

Conceptual Paradigms of West and Islam: A Study in Terminology

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Abstract

“Conceptual Paradigms of West and Islam: A Study in Terminology” is basically a comparison between concepts of two major civilizations of West and Islam. In this thesis Western worldview is discussed which primarily is based on Humanism, Secularism, Enlightenment etc. whereas Islamic worldview is a product of divine revelation. Comparing Epistemology of the two, it has been discussed that Scienticism, a product of Western worldview, is the source of Western knowledge, while divine knowledge is the source of Islamic Epistemology, without negating the subordinate role of reason.

In the comparative study of religious terminologies, it has been noticed that the role of religion (Christianity) is limited in the Western society, while in Islamic paradigm religion (Deen) plays a pivotal role in organization and working of society and state.

Political terminologies of Western and Islamic concepts have also been analyzed. It is pertinent to note that sovereignty in Western civilization belongs to humans and individuals while in Islamic civilization sovereignty belongs to Allah which leads to domination of Shariah (divine law) over human intellect but it does not negate role of reason rather it regulates it in the form of Ijtehad giving it a subordinate position.

Dedicated to my father Mian Jamil Ahmed...

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It is really difficult to start ...

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Preface

“Conceptual Paradigms of West and Islam: A study in Terminology” is a comparative study between two major civilizations of the contemporary world. Some people say that these are identical and some say that they are different from each other. In this study a comparison will be made between these two civilizations with reference to their world views and philosophies of knowledge. Religious and political terminologies of both will also be analyzed.

The term worldview deals with the concept of deity, man and universe. Judaism and Christianity are also revealed religions. However, we will see that how Western thought movements (such as Renaissance, Reformation and Enlightenment) have squeezed the role of religion in the West; whereas, Islam as a religion has a dominating role and precedes state and the society.

In the domain of political science, Western capitalistic, democratic and constitutional theories will be discussed. The West believes in secularism i.e. the separation of the church and the state. It also supports sovereignty of humans in the form of sanctity of parliament and constitution and advocates Democracy. On the other hand we will study that according to Islamic teachings sovereignty belongs to Allah (swt) and man is His ‘*abd*’ (a servant) who has to submit to Him unconditionally and follow his commandments in all fields of life whether religious or mundane.

After studying major religious and political terminologies we will try to analyze and determine whether both civilizations are identical to each other or they are different from each other.

We have divided this thesis into three chapters to make our view point clear, understandable and proven.

The 1st chapter is about the worldview which explores the reality among the concept of deity, universe and man.

The second part of 1st chapter is about the Epistemology and defines, describes and explores the basic essence of the term. Western and Islamic origins of these concepts have been discussed and their distinctive characteristics have been explained thoroughly.

The 2nd chapter gives a detailed discussion on the differences between the Islamic and Western religions terminologies.

The 3rd and final chapter defines the political terms used in both civilizations. This chapter clarifies the truthfulness and completeness of Islam and limitations of the Western ideologies.

What is a Worldview?

Introduction of Worldview

“The expression *worldview* refers to the common concept of reality shared by a particular group of people, generally referred to as a culture, civilization, tradition, customs, society or an ethnic group. Worldview is an individual as well as a group concept, and observable fact”.

Fundamentally the term worldview stands for three basic concepts:

- Concept of Deity
- Concept of Man
- Concept of Universe

The term “Worldview” may be defined as “*Cognitive Culture*”. Cognitive Culture is the psychological approach in every person’s mind of how the world works. “Expressions of harmony and unity in individual worldviews make up the cultural worldview of the group. This leads to the community and culture, the way citizens relate to one another on day to day activities and how they work together for the good of the group as a whole, called *the civilization or society*”.

It makes clear that every person has a culture in his mind. This is his “worldview”. The elasticity, flexibility of the community and traditions will be an element of the “worldview” in every body’s mind.

“*Worldview* denotes the complex of beliefs, concepts, sense of order and social constructs, role-models and moral and legal values which are unique and strange in contrast to other such complexes of other such socio-cultural groups.”

Western Worldview

Concept of God

God is the eternal Being. God is believed by nearly all Christians to be imminent at the same time as others who consider the plan of salvation think he will be about to happen later. The greater part of Trinitarian Christians suppose also that he is also external space furthermore time, moreover for that reason everlasting and not capable to be changed by powers contained by the world, based on the “New Testament only” despite the fact that “God the Son, a Jewish God-man called Jesus, was on earth during his Ministry and will come again to earth in the next upcoming of Christ, to fulfill his commitments as the Christian Messiah”. God is more often than not to have the properties of holiness, justice, supremacy, and immortality. “The Christian never speaks of God in an impersonal logic. Instead, it refers to him in individual and private terms as one who is, who speaks, who sees, hears, acts, and loves. God is understood to have strength of character and qualities and is an all dominant, heavenly and compassionate being”. He is represented in Scripture as being for the most part concerned with nation and their salvation. ¹

God is understood by Trinitarian Christians as “God the Father, God the Son and the Holy Spirit; never-ending Godhead of three dissimilar persons who is mutually within furthermore away from nature”.

Not as much of universally, non-Trinitarian denominations describe “the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit” in a different way.

The theology or divinity of Jesus and his position as God the Son in Christianity as set forth in the Chalcedonies description stems starting the opening of the Gospel of John, normally

¹ William L. Reese, *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion: Eastern and Western Thought* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1994), 635.

translated into English as: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. It is the most significant dissimilarity from Judaism, which passionately rejects the idea that God is man".²

God as Father

In Christianity, "God is called Father" further in literal sense, "besides being the creator and nurturer of creation, also the benefactor for his offspring". The Father is said "to have an eternal relation with his only begotten son, Jesus Christ, which implies an exclusive and intimate knowledge: No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." In Christian religious studies, this is the "revelation of a sense in which fatherhood is inherent to God's nature", never-ending affiliation.³

In the 3rd century, Tertullian claimed that "God exists as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit the three personas or character of one and the similar essence". To Trinitarian Christians "God the Father is not at all a separate god from the Son and the Holy Spirit".⁴

In Christian's concepts, "God the Father's relationship with humanity is as a father to children". Therefore, humans in wide-ranging are called "*children of God*". To Christians, "God the Father's relationship with humanity is that of Creator and created beings, and in that high opinion he is the father of all". The New Testament says, in this logic, that "the extreme thought of family, wherever it appears, derives its name from God the Father, and as a result God himself is the model of the family".⁵

² Wayne A. Grudem., *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (England: Inter-Varsity Press; Grand Rapids, 1994), 226.

³ Louis George Mylene, *The Holy Trinity* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 2009), 62.

⁴ Richardson Cyril C., *The Doctrine of the Trinity* (New York: Abingdon Press, n.d.), 17.

⁵ Geevarghese Mar Osthathios, *Sharing God and a Sharing World* (New Delhi: ISPCK, 1998), 1.

On the other hand, “there is a deeper sense in which Christians accept as true that they are made participants in the everlasting relationship of Father and Son, through Jesus Christ”.

Christians believe themselves *adopted* children of God: “But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying out, "Abba, Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”⁶

In Eastern Orthodox theology, “God the Father is the arches (*beginning*)”, the "foundation" or "derivation" of both “the Son and the Holy Spirit” by comparison; “Catholic religious study explains the "origin" of all three Hypostases or Persons as being in the divine nature while still maintaining God the Father as the foundation of both the Son and the Spirit”.⁷

God as Son

In the mainstream explanation of the Bible, “the second Person of the Trinity”, because of his everlasting relation to “the first Person (God as Father), is the Son of God”. “He is considered co-equal with the Father and Holy Spirit”. He is all God and all human: “the Son of God as to his heavenly nature, while as to his human nature he is from the ancestry of David”.

The core of Jesus' self-interpretation was his "filial realization, his relationship to God as child to parent” in only one of its kind sense. “His mission on earth proved to be that of enabling people to know God as their Father, which Christians believe is the essence and real meaning of undying and unending life”.⁸

⁶ Bible: Galatians 4:4-7.

⁷ Louis George Mylene, *The Holy Trinity*, 62.

⁸ John Thurmer, *A Detection of the Trinity* (Flemington Markets: The Paternoster Press, 1999), 9.

God as Holy Spirit

“The Holy Spirit is one of the three divine persons of the Holy Trinity who make up the single substance of God; that is, the Spirit is considered to take action in performance and share an necessary nature with God the Father and God the Son (Jesus)”. The “Christian divinity” of the Holy Spirit was the last piece of “Trinitarian religion” to be fully explored plus developed. For this reason, “there is greater theological diversity among Christian understandings of the Spirit than there is among understandings of the Son and understandings of the Father”.⁹

Christians believe that “the Holy Spirit leads people to faith in Jesus and gives them the ability to be alive like Christian. The Holy Spirit dwells within every Christian. The Holy Spirit enables Christians, who still understand the sound effects of offense or sin, to perform things they never might perform by their own”. These religious and spiritual gifts are not innate abilities "unlocked" by the Holy Spirit, but exclusively modern abilities, such as the ability to cast out simply bold speech. Through the authority of the Holy Spirit a person sees more clearly the world around him and can use his brainpower and body in ways that exceed his original power. Christians more or less generally have the same opinion that “definite spiritual gifts are still in effect today, including the gifts of ministry”, philosophy, ideas, benevolent, control, moreover forgiveness.

The knowledge of “the Holy Spirit” is occasionally referred to as being anointed”. After his rebirth, “Christ told his disciples that they would be *baptized with the Holy Spirit* and would receive authority from this occurrence, a guarantee that was fulfilled in the events”. A multilingual crowd heard the disciples speaking, and every one of them heard them speaking in his or her own verbal communication.¹⁰

⁹ John Thurmer, *A Detection of the Trinity*, 9.

¹⁰ Marie Fargues, *The God of Christians*, translated by Jennifer Nicholson (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994), 181.

Western concept of God in present world

In present era West has forgotten the teachings of Jesus and is following different theories.

First of all, West adopted the concept of humanism and refused the divine principles and advanced their own theories for living a peaceful and prosperous life. Humanism gives the idea that the human beings are self existent and are judge themselves. On the basis of experience, observations and later successful scientific achievements, those theorists and many Westerns rejected the restrictions imposed by religion and denied the existence of the Creator and the sole owner of this whole universe. According to this concept God has no role in man's life, man has power and authority and ultimate freedom, and ultimate reality is man. So humanism is a concept which rejects the idea of God openly.

The second concept is secularism which is also a reason of decline of Christianity. The inventor of this theory preached that human beings are completely liberal. They should follow their own wills and be prosperous. Religion should not restrict the human beings and they should reject the wills of The Almighty. Human beings are capable of solving their own problems themselves in all fields of worldly life that's why we have no need of God. A secular man has no concern with the eternal life.

Western Concept of Man

The concept of West about man is of humanism. It's an advance study, philosophy, practice or world view that focuses "on human ethics, values and concerns. It is also an attitude or structure of consideration attaching major importance to human rather than heavenly or supernatural matters". According to Greg M. Epstein, "Humanism today can be categorized as a movement, a philosophy of life or worldview, or *life stance*." In social science and philosophy "humanism is a perception which affirms some notion of human nature, and is contrasted with anti-humanism".

In simple words the exact meaning or concept of the humanism is "the man and his ultimate freedom". Basic priority is given to his wishes and will, and these concepts have also been cleared in Greek philosophy.

Italian humanist "Petrarch" used this word in 14th century but in the 19th and 20th century, secularism was the prominent feature of this concept. Anti religious theories were also dominant. In current century, humanism stands for different types like: Existentialism and Phenomenology, etc.

Scientific humanists are those who reject the aspects of the religion like: revelation, heavens, spirits, unseen powers, inexperience and unobservable facts etc and accept only scientific approach and used the scientific knowledge for freedom and the better life of humans. They separated the legal and the moral dimensions.

Those scholars who had faith in Christianity like Irving Babbitt and Jacques Maritain, separated the religious terminologies like: God, church, prayer etc from the traditional concepts and try to explain new meanings of these terms.

Karl Jaspers and Jibril Marsal tried hard to differentiate between existentialism and Christianity but failed.

However Martin Heidegger and Jean Paul Sartre openly refused to accept external powers after putting existentialism theory. According to Heidegger, human is not an object but is an existential that has supreme authority, has right and power of decisions. He declares that human is ultimate reality and in this way he rejects the existence of God. Sartre in his book *Existentialism as Humanism* explains the concept of existential humanism. He stresses on humanism instead of humanity. It won't be wrong to say that he has literally made man God. So he says that: my dogma is that there is no universe except human world and it is our humanism. It helps us to remember that except human there is no power that makes law and regulations. We have lost religion but we have achieved the humanism, man has ultimate freedom and is a creator. Man becomes creator of himself for that reason we reject the existence of God. Man is an independent reality so, has no need of God. He also rejects the objective dimensions and says that man can makes his legal and moral dimensions according to his will and needs.

According to the above mentioned theories, it is clear that humanism is not a humanity or human friendship. It's a rejection of God, existence and acceptance of the idea of man claiming himself as God and it's also a rejection of revealed religion.

Secular Humanism

“Secular humanism is a secular belief which espouses moral values, reason, and honesty, at the same time distinctively rejecting supernatural and sacred doctrine as a basis of morality and decision-making”. “Secular humanism” contrasts with “religious humanism” which is a combination of religious rituals and beliefs with humanist ethical philosophy that core on human needs, abilities, and welfare. ¹¹

“**Secular Humanism** is a development of 18th century enlightenment rationalism and free thought of 19th century”. Numerous secular groups, such as the American Rationalist

¹¹ Antony Flew, “The Presumption of Atheism,” in *God, Freedom and Immortality* (NY: Prometheus Books, 2002), 13-20.

Federation and Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism, and many philosophers and scientists, support this philosophy.¹²

Christianity and Classical Humanism: Alternate World-Views

“Christianity and Classical Humanism is the two principal of the Western tradition. Christian Humanism embraces both a God centered world-view and classical learning and thought. The value that modern Western civilization spaces on the individual derives from a sense of balance of both "Classical Humanism and the Judeo-Christian practice".¹³

In the Roman Empire, “traditional values were in decay, and Christianity was a self-motivated, dynamic and creative movement possessing both institutional and religious power”. These were the reasons that “the Christianity survived the collapse and decline of Rome”. For the reason that it holds “fundamentals of Greco-Roman nation and taught a high morality, Christianity served as an enlightening and civilizing agent in the centuries that followed Rome's down fall”. Classical Humanism and Christianity represent two fundamentally dissimilar world-views.

Christianity inherited the Jewish view of the overruling and dominant importance of deity for humanity: “God makes life logical and determined. For the Christian, God is a living being, affectionate kindhearted and sympathetic, in whose company one seeks to spend time without end; one knows God essentially through belief, faith, sensation and feeling”. The Greek philosophers had developed a pantheistic idea of God that was unable to coexist with the God of Christians and Jews.¹⁴

¹² Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought and its Sources* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1997),155.

¹³ Bolgar R. R, *The Classical Heritage and Its Beneficiaries: from the Carolingian Age to the End of the Renaissance* (Cambridge, 1993), 94.

¹⁴ *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://www.iep.utm.edu>.

Views of the Greeks, “God was a logical concept, a code of order, the ultimate good, the highest truth; God was a concept, unfriendly, unsympathetic, and straightforward with human concerns. Furthermore religion was at the edge, not the core, of traditional Humanism; the idea of God did not take as much significance as it designed for Christianity”.

Classicism held this view that “there was no authority higher than reason; on the other hand Christianity teaches that without God as the starting point, information and knowledge is worthless and prone to error”.¹⁵

Classical Humanism held the concept that “moral standards were laws of nature that reason could discover”. Reason would make possible them “to govern desires and regulate performance. Persons would seek what was best for them and act upon the voice of reason”. On the other hand Christianity in the Middle Ages maintains that ethical standards derived from the personal will of God. Without submission of God's commands, people would remain immoral forever; in actual fact the human will is sinful and could not be transformed by the promptings of reason.

Only one way, when individuals come back to God for forgiveness and turned to guidance would they find the inner strength to defeat their offense. People could not perfect themselves through the scientific knowledge alone. Belief in God must serve as the foundation of our lives. The idea of classicism that “the ultimate good was required through thought and action and for Christianity ultimate good comes through knowing and loving God”.¹⁶

¹⁵ Joseph Omen, *The Concept of Trinity and Its Implication for Christian Communication in Indian Context* (India: The United Theological College, 2002), 75.

¹⁶ Ibid., 78.

Early Attempts at Christian Humanism

“Earliest Christianity placed great value on persons. It taught that God thinks about for each of us and wants us to perform rightly. Jesus Christ died for all for the reason that God loves humanity and wants all to attain salvation. Early Christianity espoused active love and genuine concern for all people”.

Christianity adopted Plato’s idea of Dualism, “which made a separation between the mental and the physical realms, and guide to the neo-Platonic theory that the cosmos contains two different substances spirit and material Neo-Platonism was favored by the Catholic Church and was an influence on St. Augustine, who influenced by Luther and Calvin”.¹⁷

¹⁷ Nicholas Mann , *The Origins of Humanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1996), 13-15.

Western Concept of Universe

The Western concept of the universe is purely materialistic. Thus, the universe consists of all material things, the stars and galaxies and all physical matter that we can feel and experience.

Western thinkers believe the universe came into being on its own through a “Big Bang” and it is running on its own. Hence, no concept of God. They also reject the concept of doomsday.

The Protestant revolt against the church during 16th century caused the separation of the church and the state. As a result, religion was considered a private affair between man and God. This liberated man from all religious, moral and ethical bindings.

Secularism: this gave Western man unlimited freedom of thought and action. Success in worldly life and material progress became the goal of life. Rapid progress of science and technology since the 17th century in the West was the fruit of hard labor.

A secular state as defined scientifically, means a state which recognizes every citizen as equal and does not recognize any social or religious stratification as vehicles for exercising political rights. But what is generally projected as secularism is tolerance of all religions with special emphasis on the protection of minorities and preservation of communal harmony.¹⁸

This commonly understood meaning of secularism, falls far short of the scientific meaning of it, the essence of secularism, however, rests on two basic principles

- Separation of religion from politics
- Acceptance of religion as purely and strictly private affair of individuals having nothing to do with the state.

¹⁸ Peeyush Arora, *Dictionary of Political Science* (New Delhi: sarup & sons, 2007), 419.

In short, the conceptual delinkage of religion from state constitutes the core of the philosophy of secularism.¹⁹

With the suppression of religion followed by fragmentation of Christianity and emergence of secularism, a society was evolved which had no room for religious thought and spiritual values. It was an anti-religious development based on purely materialistic pursuits and secular motivations. The glitter of secular seduction was exceedingly strong and captivating. The secular man fascinated by attractive allurements committed “the deadly sin” of flirting with the ever growing seductive proclivities of modern civilization. Secular man has no God and with the banishment of the sustainer he receives hardly any succor to sustain his soul and body.²⁰

The concept of salvation of the Christ gave them immense of freedom and from the accountability before God. Christ went to the gallows as atonement of their sins. Hence they are at liberty to do whatever they like. With the adoption of materialism as a new religion and secularism as the new order, the shape of Western societies has undergone radical changes.

Darwinism and theories based on secularism played a significant role in polluting the main stream of thought in Western countries. They made people believe in the automatic functioning of the whole system of universe without any supervision or control of God.

The secular culture sought to clarify the concept of human life in purely worldly context God, religion, morality and life in the hereafter were not the relevant subjects for modern thinkers.

God for them did not exist. The secularist passion to purge the Western societies from the vestiges of ecclesiastical influence is attributed to historical development which the West experienced under some clerical excesses and obscurantism.

¹⁹ Peeyush Arora, *Dictionary of Political Science*, 420.

²⁰ Gauri Viswanathan, *Outside the Fold: Conversion, Modernity, and Belief* (N.J. : Princeton, 1998), 45.

The new pattern of thought was further invigorated by the spirit of liberalism and humanism which appeared to take the whole of Europe.²¹

Capitalism: new religion of the West

Major scientific discoveries in the 17th and 18th centuries brought advancement of technology and led to the industrial revolution. Having declared religion a private affair of man, the Western thinkers evolved the theory of capitalism.

Capitalism is an economic, social and political system based on private ownership of property, business and industry, directed towards making the greatest possible profits for successful organizations and people.

This capitalistic approach led to remarkable economic progress in the West and also strengthened its political position against the under-developed world which lagged behind in scientific knowledge.²²

With capitalism as the main system of economic growth, the West fell further in the grip of thoughtless, selfish and normless hedonism. It turned out to be a fatal instrument causing the decline in the level of human values and a resultant deprivation of individual conscience.

Capitalism instead of Christianity, therefore, became the religion of the West. The average Westerner is so much fascinated by the glamour of worldly riches that he has no other obsession except that of material well-being. For him the only goal in life is to make and accumulate money. All the avenues, howsoever, ignoble and immoral are employed to derive material gains and personal pleasures.²³

The miracles of science and technology prompted Western thinkers to deny the existence of unseen, un-experienced things like heavens and hell, angels and the life after death. They

²¹ Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, Calif., 2003), 25-26.

²² *Ibid.*, 27.

²³ Michal Harrington, *The politics at God's Funeral* (New York: Rinehart and Winston, 1995), 106.

termed death as the worst reality. According to them, man comes to the world and faces the realities of life and fights them. At the end, he grows weak and surrenders to the forces of nature, which is called death. And there is no life after that.

Big majorities of the Western people are enjoying the fruits of the progress of science and technology and feel satisfied with the material progress. They are living a mechanical life and they have no time to ponder over spiritual aspect of life. To them, religion is limited to Sunday service only.

However, the intelligentsia who looks beyond material progress does not feel satisfied over hollow worldly progress. Those among them, who search for the truth, ultimately find it in Islam. That is why Islam is spreading in US as well as Europe, and this is upsetting the secularists and the church both.²⁴

²⁴ Michal Harrington, *The Politics at God's Funeral*, 106.

The Islamic Worldview

Every part of human principles and approaches conscious or unconscious are a reflecting of a definite set of metaphysical beliefs. The domain of facts and learning definitely are two areas that are organically rooted in a worldview as has been established by studies on the sociology and philosophy of education and knowledge.

“The Islamic worldview can be defined at two levels. First it is the totality of human explanation of the world and of our lives in the world and this poses a dilemma of epistemology. Secondly it is the totality of the value by which man lives moreover this represents a problem of ethics”. “Worldview deals with ultimate questions with general and universal decisions. An individual worldview includes the educational, political, philosophical and moral attitude of a person”.

The expression of such a worldview based on “the Holy Quran and the authentic behavior and saying of Prophet Muhammad is also an important standard for evaluating the performance of historical Islam”.

Discussions on worldview in general centre on the concept of Allah, the concept of man and his density, and the concept of universes. “The Islamic worldview naturally consists of these elements, such as Christianity and Judaism would not be understandable without the concept of prophecy”.²⁵

²⁵ Dr. Ibrahim al-Salak Tr., *The Divine Traditions* (Lebanon: Dar el-Fiker, 1994), 160.

The Concept of *Allah*

“Ontologically it can say that Islam as found in the Holy Quran is ethnocentric because the only true reality is the One Allah”. The whole things are dependent upon His Will. The terms *Rabb* and Allah combined occur more than 3,750 times in the Holy Quran,

“The concept of Allah was not new to the pre-Islamic Arabs. This is evident from pre-Islamic poetry, compound personal names and old inscriptions. But Allah is the idea of the divine itself did not have the kind of certainty in their world view as demanded by the Holy Quran”. They did believe in Allah as the “Lord of the House and as the Creator of the heaven and the earth including Kaba, as the Holy Quran itself testifies”.²⁶

later than when the Holy Quran had exposed the “concept of Allah as the Highest and the most essential factor in the life of man and the world the *jahiliyya* Arabs raised challenges to the message of Muhammad”.

According to the Holy Quran “Allah is absolutely Truth (*al-Haqq*) while all other deities are false (*batil*). Allah is everlastingly living (*al-Hayy al-Qayyum*), being the First (*al-Awwal*), the last (*al-Akhir*), the External (*al-Zahir*), and the Internal (*al-Batin*). The exact nature of God is not predictable for He is beyond comprehension”.²⁷

The most significant characteristic of Allah in the Holy Quran is “His Oneness, the confirmation, of which became the most fundamental aspect of Islamic knowledge that is *tawhid*”. The religious, socio-moral, and logical implications of this idea can be obtained from the Holy Quran. In a few words, “Allah is one, not having been born, neither having any children, nor having any partners”²⁸.

²⁶ Timothy Fitzgerald, *The Ideology of Religious Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 79.

²⁷ Dr. Zakir Naik, *Concept of God in Major Religions* (Pakistan: Abdul Jabbar, 2007), 38.

²⁸ Surat Al-Ikhlās: 112: 1-4.

“If there were more than one Allah without any doubt there would be disorder in the universe”. “He is *al-samad*, the Eternal, self-subsisting Being, who is, metaphorically, likened to a hard, solid rock which provides anchor to everything.”

The unity of Allah who is Truth, the beam, logically implies the harmony of knowledge, that is, the unity of prophet hood. From this “One Allah then emerged one humankind which, though divided into male and female, tribes and races, is fundamentally one in its purpose on earth, and in its ultimate objective”.

“Allah is the creator of the havens and the world and the whole things therein and in between”. He is the “*Rabb-ul-Alameen*”, means the “Lord, the Owner, also the Bringer-up by degrees to full conclusion, the Guardian”, as Allah through “*Jibrail*, revealed to Muhammad for the first time at the cave of Hira”.²⁹

The concept of *Rabb* is also explained in other verses dealing with His relationship with His creation; “Praise the name of the *Rabb*, The Most High, who has created and then gave order and proportion, who had fixed a measure [for every being] and then granted it its guidance”³⁰ “Without Allah, there would be not anything and if there were to be more than one God, definitely there would be disorder in the universe”.³¹

“The Lordship of Allah” is characterized by justice and mercy. In fact, the most frequent epithet used in the Holy Quran which refers to Allah is “*al Rahman al Rahim* which stand at the head of all *suras* but one. He is also the Pardoner (*al-Afuww*)³² and the Forgiver (*al-Ghafir*)³³, Allah is Lord of Retribution”³⁴. All these characteristic of Allah only authenticate

²⁹ Dr. Zakir Naik, *Concept of God in Major Religions*, 28.

³⁰ Surat Al-'A`lá: 87:3, Surat Ta-Ha :20:25.

³¹ Dr. Zakir Naik, *Concept of God in Major Religions*, 43.

³² Surat An-Nisā': 4:43.

³³ Surat Al-'A`rāf: 7:155, Surat Ghāfir 40:3.

³⁴ Surat Al-'A`rāf: 7:95.

our opinion that they are primarily concerned with motivating and stimulating man's ethical potentialities.

“This personal relationship with Allah Almighty and the stress on the individual efforts and struggles to inquire about and take steps according to objective truths whether logical, natural, historical, or revelational, is very manifest in the Quranic world view”.

This is underlying idea of “Islam's prohibition” of all forms of “superstitious practices” such as “magic, sorcery, astrology, and all types of predicting the expectations and future”.

Every Islamic sect apparently seeks to define on the basis of a certain prized principle because of the lack of an integrated and coherent articulation of the Quranic worldview.³⁵

³⁵ Wan Mohd Nor Wan Davd, *The Islamic Weltanschauun* (USA: mensal publishing limited NY, 1989), 9-14.

The Concept of “*Abd*”

In the Holy Quran “reference to man as a species is made by the term *al-insan* which occurs sixty-five times and its plural form of *al-nas* and *al-ins* which occur two hundred and forty times”. The appearance of the definite piece of writing “*al*” attached to *Insan* seems to have some significance. In the case of *Insan*, extra importance gives to mankind with its universal uniqueness”. This theory is reasonable as the following discussion about man his nature, his function and the relationship of the universe to him will optimistically point toward.

“The Holy Quran discusses about two levels of the creation of man”. First is “*ghayb* (the unseen) which happened in ancient time, which is known only through revealed knowledge. Second is the natural biological procedure that man knows through experience”.

It is mentioned repeatedly in the prehistoric period that “man is created from lower organic” substance referred to as mud, and from dark altered clay. “Which Allah molded with His own Hand and when it was fully formed, breathed His Spirit into it. This divine Spirit, molded in the ‘best possible form’³⁶ .

Maybe this is one of the reasons “why Allah ordered the angels to prostrate to the First Man the Adam”.

Another reason for unique position of man is “his ability for creative knowledge and his acceptance of the *amana*, the trust which no other creation was competent to accept for fear of not being able to discharge it properly”.

Second level of the creation of man is the “logically known biological process a sperm which stuck fast in a firm position and was turned into a lump and later equipped with bones and soft tissue”.

³⁶ Surat Al-Insharh: 94:9.

A closer study of the verses of the Holy Quran “is dealing with the creation of man point to that the most important purpose of the Holy Quran is not scientific though some of its biological descriptions have been in accord with the established scientific facts”.

The Quranic propositions regarding the prehistoric stage are beyond the exploratory scope and range of instruments, scientific methods and as such should be accepted as they are.³⁷

The primary motives of the Holy Quran concerning man’s creation can be generally stated as follows:

1. “To refute the Christians’ attribution of divinity to Jesus, son of Mary, through his unique birth, because Adam was also created from dust as stated in”³⁸
2. “O mankind! If yet are in doubt concerning the Resurrection, then lo! We have created you from dust”³⁹
3. “O mankind! Be ever conscious of your Lord who created you from a single person and from each it created its mate and from each it created its mate and from them together had spread a broad multitude of men and women. Be ever conscious of God in whom ye claim of one another, and towards the wombs. Lo! God has been a watcher over you”⁴⁰

The mankind in the Holy Quran “comes from a single person, *nafs wahida*. The division of humankind into male and female, into groups and families cannot be interpreted as there being one sex or group superior to another with the exception of the *taqwa* which consists of good, complete faith and useful work”. The Holy Quran recognizes obvious difference among human individuals in terms of intellectual, moral, and physical capacities, but mutual responsibility of the human race is categorically affirmed.

³⁷ Wan Mohd Nor Wan Davd, *The Islamic Weltanschauun* ,15.

³⁸ Surat 'Āle 'Imrān: 3:59-60.

³⁹ Surat Al-Ĥaj: 22:5.

⁴⁰ Surat An-Nisā': 4:2.

Even though man is of divine origin with a greater status to other living things the “Holy Quran is replete with descriptions and a statement of man’s not is having lived up to his maximum potentiality and dignified purpose”. Man is mentioned as “ever grudging, and niggardly, stubbornly contentious, unthankful, intolerant, hasty in achievement, as loving the short-lived life, pushing back in his consciousness the remembrance of the grievous day, go astray all bounds, and as having many other faults”.⁴¹

The discussion “concerning man’s nature from the viewpoint of the Holy Quran is essentially linked to the idea of the faith which man accepted in prehistoric time, and the concept of his liberty which is fundamental to his nature and destiny”. Both of these ideas have been in a different way interpreted by the Muslims.⁴²

The question of human volition and self-determination unfortunately has been much discussed outside the Quranic concept. The origin of the argument and disagreement lies in verses of the Holy Quran such as the following:

1. This message is no less than a reminder to all mankind who wills to take a right way. But you cannot will it unless Allah wills.
2. If Allah so willed they would not have ascribed divinity to other than God. Hence, we have not made the [Holy prophet Muhammad] their custodian and neither are thou responsible for their conduct. He will guide whomever and He leaves astray whomever He wills.
3. Allah has power over all things. Rule and authority of the whole thing is in the hand of Allah.⁴³

The above verses give the idea that since Allah is supreme Omnipotent, man does not have any free action or will, but in some way appropriates the actions created by Allah. However, if these verses are analyzed within their proper perspective the intention behind them can be

⁴¹ Wan Mohd Nor Wan Davd, *The Islamic Weltanschauun*, 16.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 17.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 18.

properly comprehended and the Quranic stress on man's actions and his ultimate judgment, Allah's justice, mercy, and His behavior can be completely and systematically understood.

In short, "the purpose of the Holy Quran is to enhance the human relationship with and the awareness of his Lord the Creator the openhanded and to encourage the believers not to be excessively anxious of the opposition and rebellions of creation people because these are part of the will of Allah". The approach of dependence on Allah will create "personalities that are ever-optimistic and courageous" once they identify the true value of their dealings.

"Allama Muhammad Iqbal in addressing the younger Muslims characterizes the dynamism of dependence on the one and only Allah".

When they molded thee of clay and mud,

Love and panic will merge in thy making;

Fear of this the human race and of the world to come,

Fear of passing away, Fear of all the pains of gravel and paradise,

Be in love with treasures, resources, authority and supremacy, feel affection for country,

Love of identity, of family members and spouse

So long as you hold the force of *la ilah*.

Thou will break every curse of fear!

One to whom Allah is as the essence and soul in his body

Does not bow his head in front of falsehood.

The Concept of the *Dunya* and *Aakhirah*

The concept of the *aakhirah* in the Holy Quran is conveyed by the expression the “Heavens and the Earth and whatever lies between them”.

“Have they not pondered upon themselves? Allah created not the heavens and the earth and what is between them, save with truth and for a destined end. But truly, many of mankind are disbelievers in the meeting with their Lord.”⁴⁴

“The term *sama* (used for heaven or sky) is applied on everything that is extend like a cover above and higher than any other thing as in the case of our visible skies which is the most important gist of this term in the Holy Quran”. It also indicates the cosmic system the world. “The term *al-ard* in relation to the procedure of creation is not only the Earth but the whole inorganic planets including the Earth, references to specific creations of Allah Almighty either of the Unseen “*al-ghayb*” or the Seen “*al-shahada*” like the heaven and hell, angels and jinn, life before and after death”.

The visible phenomena “*shahada*” are of course all that is able to be seen that exist in the entire universe. On the other hand the “*ghuyub*” stand for all that is away from human observation not only the “*jinn* and angels, but also past historical events on nations which have been forgotten” by man. Allah created this whole creation by a mere command. Allah is who created the heavens and the world in reality. He permitted the universe to evolve in a periodic time, which is called *ayyam*. “This term (*ayyam*) is used in Arabic to signify any era whether extremely long or extremely short. The procedure of creation by Allah continues for an indefinite period”.⁴⁵

This cosmos does not exist to give activity but for specific time.

⁴⁴ Surat Az-Zumar: 39:5.

⁴⁵ Wan Mohd Nor Wan Davd, *The Islamic Weltanschauung*, 20.

Actuality “the natural phenomena are referred to in the same way as revealed knowledge means that they both insist the identical consideration that is, to be considered and thought about”. “The *aya* (signs) of Allah are also used for psychosomatic phenomena”.

So, it can be maintained that the Holy Quran considers numerous possibilities to guidance, to an understanding of the superior reasons and rules of existence.

There is the “verbal-scriptural guidance” revealed in a specific verbal communication addressed to the “instant situation of a people, and through them to the whole of mankind to gain benefits. Both complement each other and one cannot be dispensed with in the achievement of the highest level of the Quranic individual and communal uplift”.⁴⁶

It is indeed very illuminating to know that the whole universe and its contents are made for the man. However, all creation (living and non-living) in itself hymns the praise of Allah Almighty in the manner that surpasses human understanding. Even though “the whole universe is made to be utilized by man, this utilization is for the improvement of man’s true reason in creation: to perform worship (*ibada*) to One Allah”.

Hence, man should use the entire universe not just for his physical and intellectual requirements and desires but more importantly, for his ethical and spiritual progression. His authority and rule over the cosmos is for good in the widest possible sense and not to propagate corruption which the Holy Quran repeatedly condemns.

The corruption (dishonesty, bribery, fraud) on earth, on the territory and in the sea is due to men’s actions as a sign of their extravagance which stems from greediness.⁴⁷

The ideal human personality in the “Holy Quran is the *muttaqi*, the one who has attained *taqwa*. This implies in a straight line that he should be *Muslim*, submitting to the laws of

⁴⁶ Wan Mohd Nor Wan Davd, *The Islamic Weltanschauung*, 21.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*,22.

Allah, after finding out them in the Holy Book of Revelation and Creation book of nature and human psychology and history. Spiritually a *mutaqi* is a *mumin* whose faith is in *tawhid*".⁴⁸

His *iman* is grounded definitely in knowledge of the word of Allah in Revelation and the work of Allah in creation. He then shall join the group of *Muslims* to 'command good, prohibit evil', 'cooperative in righteousness, to use all the resources in nature and knowledge from historical experiences and establish a socio-moral order on earth that reflects the harmonious connection between Allah, man and the cosmos, according to the teaching of Allah.⁴⁹

The Quranic man is an integrated man, "who is first of all cured of all the illness of the soul, not by having all worries and complexes removed in the way of modern psycho-analysis so that he becomes like a plant quiescent but with no an internal drive, but by having all those worries that arise from his natural constituencies and from his deep urge and need for the transcendent in him comprehend and satisfied".⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Ibid., 24.

⁴⁹ Wan Mohd Nor Wan Davd, *The Islamic Weltanschauun*, 26.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 27.

Conclusion

According to above mentioned concepts of Deity, Man and Universe, West forgets the teachings of Jesus and the commands of the New Testament. The concept of God in earlier Christianity is based on Trinity.

They reject the concept of God and use religion for their personal affairs they believe Humanism and refuse the divine principles. Humanism gives the idea that the human beings are self existent and are judge themselves. God has no role in man's life, Man has full power, authority and freedom, and ultimate reality is man. So Humanism is a concept that openly rejects the idea of God.

In Islam absolute reality is Allah who has unlimited power. Allah is absolute Truth while all other deities are false. Allah is everlastingly living. He is the creator of everything. Human beings are his servants. The most significant characteristic of Allah is "His Oneness.

The West stresses that man is absolute reality and has complete freedom. So they reject religion and accept the concept of Humanism and Secularism. But in Islam religion is obligatory in collective and personal life both.

The Western concept of the universe is purely materialistic. According to them the universe consists of all material things. Western thinkers believe the universe came into being on its own through a "Big Bang" and it is running on its own. They have no concept of God. They also reject the concept of doomsday.

According to Islam, worldly life is a temporary. Real life will start after the death. We are answerable to Allah for our deeds. The faith on the doomsday is a part of *Iman*.

Epistemology

Western Epistemology

The meaning of epistemology is "knowledge, understanding". The term was introduced by the "Scottish philosopher James Frederick Ferrier".

The literal meaning of Epistemology is theory of knowledge. "Epistemic is sometimes used as equivalent to epistemology and it stands for a scientific approach to knowledge".

EPISTEMOLOGY: "is the logical and systematic inquiry into knowledge, its environment, possibility, kinds, and scope. Knowledge has been well-known into different types on different grounds".

Epistemology usually starts with "challenges to disprove skepticism by justifying the claim that knowledge is possible, and then proceeds to clarify the character, range and the capacity of knowledge". The average analysis of knowledge claims that it is justified true belief, an explanation initiated fundamentally by Plato, this definition; "philosophers have been working to investigate the relation between knowledge and truth, between knowledge and belief and between knowledge and justification. The last issue is especially innermost. In a sense, epistemology pays more attention to the dilemma of what it is to be reasonable in believing than to knowledge". One more major task of epistemology concerns the foundation of knowledge that "is to assess the role of logic and cause in the gaining of knowledge".⁵¹

"Rationalism represented by Plato Descartes, and Leibniz, takes reason to be the source of knowledge, whereas empiricism represented by Hume and Locke. They argue that experience is cause of truth". Kant attempted to reconcile Plato and Hume, Locke by the grouping of our *a priori* sixth sense and perceptions of the appearances and understanding. "Existing

⁵¹ Nicholas Bunnin and Jiyuan Yu, *The Blackwell Dictionary of Philosophy* (U.S.A: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 218.

epistemology is dominated by Anglo-American philosophy and is largely experimental. Corresponding to the improvement of the philosophy language, speech and meaning become important issue since epistemology is strongly connected with psychology and the philosophy of mind, perception, memory, imagination, and major topics”.

The debates of introduction and previous knowledge are also well-known, in part through the connection of “epistemology with philosophy of science”.

“Questions about the nature, origin, and limits of human knowledge, motivated the enterprises of epistemology, past and present.”⁵²

Plato’s dialogue, “Knowledge has been thought to consist in three essential conditions: belief, truth, and justification. Customarily, the focal point is the nature of justification. Epistemologists are divided into promoter of foundationalism, Coherentism, and Contextualism, each of which has a diversity of explanation”. Gettier explains that these three conditions do not actually make clear what knowledge is. Such a belief cannot count as facts and knowledge. The primary theory of knowledge claims “that information should be investigated as true belief where there is an informal relationship between that belief and the state or event represented by that belief”. Reliabilism suggests that “knowledge should be analyzed as true belief acquired by a reliable method or procedure. The position which proposes that the conditions that distinguish knowledge from non-knowledge should be available to the subject is internalism, while the position which does not insist such as consciousness is externalism”.

According to Nozick, *Philosophical explanations*: “To know is to have a belief that tracks the true knowledge is a particular way of being connected to the world, having a specific real factual connection to the world: tracking it.”⁵³

⁵² Nicholas Bunnin and Jiyuan Yu, *The Blackwell Dictionary of Philosophy*, 219.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 374.

There is a comprehensive, loosely joined set of philosophical problems relating to such philosophy as those of knowing, perceiving, feeling sure, supposition, being mistaken, remembering, finding out, providing evidence, concluding, creating, supporting, surprising, reflecting, visualizing, dreaming etc. This fraction of philosophy is often called the Epistemology.

Some problems revolve around the concept of a science in the sense in which we take astronomy to be a science, but astrology not. A distinctive difficulty of this kind is the problem why in pure mathematics there are conclusive proof and verification of theorems, when no such demonstrable certainties can be found in. It would be illogical for a mathematician to rest content with simple probable assumption or even with highly probable theory. Scientists of other sorts seem not to be in a position to desire higher than high probabilities.⁵⁴

We are inclined to say that a body of truths ranks as an authentic science only when these are conclusively established and then we find ourselves enforced to say that, judged by this exact standard even physics and chemistry are not really sciences and this conclusion conflicts roughly with our general view.

Further problems in the epistemology centre not upon the concept of a science, but upon the philosophy of our personal examining, concluding, perceiving identifying, dreaming, etc.⁵⁵

Our knowledge of the world around us together with simple beliefs and assumption about this world is all collection of interlocking conclusions inferred sometimes legally sometimes riskily and sometimes illegally from our imitation. Knowledge unlike belief and supposition would be the product only of legal and riskless inferences.

⁵⁴ J.o.Urmson and Jonathan Ree, *The Concise Encyclopedia of Western Philosophy and Philosophers* (London: Academic division of nwin hyman, 1991), 93.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 94.

Knowledge we get after a great deal of experiments and observation. Knowledge as opposed to presumption and opinion is to be found where the sciences are at their peak. What is identified to some and is in principle predictable to all is any person of truths conclusively established by the exact methods of true science.⁵⁶

As suggested by Kant, Knowledge of what be present and happens must have for its foundation neither only the formal and therefore uncontradictable facts of pure reason nor merely the continuous imitations of the senses but the facts of reason as the main beliefs or ideology organizing the sense impressions and the sense imitations as the actual material to be organized by the realities of reason. It is the application of the formal believes of the conceptual sciences to what we get by absolute hearing, seeing, etc, that make possible first to make anything at all out of our impressions and then to sift out what actually does exist and occur from what we precariously and often misguidedly suppose to happen and exist.⁵⁷

Epistemology by description

“Russell distinguished between knowledge by description and knowledge by acquaintance is a Bertrand relation between a knowing an object and subject of direct awareness”. The objects of social contact include information like “sense-data, memories, and our own understanding about objects”. They also contain universals like “ruddiness and roundness the awareness of which Russell called conceiving”. Material objects and other intelligence on the contrary are known by description. There are two kinds of Description: “indefinite description which is conveyed by any phrase of the form and definite description which is conveyed by any phrase of the form”.

Social contact is “knowledge of things while description is knowledge of truths. Russell’s theory of definite descriptions analyzes such descriptions to stay away from the visible need

⁵⁶J.o.Urmson and Jonathan Ree, *The Concise Encyclopedia of Western Philosophy and Philosophers*, 95.

⁵⁷Ibid., 96.

to hypothesize exceptional entities as their objects when they do not succeed in selection of actual objects”.⁵⁸

Knowledge of relations of ideas

“Hume distinguished between knowledge of matters of truth and knowledge of the relations of ideas and thoughts. Some knowledge depends upon the relations of ideas and a statement that expresses such knowledge will not fall into challenge. Knowledge of relations of idea can be exposed either by sixth sense or though deduction”. Hume also distinguished between “two kinds of knowledge as a distinction between probability and knowledge”. Hume’s distinction was foreshadowed by Leibniz’s difference between “truths of fact and truths of reason, or between essential and conditional truths”. Hume in turn provided the precursor of “Kant’s distinction between analytic and synthetic judgments. Because Kant held that some synthetic judgments can be known *a priori*, Hume’s distinction is more directly similar to the logical positivists’ dissimilarity between logical and unreal judgments”.

According to *Hume* “All the objects of human reason or enquiry may naturally be divided into two kinds, relations of ideas, and matter of fact.”⁵⁹

Meta-epistemology

“It is the epistemology of epistemology”. Ordinary epistemology can be called “substantive epistemology” and refers to “relations between knowledge and belief, knowledge and truth, and knowledge and Justifications”.

It also deals with “inquires about the source of knowledge, while meta-epistemology compares all kinds of epistemology and analyzes fundamental epistemic concepts determining their restrictions and the conditions of their application”.

⁵⁸ Nicholas Bunnin and Jiyuan Yu, *The Blackwell Dictionary of Philosophy*, 374.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 375.

In the view of Alston “Meta-epistemology is concerned with the basic concepts we employ in epistemology, concepts of knowledge, truth belief, justification, rationality, and so on, and with the methods, procedures, and criteria to be employed in determining how to apply these concepts.”⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Nicholas Bunnin and Jiyuan Yu, *The Blackwell Dictionary of Philosophy*, 425.

Islamic Epistemology

The Holy Quran as the first source of knowledge

“Everything that exists was created by Allah including knowledge”. He is the only “Rabb” Who comprehends all living and non-living things. He is the One who teaches Man is conveyed in “*Who taught by the pen, Taught man that which he knew not*”.⁶¹

And also in “*And if you fear an enemy, then pray on foot or riding. But when you are secure, then remember Allah as He has taught you that which you did not know previously*”.⁶²

Revelation (*wahi*): “which all prophets and messengers received from the divine source is the most definite knowledge”. The Holy Quran also points out “that there exist other sources of knowledge the appropriate study and orientation of which will complement the Truth of revealed knowledge for ultimately they are derived from the same source Allah the creator of all things”. Non-revealed knowledge: “Non-revealed knowledge is not directly granted by Allah to man and is vulnerable to methodological and axiological limitations, it does not hold the same status as *wahi*”. The other sources of knowledge are natural observable fact experiences and happenings, individual psychology, and narrations or history. In reference to historical phenomena, the Holy Quran never uses the term *ayat*, but rather the term *ibra* which means lesson, guidance from which moral lessons should be derived.

As a corollary to its divine authorship the Holy Quran apart from pointing to the sources of knowledge external to it, in itself is a major source of every kind of knowledge. Its orientations to the historical, metaphysical, sociological, natural phenomena and events must

⁶¹ Surat Al-'Alaq: 96:4-5.

⁶² Surat Al-Baqarah: 2:239.

be necessarily true either literally, symbolically or metaphorically. Muslims derive systems and subsystems of knowledge and culture from the Holy Quran.⁶³

The Prophet as a Source of knowledge

Imam Shafai said that “those who were learned in the Holy Quran in his times equated wisdom which appears in conjunction with the mentioning of the Book of Allah with the *Sunna* of the Prophet”. This is articulated in more than a few places including “*Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him as they know their own sons. But indeed, a party of them conceals the truth while they know [it].*”⁶⁴

Imam Shafai says that the Prophet’s knowledge consists of revelation that is recited, the Great Holy Quran and that which is not recited is in the form of *Sunna*. Shah Wali Allah divides the prophetic sciences into two categories. First is the knowledge that serves to spread the message, which includes the sciences for the next life and the wonders of the *Malakut* which are the direct results of revelation. It also includes divine laws which are based on revelation while others are based on the Prophet’s *ijtihad* which is called personal intellectual reasoning.⁶⁵

According to Shah Wali Allah, the second category of prophetic sciences is that which is not related to the propagation of the message. Sciences where there exists the possibility of error but which do not hinder the fundamental authority and dignity of the message.⁶⁶

⁶³ Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (London: Oxford University Press, 1999), 96, 126-28.

⁶⁴ Surat Al-Baqarah : 2:146

⁶⁵ Riaz-ul-Hasan Gilani, *The Recocstruction of Legal Thought in Islam* (Lahore: Idara Tarjuman al- Quran, 1994), 59-60.

⁶⁶ Wan Mohd Nor Wan Davd, *The Islamic Weltanschauun*, 48-49.

The Characteristics of Knowledge in the Holy Quran and the Prophetic Tradition

It should be clear that in Islam the acquisition of knowledge by man is not only possible but compulsory and is considered obligatory for all Muslims. Imam Ghazali captures this fundamental Islamic plan when he emphasizes that man 'was created only to know'.⁶⁷

Knowledge is Root and Relationship to God

Since the Holy Quran is neither a theoretical (philosophical), nor an educational essay on epistemology, it does not present a brief description of knowledge.

Knowledge in Arabic is expressed through the terms *al-ma'rif*, *al-ilm* and *al-shu'ur* (awareness) but the first in the Islamic world view is of the highest magnitude because it is one of the heavenly attributes.⁶⁸

A salient feature of Islamic epistemology

A salient feature of Islamic epistemology is the concept of Allah's Knowledge. In the Holy Quran this concept is so pervasive that it is present in almost every passage of its verses whether in its usage of the direct source of knowledge or through the application of additional terms, such as His hearing, His vision, and His constant awareness of everything. His attributes appear to be inseparable. He is described as *Alim al-Ghyub*, *al-Alim al-Khabir* (the knower), *al-Sami* (the Hearer), *al-Alim* (the Knower), *al-Sami al-Basir* (the Hearer, Seer). Absolute knowledge is Allah's, which the Holy Quran categorically declares about thirty times. The all-comprehensiveness of His Ilm covers what is in the heavens and the earth and

⁶⁷ Wan Mohd Nor Wan Davd, *The Islamic Weltanschauung*, 62.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 63.

what is between them and their secrets. He knows the *Zahir* (evident) and the secret (*batin*) and the *ghayb* (Unseen).⁶⁹

Knowledge and Truth

Second prominent feature of the Quranic epistemology is its persistence on the truth (*al-haqq*) and faith (*al-yaqin*) whose antitheses are falsehood (*al-batil*), doubt (*shakk*) and conjecture (*al-zann*).

On the other hand, it must be distinguished that *zann* (conjecture) is not absolutely negative concept in Islam and that in spite of the overwhelming emphasis of the Holy Quran on the accuracy and certainty of knowledge, man can know the extra-Holy The Holy Quranic information. The Holy Quran clears that the unbelievers of Makkah ‘know (*yalamuna*) the externalities of life of this world’⁷⁰.

The Holy Quran gives a word of warning that implies that certain faculties in man are prepared to deal with knowledge. As in the Holy Quran: “O Man, follow not of which thou hast no knowledge. Lo! The hearing, and the sight, and the heart each of these will be questioned.”

The Integral Nature of Knowledge

The third concept of knowledge in Islam and especially in the Holy Quran is its holistic or integral nature. This characteristic is evident in its world view which is straightforwardly and uncompromisingly monotheistic. In this context it means that the epistemological concerns are related to ethics and spirituality. The existence of the One Allah who is the Source of all type of knowledge directly entails the unity and integrality of all epistemological foundations and ends.

⁶⁹ Riaz-ul-Hasan Gilani, *The Reconstruction of Legal Thought in Islam*, 65.

⁷⁰ Surat Ar-Rūm: 30:7.

The connection between disciplines of knowledge and their integration and compatibility with the Islamic world view is also evident from the reality that many prophets and messengers of Allah were taught other forms of knowledge apart from Divine revelation. Thus, Joseph (Yusuf) knew the interpretation of dreams. As the Holy Quran says that: *“And thus will your Lord choose you and teach you the interpretation of narratives and complete His favor upon you and upon the family of Jacob, as He completed it upon your fathers before, Abraham and Isaac. Indeed, your Lord is Knowing and Wise.”*⁷¹

*“My Lord, You have given me [something] of sovereignty and taught me of the interpretation of dreams.”*⁷²

David (Dawud) knew how to produce coats of steel *“O Children of Israel, We delivered you from your enemy, and We made an appointment with you at the right side of the mount, and We sent down to you manna and quails”*,⁷³ and Solomon (Sulayman) knew the languages of the animals and the jinn *(And Solomon inherited David. He said, "O people, we have been taught the language of birds, and we have been given from all things. Indeed, this is evident bounty.”*⁷⁴

Revealed knowledge is the most central as it comes directly from Allah, is unique in certitude and has a basically beneficial nature.

Knowledge and Action

The next important aspect is the relationship between knowledge and action. It is logical that knowledge should be followed by good deeds. This is not only because true fear of Allah is

⁷¹ Surat Yūsuf: 12:6.

⁷² Surat Yūsuf: 12:101.

⁷³ Surat Ta-Ha: 20:80.

⁷⁴ Surat An-Naml: 27:16.

defined in terms of good actions, private and public, personal and societal, but also action falls within the scope of the term *alim* itself.⁷⁵

Knowledge and Spirituality

Knowledge in the Holy Quran does not deal only with logical and cognitive matters, but also with religious and practical aspects of human concerns. It is for this reason that the Holy Quran often includes belief (*iman*), light (*nur*), and guidance (*huda*) in its semantic field of knowledge.⁷⁶

Knowledge and Ethics

The next major feature of the integrated concept of knowledge in the Holy Quran is its relationship to morality. The Holy Quran is concerned the link between knowledge and good action (*amal* or *amal salih*) does not appear as frequently as that of *iman* and *amal salih* which occur so often that the two are like theoretical Siamese twins.⁷⁷

Knowledge and Wisdom

The Holy Quran uses the word *Hikma for wisdom*. This means knowledge of the reality of things and action according to the requirements. In its primary meaning it comes close to that of *aql* which means the act of withholding, which in its substantive form, means something that with holds its possessor from doing that which is not suitable, thus signifying intelligence, mental power, understanding , explanation, cause, or knowledge.

In the Holy Quran, Allah is called *Ahkaml-Hakimin*, which means the wisest of those who have the attributes of knowledge.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Wan Mohd Nor Wan Davd, *The Islamic Weltanschauun*, 36-40.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 41-45.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 54-63.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 67-74.

The Unlimited Nature of Knowledge

The other salient feature of the concept of knowledge in the Holy Quran is its unlimited nature. Here knowledge is not limited to human knowledge only; it also includes divine.

The concept of Knowledge in the Prophetic Tradition

It is important to point out that to Imam Shafai, knowledge meant the establishment of legal principles on the basis of the four primary sources of Islam: the Holy Quran, the *hadith*, *ijma* and *qiyas*, these are four fundamental sources of Islam.

The salient features that can be derived from the most important *hadith* literature in Sunni Islam in many respects complement the idea of knowledge that comes out from the Holy Quran.

The idea of the infinitude of knowledge, culminating in Allah's Omniscience which is the peak of all knowledge.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Wan Mohd Nor Wan Davd, *The Islamic Weltanschauun*, 74-87.

A comparative study of Western and Islamic Epistemology

Salient features and terms of Western knowledge:	Salient features and terms of Islamic knowledge:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Theoretical: “knowledge is based on application of experimental information to a theoretical structure”. ● Teacher to student: “knowledge is passed from an older person to a younger person in a one sided monologue”. The teacher is assumed to have more knowledge than the student and therefore authority. ● Written material: “knowledge is unacceptable until it is reduced in writing. Main conveyance of knowledge is through written materials”. ● Meta-narrational: “Stories are subsumed under a few overarching narratives that claim to explain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Experimental: “knowledge, especially language is gained by discharging responsibilities and experiencing the world”. ● Apprenticeship: “knowledge is passed from an older person to a younger person through doing actions together and storytelling”. ● Oral Tradition: “Casual storytelling serves as a means of spreading knowledge”. ● Narrational: “Multiple stories of how people function in the world and cultural knowledge are

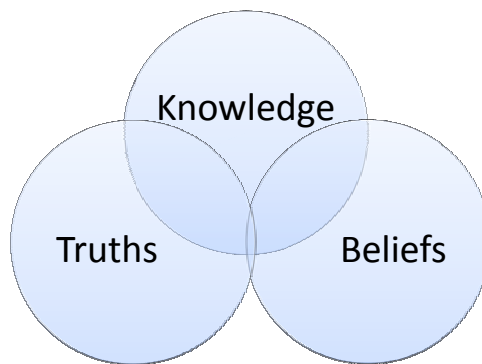
<p>everything in a certain ground of knowledge”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Binary: “certain facts are placed in opposition with others. One group is privileged while the other group is marginalized”. 	<p>acceptable”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-binary: “Objects in the planet are classified mentally and linguistically according to relevance”.
<p>sources of knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary: “Human intellect and senses”. • Secondary: “A cursory role of religion”. <p>Objectives of Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Success in the worldly life and the achievement of maximum pleasures”. <p>Branches of Knowledge</p> <p>a) Various disciplines of worldly knowledge such as:</p> <p>“Natural sciences, Physical</p>	<p>Sources of knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary: “Divine revelation”. • Secondary: “A limited and minor role of human intellect and senses”. <p>Objectives of Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “To know and truly understand the Lord and the Self to get ready and encourage individuals for worship and submission of Allah in the worldly life for earning His pleasure in the Hereafter”. <p>Branches of Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The revealed knowledge. • Knowledge related to revelation, and its

<p>sciences, Hard Sciences, Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, Technology</p> <p>b) Religious knowledge: This is a purely personal affair of an individual and has no place in collective life.</p> <p>Purpose of Education</p> <p>“Human beings are completely free, independent and sovereign and also capable of achieving maximum worldly success and pleasure”.</p>	<p>implementation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Disciplines of knowledge are based on divine revelation as well as human intelligence and senses, such as Economics, Politics, Psychology”, etc. • “Disciplines of knowledge mainly based on human intellect and senses (observation and experience) such as Medicine, Engineering, Agriculture”, etc. <p>Purpose of Education</p> <p>“To develop personality of individuals in a way that they become faithful servants of Allah”.</p>
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Conclusion

In short Western concept of Epistemology is:

- “What is knowledge?”
- “How is knowledge acquired?”
- “To what extent is it possible for a given subject or entity to be known?”



Much of the debate in this field has focused on “analyzing the nature of knowledge and how it relates to connected notions such as truth, belief, and justification”. The field is sometimes referred to as the “*theory of knowledge*”.

Epistemology in general, “the kind of knowledge usually discussed is propositional knowledge”, also known as "knowledge that." This is distinct from "knowledge how" and "acquaintance-knowledge."

The concept of Western epistemology is according to the theories of humanism, especially secularism. Western concept of epistemology is a way to achieve the real goal of Secularism.

“Epistemology or Islamic concept of knowledge is not merely theoretical but has a close bearing on human thought and behavior in individuals and the society at large. The Holy Quran, *Hadith* and Muslim scholars have attached great importance to Islamic concept of

epistemology. In the early days of Islam epistemology flourished in the light of Islamic principles.

It discusses nature of knowledge, its sources, objectives and scope, its types and branches, which branch of knowledge is useful and should be acquired, which one is harmful and should better be avoided, what is possible to know, and what is simply not possible to know, how can knowledge be acquired etc”.