but also the proof of the intellectual perfection to be able to understand the ontological structure of the real itself. This means that *hikmah* is an epistemological success, as well as a metaphysical ascent from sensory perception to knowledge of the Necessary Existent.²² Ibn Sīnā's writings focus more on the perfection of the rational soul. In his writings on philosophy, he always says that knowledge is complete only when the mind goes beyond the material sphere and grasps the universal truths. Wisdom, then, is not just a possession of knowledge, but the progressive realization of the highest capacities of the soul, through disciplined intellectual and moral development.²³ This focus gives a more profound metaphysical aspect to the theme of *hikmah*. It is consistent with the overall Islamic belief that knowledge must be for the perfection of humans, and not for intellectual show.

5.2 *Hikmah*, Knowledge, and the Perfection of the Rational Soul

A central tenet of Ibn Sīnā's philosophy was that the human soul has an innate ability to become intellectually perfected. For example, in *Kitāb al-Shifā'* and *Kitāb al-Najāt*, he explains knowledge as a process of transformation from potentiality to actuality leading to the unification of the intellect with intelligible realities.²⁴ It is not an automatic or scientific process, but is speculative as well. It demands thoughtfulness, moral cultivation and constant mental activity. Wisdom, then, is the fulfilment of the soul's capacities, by means of which man can view the real according to its true ontological order. Ibn Sīnā believes that true knowledge is separate from opinion because it is certain and has a demonstrative basis. But a sense of philosophy is not enough. The ultimate end of wisdom is the perfection of the human person, and this perfection is essential for his happiness because his happiness consists in the harmonious development of his intellectual, moral and spiritual faculties. Ibn Sīnā, then, has a vision of *hikmah* that is not merely theoretical but is also a comprehensive vision of human flourishing. If knowledge does not make for perfection, then it is not complete knowledge, but is missing that perfection for which the rational soul was created.²⁵

This insight is in line with the Qur'ānic emphasis that wisdom is not just the product of knowledge but also on how to behave. Ibn Sīnā uses philosophical language that is not found in the Qur'ānic text, but his concern is very consistent: the pursuit of truth ought to impact the person's moral character. The difference lies primarily in the explanations given. Both the Qur'ān and Ibn Sīnā attribute these changes to divine guidance and prophetic instruction; while the former bases this transformation on divine guidance and prophetic instruction, the latter explains it in terms of the metaphysical nature of the soul and its turning toward ultimate reality. Another important aspect of Ibn Sīnā's thinking is the fusion of ethics in epistemology. Ibn Sīnā has repeatedly stated that the perfection of the intellect depends on the development of the moral virtues. The passions, the love of material things, and moral weaknesses hinder the intellectual progress of the soul by diverting it from the contemplation of truth. Moral discipline is a task, then, not only ethically required, but also epistemologically required. Only intellectual excellence, unalloyed with the corruption of the flesh and the self-government of the mind, can make wisdom attainable.²⁶ In this ethical aspect, this study's focus lies with one of the more salient features of continuity in the thinking of Ibn Sīnā and the Qur'ānic understanding of *hikmah*. His philosophical system is rationally demonstrated, yet he rejects any distinction between knowledge of truth and living in accordance with truth. The convergence is an indication that Islamic philosophy in the late period of Ibn Sīnā's thought is by no means a purely theoretical affair, but is rather very much concerned with the practical application of wisdom.

6. Al-Ghazālī and the Ethical-Spiritual Integration of *Hikmah*

6.1 From Philosophical Wisdom to Qur'ānic Realization

Imam Al-Ghazālī transforms *hikmah* from a primarily intellectual achievement into a comprehensive program of ethical and spiritual formation. Unlike al-Fārābī, who places intellectual perfection at the center of human happiness, or Ibn Sīnā, who emphasizes the metaphysical ascent of the rational soul, al-Ghazālī locates the realization of wisdom within the purification of the heart (*tazkiyat al-nafs*). Knowledge remains indispensable, but its value depends entirely upon its capacity to reform character, discipline desire, and cultivate nearness to God. Thus, *hikmah* is no longer measured primarily by the quantity of knowledge acquired but by the extent to which knowledge transforms the whole person.²⁷

6.2 Knowledge, Action, and the Unity of *ʿIlm* and *Hikmah*

One of the salient features of al-Ghazālī's philosophy is that he does not distinguish between knowledge and action. In *Ihyā' ʿUlūm al-Dīn*, he constantly stresses that knowledge that does not lead to good deeds is a source of accountability, not salvation.²⁸ The true scholar, then, is not he who fills his mind with information but he who has knowledge that affects his intention, purifies his conduct, and leads him to seek the King's mercy. This principle is one of the most consistent ethical teachings of the Qur'ān – that it is supposed to transform, not just inform.

Al-Ghazālī's conception of *ḥikmah* comes about when the intellectual understanding (*ʿilm*) and ethical practice (*ʿamal*) are united as a real phenomenon. He often says the difference between the knowledge that stays on the tongue and the knowledge that reaches the heart: Only the latter is worthy of being called wisdom.²⁹ Thus, it is impossible to judge the perfection of the intellect apart from the perfection of the character. But when intellectual brilliance comes without sincerity (*ikhlaṣ*) or moral discipline, then it is a hindrance to obtaining true wisdom, not a help. This view radically changes the epistemological/ethical equation. Al-Ghazālī, however, starts by asking questions about the ethical significance of knowledge, and only then asks questions about the nature of knowledge, unlike the Islamic philosophers. The condition for authentic knowledge is ethical purification, for the heart filled with pride, envy or attachment to worldly things is incapable of grasping reality. Wisdom must therefore presuppose an inner change, namely one that allows reason to operate in the way God intended it.³⁰ The Qur'ānic bases of this position are clear. Throughout the Qur'ān, the ability to reflect, understand and have insight is consistently tied to the ability to be humble, thankful, just and God-conscious. The novelty of Al-Ghazālī's work is that he shows that these moral virtues are not only its fruits, but essential prerequisites for achieving it. In this context, his theory of *ḥikmah* can be understood as a kind of systematic development of the integration of knowledge, virtue and spiritual awareness as found in the Qur'ān. Al-Ghazālī's most significant work is the reconquest of the ethical centre of *ḥikmah*. He says nothing disparaging or ungenerous about science, nor debases the power of mind; on the contrary, he declares that neither science nor the ability of mind can have their fullest meaning in life unless they are employed in the path of spiritualization and moralizing. His comprehension thus maintains the legacy of the philosophers before him, and he places it in the context of the whole Qur'ānic vision of human flourishing.

6.3 *Hikmah* as the Perfection of the Heart

The distinctive feature of al-Ghazālī's view of *ḥikmah* is that he presents the heart (*qalb*) as the place of true wisdom. While philosophers tend to depend on the intellect (*ʿaql*), al-Ghazālī argues that the heart is the place of real knowledge since it is through the heart that people have knowledge about God and understand the moral orders and attain certainty.³¹ This notion does not mean that the heart is opposed to intellect; rather, this provides a better insight into the anthropology that encompasses both reason and emotion and spirituality in line with the revelation.

In his works such as *Mīzān al-ʿAmal* and *Ihyā' ʿUlūm al-Dīn*, al-Ghazālī depicts the heart as a mirror reflecting the divine truth. While sins, pride and earthly desires hide the mirror, acts of repentance and dhikr help restore its transparent nature.³² Thus, wisdom is more an existential condition rather than mere intellectual achievement. To know rightly is to live rightly, as knowledge and existence can only be transformed together. This comprehension brings the theme of *ḥikmah* back to the Qur'ānic roots. In the Qur'ān, blindness is always correlated not with the eyes but with the hearts (Q. 22:46), making it clear that any insight depends on ethical and spiritual sensitivity, not simply on objective perceptions. Al-Ghazālī's heart concept can be viewed thus as a full spectrum of the idea of the Qur'ān. Instead of starting from scrape, al-Ghazālī focuses on enhancing the ethical and spiritual implications already existent in the revelation. This research suggests that al-Ghazālī is the peak of the intellectual process outlined in this text. If al-Fārābī is rational, appealing to *ḥikmah* in the Qur'ān, and Ibn Sīnā is doing it metaphysically, al-Ghazālī is the one who returns it to the ethical and spiritual plane without ignoring the contributions of philosophical thinking. His synthesis illustrates that revelation, reasoning, and transformation are not in opposition but exist as different dimensions of the same vision of the Qur'ān regarding human perfection.

7. The Intellectual Trajectory of Qur'ānic *Hikmah*: A Comparative Synthesis

The above discussion shows that *ḥikmah* develops extensively in the works of al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, and al-Ghazālī, but the transformations that take place in this respect must not be considered rival definitions. They are simply different ways of explaining the same Qur'ānic concept. Their dispute concerns the methodology rather than the essence of *ḥikmah*. The Qur'ān establishes that *ḥikmah* is a divine gift that allows a person to see reality as it is and then act ethically. The same principle can be seen in the other tradition of philosophy, with some modifications. Al-Fārābī pays attention to the coordination of knowledge; Ibn Sīnā looks into the metaphysical foundation of the concept; while al-Ghazālī brings back the ethical meaning of *ḥikmah*. The relationship between revelation and reason is perhaps the most

intriguing issue in the study of Islamic intellectual history. Scholars have often presented al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā as proponents of philosophical rationalism. At the same time, al-Ghazālī has been seen as the theologian who not only questions their views, but also refutes them. Nevertheless, this approach does not reflect the complexities of the historical process.

Historically, al-Fārābī did not consider reason to have independent power and influence in referring to ultimate truth. To this, he saw philosophy as the process of searching for the secrets of the laws of Divine order.³³ Ibn Sīnā's research in metaphysics did not aim to prove revelation wrong but to prove logically 'why' and 'what' was created by God. As for al-Ghazālī, he is known for having criticized certain philosophical theories in the work called *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*. This means that even though he was against the philosophers, he continued to use the methods of logic in his theological and ethical works.³⁴ Their disagreement is not over the validity of philosophy itself but rather over its limits. For al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā, philosophy represents the climax of human rationality; for al-Ghazālī, it is a useful tool whose results need to be examined in terms of revelation. All three thinkers come to different conclusions about the nature of knowledge but emphasize that true wisdom cannot contradict God's truth. This point coincides with an important idea expressed in the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān encourages human beings to perceive, think, and contemplate the signs of God in nature, pointing to how the process of knowledge-gaining is possible only within ethical and religious frameworks, which means that all three thinkers work in three different ways to find wisdom.

A second point of convergence concerns the purpose of wisdom itself. None of the three thinkers regards knowledge as an end in itself. Instead, knowledge functions as the means through which the human being approaches perfection. For al-Fārābī, perfection is realized through the harmonious development of intellectual virtue and participation in the virtuous community. Wisdom enables individuals to contribute to a political order directed towards justice and collective happiness.³⁵ Al-Ghazālī further develops the issue by establishing perfection in the purification of the heart. Only when knowledge transforms character, purifies intention and enforces men's relationship with God can knowledge be considered as complete. Hence, intellectual ability without ethical improvement can be regarded as an incomplete realisation of *ḥikmah*.³⁶

In light of this research, the presence of the common destination serves as the strongest proof of the existence of the commonality of the "*ḥikmah*" concept in Islamic thought. It is found in this research that the unique power of the Qur'ānic concept of *ḥikmah* is in its capability to combine the intellectual search, metaphysical thinking, responsibility for moral behaviour, and the essence of spirituality into a single vision of the flourishing of humanity. Thus, the works of al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā and al-Ghazālī could be analyzed as different intellectual versions of the same Qur'ānic idea.

Theme	Qur'ān	al-Fārābī	Ibn Sīnā	al-Ghazālī
Source of wisdom	Divine gift	Perfected reason	Metaphysical intellect	Revelation and purified heart
Human perfection	Ethical obedience	Virtuous citizen	Perfect intellect	Purified soul
Goal	Nearness to God	Happiness	Intellectual perfection	Knowledge of God
Ethics	Essential	Political virtue	Moral discipline	Spiritual transformation

8. Conclusion

This present research has looked into the idea of *ḥikmah* in the Qur'ān through comparisons of the philosophies and ethical perspectives of various philosophers, including al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, and al-Ghazālī. Rather than viewing the philosophers as competing representatives of different schools of thought, this paper has shown how each philosopher meaningfully contributes to the proper understanding of *ḥikmah* in the Qur'ān. Through the use of comparative analysis, it has been shown that the Qur'ān states that *ḥikmah* is a perfect way of achieving perfection by combining the three important aspects of human beings: knowledge, moral judgment, and behavior. First of all, the concept discussed earlier was analyzed through the Qur'ān itself, which showed how *ḥikmah* cannot be solely defined through being an

intellectual talent or being experienced in some area of knowledge. What is important is that the Qur'ān explains that wisdom is a divine gift allowing the person to understand God's revelations. The repeated connection of *ḥikmah* with messages from God, guidance given to prophets, the importance of gratitude, the pursuit of justice, and righteousness implies that wisdom serves as a moral and epistemological principle and not just a philosophical term. As a result, the Qur'ān becomes a starting point for Muslim scholars' interpretations of *ḥikmah*. In contrast to the background provided by the Qur'ān, the comparative analysis indicates that al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, and al-Ghazālī do not change their concepts of wisdom according to their own preferences. Instead, each scholar practically addresses several aspects of the same idea. Al-Fārābī classifies *ḥikmah* within a philosophical system of thought connected to the objective of acquiring knowledge and establishing a proper society. Ibn Sīnā expands the subject matter by adding a detailed account of how the active soul evolves. Lastly, Al-Ghazālī alters the subject matter of *ḥikmah* while retaining the epistemological significance of philosophy, as he reframes the discussion in ethical terms and the functions of knowledge.

The interaction between revelation and philosophy in Islamic intellectual tradition is a continuous process rather than the one that can be represented as a discrete historical phenomenon. Scholarly literature has regularly depicted Islamic philosophy and spirituality as two distinct ways of acquiring knowledge, with the critique of some philosophical standpoints offered by al-Ghazālī being considered as the point of separation between reason and revelation. The comparative analysis of the works of several philosophers presented in this paper allows us to suggest a more nuanced interpretation of the evidence at stake. In spite of the differences in their approaches, the three philosophers under consideration still agree that true wisdom leads people to truth, virtue, and perfection in human form. The various disagreements discussed in the study refer only to the ways in which wisdom should be attained and formulated, but not its essence. Thus, the development of *ḥikmah* can be viewed not as a history of confrontations but as a series of discussions on the nature of knowledge, morality, and human success under God's guidance.

The current study, therefore, suggests that the best way to comprehend *ḥikmah* consists not in disciplinary disintegration, but in conceptual coherence. The Qur'ān establishes the normative basis of wisdom; philosophy explains its rational and metaphysical aspects. At the same time, ethical-spiritual thought allows its practical implementation in the moral life of a person and society. The scholars mentioned above enable us to see how it is possible for the Qur'ān's concept of *ḥikmah* to be used in diverse intellectual expressions without losing its intrinsic unity. The results obtained in this research also have implications for contemporary studies in Qur'ān and Islamic intellectual history. In other words, in an age of rapid progress in science and technology which puts the foundations of moral decision-making in jeopardy, it is the Qur'ān-based understanding of *ḥikmah* that provides a holistic approach which stands against the fragmentation of knowledge from moral responsibility.

Recommendation

1. Comparative works that would include later periods of philosophical and mystical thought should further help find ways of linking and transforming the concept of *ḥikmah* in Islamic philosophy.
2. Interdisciplinary research reflecting on the old concept and its correlation to modern ideas in the field of virtue ethics, moral psychology, educational philosophy or artificial intelligence ethics can prove that the traditional notion is still relevant for modern ethical issues and challenges.

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- ² Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Mufradāt Alfāz al-Qur'ān*, ed. Ṣafwān 'Adnān Dāwūd (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2009), s.v. "حِكْم"; Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, n.d.), s.v. "حِكْم."
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- ⁴ Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 28–36.
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- ⁶ Oliver Leaman, *An Introduction to Classical Islamic Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 85–121; Majid Fakhry, *Al-Fārābī: Founder of Islamic Neoplatonism* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2002), 67–89.

⁷ Al-Ghazali's *Philosophical Theology*, by Frank Griffel (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 45–72.

⁸ Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Mufradāt Alfāz al-Qur'ān*, ed. Ṣafwān 'Adnān Dāwūd (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2009), s.v. "حکم."

⁹ Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, n.d.), s.v. "حکم."

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¹³ Quran 31:12

¹⁴ *The Study Quran*, commentary on Q. 31:12–19; M. A. Draz, *The Moral World of the Qur'an*, trans. Danielle Robinson and Rebecca Masterton (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 493–505.

¹⁵ Quran 16:125

¹⁶ Al-Fārābī, *Ḥṣā' al-'Ulūm*, ed. 'Uthmān Amīn (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1949), 95–103; Majid Fakhry, *Al-Fārābī: Founder of Islamic Neoplatonism* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2002), 1–25.

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