

The Classification of Knowledge Based on Al-Ghazali's Perspective and Its Relevance to Qur'anic Exegesis

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Article	Abstract
Article History : Received : June, 30, 2025 Reviewed : Oct., 10, 2025 Accepted : Oct., 29, 2025 Published : Oct., 29, 2025	This article studies Al-Ghazali's system of knowledge classification and its relevance to Qur'anic exegesis within the framework of classical Islamic epistemology. The focus of this study is to explain the structure of Al-Ghazali's epistemology, which includes the sources of knowledge, methods of acquisition, and legal-ethical rulings on seeking knowledge, while positioning tafsir as an integral part of this framework. This research employs a qualitative approach through library research, focusing on Al-Ghazali's major works, such as <i>Iyy 'Ul m al-D n</i> and <i>al-Ris lah al-Ladunniyyah</i> . The findings indicate that: (1) Al-Ghazali classifies knowledge based on its sources into revelatory knowledge (<i>'ilm al-shar'i</i>), rational knowledge (<i>'ilm al-'aql</i>), and intuitive knowledge (<i>'ilm al-kashf</i>); (2) based on its method of acquisition, knowledge is divided into <i>u r</i> (immediate) and <i>u l</i> (acquired through learning), incorporating approaches such as <i>bay n</i> , <i>burh n</i> , <i>'irf n</i> , and <i>tajrib</i> ; (3) in terms of legal rulings, knowledge is categorized as <i>far 'ayn</i> , <i>far kif yah</i> , <i>mand b</i> , <i>mub</i> , or <i>ar m</i> ; and (4) Qur'anic exegesis is positioned as a <i>shar'i</i> science, falling under the category of <i>far kif yah</i> , specifically within the subcategory of <i>al-mutammin t</i> , developed through <i>u l</i> methods and integrating several epistemological approaches.
Keywords: <i>Classification of Knowledge, Al-Ghazali, Islamic Epistemology, Quranic Exegesis, Fard Kifayah</i>	

INTRODUCTION

The classification of knowledge is a vital element in the Islamic intellectual tradition because it reflects an epistemological system that is not only rational but also normative and spiritual. Al-Ghazali offers a model of classification that integrates revelation, reason, and spiritual intuition as sources of knowledge, and assesses knowledge based on its benefits and objectives. This approach is not merely taxonomical but also contains ethical and religious orientation (Wisudaningsih, 2023). One of the disciplines that occupies an important position within this system is Qur'anic exegesis, which is categorized as *fard kifayah* and functions to maintain the continuity of the meaning of revelation in the life of the Muslim community (Amrullah, 1989). Therefore, examining Al-Ghazali's classification system in relation to the science of tafsir is relevant for developing an Islamic scientific paradigm that integrate intellect, revelation, and social responsibility (Naurah et al., 2024).

These are previous studies that discuss about of Al-Ghazali's classification of knowledge. First, a study by Imran Agung discussed the significant role of religion in shaping knowledge classification (Khoirudin, 2021). Second, Tijani Ahmad conducted a comparative study between the classification of knowledge by Al-Ghazali and Al-Farabi (Ashimi, 2022). Third, Nurul Laylia et al. studied two parts of Al-Ghazali's classification of knowledge along with their benefits (Laylia et al., 2020). Fourth, Agus Salim's research argues that Al-Ghazali did not dichotomize knowledge, but rather explained which types should be prioritized (Salim, 2022). Fifth, a study by Sujiat et al. explored how Al-Ghazali's classification of knowledge can prevent Muslims from facing epistemological disruption in the contemporary era (Saleh et al., 2022).

There are also studies that examine Al-Ghazali more broadly. First, a study by Mohammad Kheilmi et al. explored Al-Ghazali's contribution to intuitive education, which can enhance multiple intelligences (Kheilmi et al., 2024). Second, Achmad Khudori Soleh's research investigated Al-Ghazali's concept of happiness (Soleh, 2022). Third, Rosidah et al. discussed the relevance of Al-Ghazali's and Al-Zarnuji's ethical education concepts in the contemporary era (Rosidah et al., 2024). Fourth, Achmad Khudori Soleh also analyzed the stages of achieving happiness according to Al-Ghazali, namely: recognizing the essence of the self, making the heart the leader, and focusing one's attention on God (Soleh, 2024). Fifth, Yogi Muhammad Akbar and Khudori Soleh examined a comparison of Islamic epistemology between Al-Ghazali's 'irfani thought and that of Al-Jabiri (Akbar & Soleh, 2024). Sixth, Niki Sutoyib and Khudori Soleh focused on a comparison of burhani epistemology between Al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd. (Sutoyib & Soleh, 2023). Seventh, Mazaya and Khudori Sholeh explored Al-Ghazali's and Al-Basri's concepts of happiness with an emphasis on inner well-being (Hurin'in & Soleh, 2023).

There are also previous studies that discuss Qur'anic exegesis more generally. First, a study by Aqdi Rofid et al. analyzed the development of scientific exegesis (tafsir ilmi) in Indonesia, which began in the 1960s and was produced by Indonesian Muslim scholars as an effort to integrate religion and science (Asnawi et al., 2021). Second, a study by Islah Gusmian and Mustaffa focused on the figure of Misbah, an Indonesian mufassir during the New Order regime, who used Qur'anic exegesis as a medium of critique and successfully built a new tradition in Indonesia's exegetical history (Gusmian & Abdullah, 2023). Third, a study by Agus Salim and Eni Zulaiha examined the essence of tafsir, which lies in clarifying the meanings and aims of the Qur'an so that it can be understood and practiced (Hasanudin & Zulaiha, 2022). Fourth, Wardani's research explored the integration of Qur'anic exegesis and social sciences using a semantic approach (Wardani, 2020). Additionally, there are also studies on fard kifayah more generally. First, Taqiyuddin's research emphasized that balancing fard kifayah and fard 'ayn knowledge leads to a broader, more flexible, and tolerant understanding of Islam (Taqiyuddin, 2021). Second, a study by Sahrul Sobirin and Erwin Mahrus discussed teaching fard kifayah through the manuscript Risalat Tajhiz, which is considered relevant as a reference in Islamic education (Sobirin & Mahrus, 2023).

Although there have been numerous studies discussing the classification of knowledge according to Al-Ghazali, some focusing on the role of religion, comparisons with other scholars, or its relevance in the contemporary era these studies are generally still partial and thematic. Some are limited to the dichotomy of knowledge, the relevance of classification to modern society, or place Al-Ghazali within the general discourse of education. Furthermore, studies on the relationship between Al-Ghazali's classification of knowledge and the discipline of Qur'anic exegesis, particularly in the context of fard kifayah as an epistemic and social foundation remain underexplored. On the other hand, research on tafsir and fard kifayah also tends not to connect them meaningfully to Al-Ghazali's classification framework. This disconnect reveals an important academic space that needs to be addressed so that the construction of Islamic epistemology can become more integrated and applicable.

This research focuses on Abū Ḥamid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazālī al-Tūsī al-Shāfi'ī (d. 505/1111), a prominent classical Muslim theologian, philosopher, and mystic from Persia whose works such as *Iyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* and *al-Risālah al-Ladunniyyah* have profoundly shaped Islamic epistemology. It aims to explain his system of knowledge classification comprehensively, including the sources of knowledge, the modes of attainment (*uṣūl* and *uṣūl*), the methodological approaches within *uṣūl* knowledge (such as *bay'ān*, *burhān*, *'irfān*, and *tajrib*), and the jurisprudential status of seeking religious knowledge (*far'āyn*, *far' kifāyah*, and others). This study also seeks to analyze how the science of tafsir is

positioned within that epistemological structure, both normatively and theoretically. Accordingly, this research is not merely descriptive of al-Ghazali's thought, but also analytical and applicative in assessing the relevance of his classification system to tafsir as a branch of shar' knowledge. The focus is raised in response to the need for an integrative model that connects the authority of revelation, rational inquiry, and social responsibility in the development of contemporary Islamic scholarship.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study focuses on analyzing Al-Ghazali's system of knowledge classification and its relevance to Qur'anic exegesis from the perspective of Islamic epistemology. The objective of this research is to systematically describe Al-Ghazali's scientific framework, including the sources of knowledge, methods of attainment, and the legal rulings concerning the pursuit of knowledge, as well as to identify the position of tafsir within that system. The data sources in this study consist of both primary and secondary materials. The primary data include Al-Ghazali's major works, such as *Kitab al-'Ilm in Iy' 'Ul m al-D n* and *ar-Ris lah al-Ladunniyyah*, along with the contemporary elaboration of his thought by Achmad Khudori Soleh. Meanwhile, the secondary data are obtained from academic books, journal articles, and relevant previous studies, including the epistemological views of Ibn Sina as a point of comparison (Hardani et al., 2020).

This study employs a qualitative approach using library research, which involves in-depth examination and analysis of texts to explore Al-Ghazali's thought and the structure of his knowledge classification. The data analysis technique used is content analysis with an interpretative approach, aiming to uncover the meanings embedded in the texts in order to understand the logical structure, normative values, and spiritual significance in Al-Ghazali's scientific system. Through this approach, latent conceptual meanings can be revealed contextually and related to the position and role of Qur'anic exegesis within the framework of Islamic epistemology (Rahmadi, 2011)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Sources of Knowledge

This rich intellectual and spiritual trajectory became the foundation of al-Ghazali's epistemological vision, through which he sought to integrate revelation, reason, and mystical experience into a coherent system of knowledge. Abū Ḥamid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazali al-Tūs al-Shāfi' (450–505 H / 1058–1111), widely known as *ujjat al-Islām* (the Proof of Islam) and *'Ajbat al-Zamān* (the Wonder of the Age), was a towering figure of Islamic scholarship distinguished by his intellectual brilliance and spiritual depth. He began his studies in ḥadīth and continued in Nishapur under Imam al-Arāmāy al-Juwaynī, where he mastered jurisprudence, dialectical theology, and philosophical reasoning. His exceptional talent soon drew the attention of *Nizām al-Mulk*, the vizier of the Saljuq dynasty, who appointed him as a professor at the *Nizāmiyyah* of Baghdad at the age of about thirty. There, he produced seminal works in jurisprudence, theology, and philosophy. Yet following an intense spiritual crisis, al-Ghazali withdrew from public life, embracing asceticism and devoting himself to contemplation, pilgrimage, and inner purification. During this period, he authored his monumental works, including *Iy' 'Ul m al-D n*, *al-Arba' n*, *al-Qis s al-Mustaq m*, and *Ma akk al-Na ar*. After years of intellectual and spiritual journeying, he returned to his hometown of ḥadīth, living a life of teaching, writing, and moral refinement until his passing (Adz-Dzahabi, 1980).

Within his epistemological framework, Al-Ghazali classifies knowledge based on its origin, which serves as the foundation for its validity and orientation. This classification is

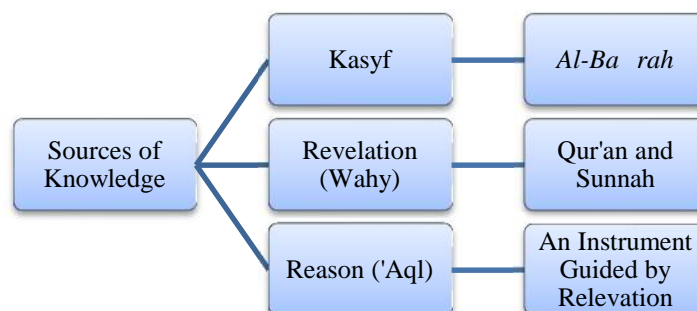
constructed upon the principle of integration between revelation and intellegence of two main of Islamic intellectual tradition. According to its sources, knowledge is categorized into three major domains: kashf (intuitive unveiling), revelatory knowledge (shar'i), and rational knowledge (Soleh, 2013).

First, *kashf* refers to knowledge acquired through profound spiritual unveiling or inner witnessing, without recourse to rational processes or logical reasoning. Al-Ghazali regards this as the highest form of knowledge, as it stems from *al-ba rah* (the eye of the heart), the fourth level of epistemic attainment following sense perception, mind, and revelation. This knowledge is considered free from error and more authoritative than that derived from transmitted revelation (*naql*) or rational inference, since it is believed to originate directly from God. However, due to its deeply personal nature and incommunicability to those who have not experienced it, the validity of kashf is confined to the individual who attains it. Thus, while it is epistemically superior, it is socially and communicatively limited (Soleh, 2013).

Second, *shar'i* knowledge is derived from revelation that has been codified systematically within the intellectual heritage of Islam namely the Qur'an and Sunnah. (Al-Ghazali, 2014) This body of knowledge encompasses various disciplines such as jurisprudence (*fiqh*), Hadith studies, and theology (*kalam*). It holds an authoritative epistemic status and constitutes the foundation for religious norms and ethical conduct. Although rational engagement is permitted in its interpretation, the legitimacy of shar'i knowledge remains anchored in the revealed text (Soleh, 2013).

Third, rational knowledge includes all forms of knowledge acquired through human intellegency, such as logic, philosophy, and the natural sciences. Al-Ghazali likens the relationship between reason and knowledge to that of a tree and its fruit, underscoring mind as an essential instrument in the pursuit of knowledge. Nevertheless, mind is not an autonomous source; it requires the guidance of revelation, just as the eye needs light to see. For this reason, intellegence and revelation must operate in harmony. While affirming the central role of intellegency, Al-Ghazali is keen to highlight its limitations, placing revelation above it in the epistemic hierarchy. (Soleh, 2013) In *Mishkat al-Anwar*, he refers to the Qur'an as "light upon light," suggesting that it illuminates reason by unveiling metaphysical realities inaccessible to the intellect. Consequently, revelatory knowledge is deemed superior to rational knowledge, although both are mutually reinforcing within the architecture of Islamic epistemology (Al-Ghazali, 1929).

Through this tripartite classification, Al-Ghazali illustrates that the value of knowledge is not solely determined by its object or method, but primarily by its epistemic source. Knowledge of divine origin occupies the highest rank, whereas rational knowledge must be directed toward ethical and spiritual ends. This reveals that the classical Islamic system of knowledge classification is neither neutral nor merely descriptive; it is normative and teleological, aimed at guiding the human intellect toward *ma'rifah* (gnosis) and ultimate happiness (*sa' dah*) (Al-Ghazali, 1961).



The classification of knowledge sources according to al-Ghazali implies a hierarchical unity between intellect, revelation, and kashf-based knowledge. Al-Ghazali assigns the highest

rank to kashf-based knowledge, as it is believed to be free from error and directly sourced from the Divine. The consequence of this model is a rejection of epistemological secularism; knowledge is not separated from its spiritual and transcendental orientation. Knowledge is not understood as neutral value, but as a means of inner transformation and proximity to God (Bakar, 1997).

In contrast to Ibn Sina's approach, the fundamental difference lies in the role of logic within the epistemological system. Ibn Sina positions logic as the essential tool for acquiring and verifying knowledge, including religious doctrines and Qur'anic interpretation. For him, logic operates through four aspects of cognition: *al-iss al-musyarak*, *al-khayl*, *al-muta'ayyilah*, and *al-wahm*, with imagination playing a central role in connecting abstract concepts to concrete reality. Logical inference becomes the heart of his rationalism, encompassing dialectics, rhetoric, and even poetry within a systematic framework. Al-Ghazali, by contrast, treats logic as a valid path to knowledge but not as the sole standard of truth. He privileges kashf of intuitive knowledge that arises from inner purification and divine grace as the epistemic summit. Thus, his approach does not reject logic but subordinates it to spiritual orientation, constructing an epistemology that is not only rational but also transcendent (Syihabuddin et al., 2023).

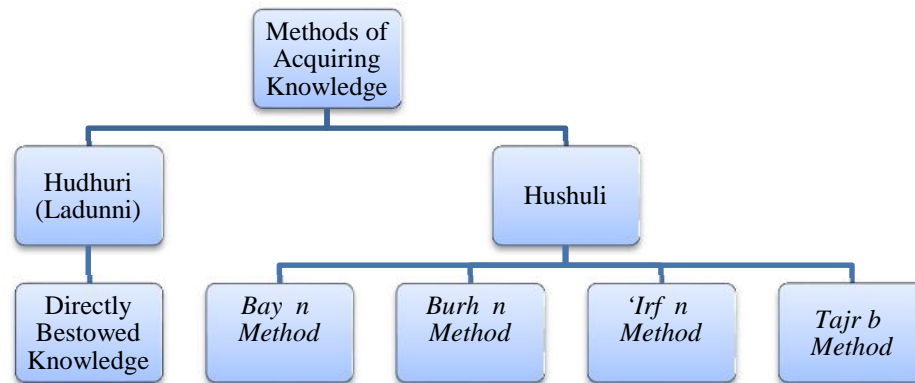
Methods of Acquiring Knowledge

Within the structure of Islamic epistemology, Al-Ghazali distinguishes two principal modes of acquiring knowledge: *u ri* (immediate) knowledge and *u li* (acquired) knowledge. *Ilm u ri* refers to knowledge that is directly present in the soul without the mediation of rational processes or symbolic representation. (Bakar, 1997) In *ar-Risalah al-Ladunniyyah*, this form of knowledge is referred to as '*ilm ladunn*', that is, knowledge divinely granted to individuals who have attained inner purity. Due to its immediacy and intuitive nature, this knowledge is regarded as more authoritative and uncontaminated by perceptual or rational error (Al-Ghazali, 2014).

In contrast, *u li* knowledge is acquired through cognitive processes, learning, and symbolic interaction. It is representational in nature, as its object is not immediately present but constructed through concepts, language, or empirical experience. This type of knowledge forms the foundation of educational systems, scientific inquiry, and the broader Islamic intellectual tradition (Al-Ghazali, 2014). Within this *u li* framework, Al-Ghazali offers a range of methodological approaches, each adapted to the characteristics of the object of knowledge and the capacity of the learner.

The first is the *bayn* method, which relies on the authority of revealed texts and the classical Islamic scholarly tradition. This approach employs linguistic and normative tools to interpret the Qur'an, Hadith, and the principles of *shar'ah*. Second is the *burhān* method, a logical-rational approach that emphasizes argumentative coherence and syllogistic demonstration. Although Al-Ghazali critiques philosophy, he acknowledges the value of rational reasoning as long as it does not contradict revelation. Third is the '*irfān*' method, a spiritual-intuitive approach grounded in *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the soul) and mystical experience. This method prioritizes inner witnessing (*mushahadah*) as a means of attaining truth. Fourth is the *tajrib* method, an empirical approach that relies on observation and sensory experience, particularly applicable in practical sciences such as medicine and astronomy (Soleh, 2017).

In this way, Al-Ghazali constructs an integrative epistemological framework that resists reductionism. He accommodates diverse epistemic pathways in spiritual unveiling, rational inquiry, textual interpretation, and empirical observation as legitimate avenues toward truth. For Al-Ghazali, all these methods must ultimately be oriented toward the highest purpose of knowledge: *ma'rifatullah* (gnosis of God) and eternal happiness in the hereafter. Islamic epistemology, therefore, is not only concerned with the nature and means of acquiring knowledge, but also with its ultimate aim and moral direction.



With regard to the method of knowledge acquisition, al-Ghazali draws a clear distinction between *u r* knowledge (direct and immediate) and *u l* knowledge (acquired through learning). The *u l* path encompasses multiple approaches: *bay n* , *burh n* , *‘irf n* , and *tajrib* . The consequence of this system is the demand for a multidisciplinary process of knowledge acquisition is integrated on textual analysis, rational inquiry, empirical observation, and spiritual intuition while preserving the ethical and spiritual dimensions of intellectual pursuit (Rozi, 2020).

Unlike al-Ghazali, Ibn Sina does not explicitly divide knowledge acquisition into *u r* and *u l* . His model leans more toward formal rational structures.(Syihabuddin et al., 2023) In this respect, al-Ghazali's framework is more methodologically inclusive. He grants balanced space to both revelation and reason, allowing for the integration of normative and experimental approaches. This becomes a foundational direction for Islamic education to build a holistic epistemology one that is both rational and spiritual.

The Legal Status of Seeking Knowlegde

Al-Ghazali emphasizes that not all forms of knowledge hold equal legal standing within Islam. Based on their urgency and benefit to both individuals and society, he formulates a classification of the obligation to seek knowledge into five categories: individual obligation (*far ‘ayn*), collective obligation (*far kif yah*), recommended (*mand b*), permissible (*mub t*), and reprehensible or forbidden (*makr h* or *ar m*). This classification is not merely normative but also reflects the broader Islamic epistemological structure, which integrates legal, ethical, and social dimensions of knowledge. Through this system, Al-Ghazali does not evaluate knowledge solely in terms of its methodology, but also through its moral value and societal consequences (Soleh, 2013).

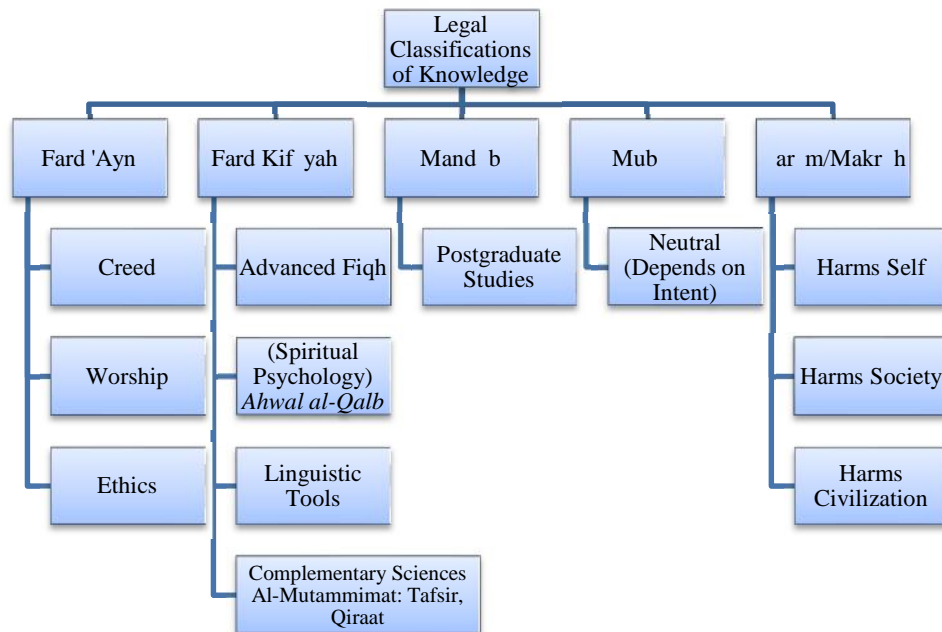
Far ‘ayn knowledge refers to essential knowledge that every Muslim must acquire to believe their faith and basic religious life. This includes three fundamental areas: the principles of Islamic creed (*‘aq dah*), foundational acts of worship such as purification (*ah rah*) and prayer (*al h*), and ethical conduct. According to Al-Ghazali, a person cannot properly practice Islam without adequate knowledge in these domains. As such, pursuing *far ‘ayn* knowledge is non-delegable and must be prioritized in Islamic education. Neglecting this obligation is considered a personal failure in religious duty (Al-Ghazali, 2005).

In contrast, *far kif yah* knowledge is must be acquired by a sufficient number of individuals within the community to maintain the collective good. Once fulfilled by some, the obligation is lifted from the rest; but if neglected entirely, the entire community shares in the sin. Al-Ghazali identifies several disciplines within this category. First, advanced religious sciences such as jurisprudence (*fiqh*), particularly in matters of transactions, criminal law, and family law. Second, knowledge of inner spiritual states (*a w l al-qalb*), including destructive traits (*muhlik t*) and salvific virtues (*munjiy t*). Third, foundational tools such as Arabic grammar, linguistics, and writing. Fourth, complementary sciences (*al-mutammim t*) like Qur’anic exegesis (*tafs r*), Qur’anic readings (*qir ’ t*), Hadith sciences including narrator

evaluation (*'ilm al-rijāl*), and legal theory (*uṣūl al-fiqh*). Al-Ghazali also gives separate attention to *kalām* (Islamic theology), which he views as vital in defending Islamic belief against ideological threats. Moreover, he includes applied and social sciences such as medicine and economics as part of *far kif yah*, given their essential role in sustaining the material and professional well-being of the Muslim community (Al-Ghazali, 2005).

Beyond this, Al-Ghazali classifies some fields as *mand b* not obligatory but highly recommended for personal and intellectual development, such as advanced studies at the master's or doctoral level. There are also *mub* sciences, which are legally neutral and whose value depends on intention and outcome such as technical skills or general knowledge. However, Al-Ghazali issues a strong caution against disciplines that fall under *makr h* or *ar m*, which he considers spiritually or socially harmful. These include knowledge used for manipulation, corrupting beliefs, or undermining social order. He categorizes such harmful knowledge in three degrees: that which corrupts the individual, the community, and civilization itself (Soleh, 2013).

In this way, Al-Ghazali offers a classification system for the pursuit of knowledge that not only reflects practical and normative urgency, but also highlights the integration of epistemology, *shar'ah*, and ethics. Knowledge is not perceived as neutral; its value is determined by its purpose. Within this framework, the classification of knowledge serves as a guiding tool to ensure that the pursuit of learning ultimately contributes to individual well-being, social harmony, and the flourishing of Islamic civilization. Harms: Self, Society, or Civilization (Bakar, 1997).



Regarding the legal status of seeking knowledge, al-Ghazali emphasizes that knowledge carries a *shar'* status are categorized as *far 'ayn*, *far kif yah*, *mand b*, *mub*, or *ar m*. The implication is that knowledge must be directed toward personal and societal well-being and spiritual salvation. Knowledge that undermines faith, cultivates arrogance, or lacks benefit must be avoided. This model promotes a value-conscious education system rather than one that is morally neutral (Bakar, 1997).

In comparison with Western philosophy or Ibn Sina's epistemological model, al-Ghazali's classification uniquely integrates legal and ethical dimensions. Ibn Sina does not address the legal rulings (*ukm*) of knowledge, whereas al-Ghazali offers a typology grounded in the benefits and societal implications of knowledge is not merely its object or method. Hence, his classification provides a strong ethical foundation for the selection, development, and orientation of Islamic scholarship (Khasanah et al., 2020).

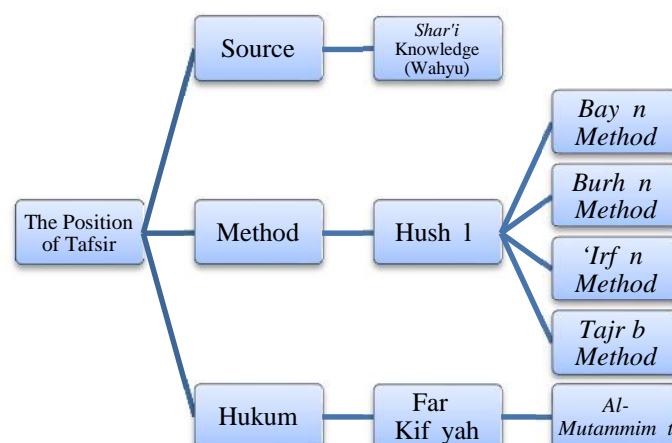
The Position of Tafsir in Al-Ghazali's Classification of Knowledge

Within Al-Ghazali's framework of knowledge classification, tafsir holds a strategic position as a discipline that not only engages directly with divine revelation but also serves as the principal bridge for understanding Islam's primary source al-Qur'an. In terms of epistemic source, tafsir is categorized under *shar'* knowledge, which is derived from revelation (naql) and functions as a means to explain, interpret, and extract meaning from the sacred text. Although it originates from revelation, tafsir cannot rely solely on memorization and transmitted reports; it also necessitates the active engagement of sound reasoning to analyze context, establish coherence, and uncover the intended meanings of the verses (Al-Ghazali, 2014).

From the perspective of the methods of acquiring knowledge, tafsir employs an integrated use of *bay' n*, *burh' n*, and at a more advanced level *'irf' n* approaches. The *bay' n* method is applied in the linguistic, grammatical, and syntactical analysis of Qur'anic text. The *burh' n* method is evident when the exegete (mufassir) formulates rational arguments to elucidate the meanings of verses, particularly in *tafsir bi al-ra'y* and thematic interpretations. Meanwhile, the *'irf' n* dimension emerges in esoteric or Sufi-oriented commentaries, which require deep spiritual insight and inner purification (Al-Ghazali, 1987). Although *tafsir* is not directly associated with the *tajr' b* (empirical) method, it nonetheless adheres to principles of logical validity and coherence to maintain its scholarly credibility.

In terms of the legal status of knowledge, Al-Ghazali classifies tafsir as *far kif yah*, specifically within the subset of *al-mutammim t*, or complementary sciences, which are essential for the comprehensive understanding of religion. While this knowledge is not obligatory for every individual, the presence of a group of qualified exegetes is vital to preserve the Qur'an's textual integrity, construct sound interpretative methodologies, and convey divine meanings contextually. Alongside disciplines such as *qir' t*, *ad th*, narrator criticism (*'ilm al-rij l*), and legal theory (*u l al-fiqh*), tafsir does not stand alone but serves as a central instrument for understanding and applying Islamic law. The absence of tafsir scholars in a society risks creating an epistemic vacuum that could disrupt the continuity of religious understanding among Muslims (Al-Ghazali, 2005).

Thus, within Al-Ghazali's epistemological system, tafsir is not merely a traditional science but a composite discipline that synthesizes multiple methodological approaches while maintaining high normative significance. It occupies a central position in the Islamic knowledge system by being rooted in revelation, supported by reason, implemented through diverse methodologies, and granted a strategic legal status vital for the continuity of religious civilization. The role of tafsir, therefore, exemplifies the epistemic synthesis of text, intellect, spirituality, and social responsibility (Al-Ghazali, 1987).



In al-Ghazali's classification, tafsir occupies a strategic position as a *shar'ī* science, specifically within the category of *far kif yah*, under the subcategory of *al-mutammim t* (complementary sciences). The implication is that tafsir serves as a collective obligation and a vital discipline: it safeguards the community's understanding of divine revelation and connects it to social realities. Tafsir functions not only to explain meaning but also as a moral and transformative force within society (Shihab, 2007).

In contrast, Ibn Sina does not treat tafsir as an independent discipline within his philosophical classification of knowledge. (Siddiq & Siregar, 2024) It does not appear in his rational framework. Therefore, al-Ghazali's system demonstrates superiority through its integration of text, intellect, and spirituality into the science of tafsir. His classification is not merely taxonomic but also applicative of serving to demonstrate Islamic teachings within the lived experience of the Muslim community.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, this study concludes the following: (1) Al-Ghazali classifies knowledge according to its sources into three categories: revelatory knowledge (*'ilm al-shar'ī*), rational knowledge (*'ilm al-'aql*), and intuitive knowledge (*'ilm al-kashf*). These are arranged hierarchically, with *kashf*-based knowledge occupying the highest spiritual level, although it is limited in terms of social applicability. (2) In terms of acquisition, knowledge is divided into *u r* (immediate) and *u l* (acquired through learning). *u l* knowledge is developed through four main approaches: *bay n*, *burh n*, *'irf n* and *tajrib*. (3) From a legal-ethical perspective, knowledge is categorized into *far 'ayn*, *far kif yah*, *mand b*, *mub*, and *ar m*. Al-Ghazali assesses the value of knowledge not only by its object, but also by its impact on individuals and society. (4) Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*) is categorized as a *shar'ī* science that falls under *far kif yah*, particularly within the subcategory of *al-mutammim t*. Tafsir holds a strategic role in preserving the continuity of revelatory understanding and applies *bay n*, *burh n*, and *'irf n* approaches in its interpretation.

This research contributes significantly to reviving Al-Ghazali's classification system as an epistemological, normative, and spiritual foundation within the Islamic intellectual tradition. By positioning tafsir as an integral part of this structure, the study offers a renewed perspective on Islamic sciences, one that is not solely based on rationality but is also rooted in the authority of revelation and ethical values. These findings may serve as a reference for developing Islamic educational models that integrate *shar'ī* sciences with philosophical and methodological approaches. The limitation of this study lies in its conceptual scope, which does not yet incorporate empirical research or practical application of tafsir methodologies within educational institutions. Future research may focus on exploring the practical implementation of Al-Ghazali's classification system, particularly its integration into curriculum development for Qur'anic exegesis and Islamic education in general.

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