

## The Epistemology of Human Creation In The Qur'an

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### **Abstract.**

*This study examines the epistemology of human creation in the Qur'an through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. The research aims to analyze the sources of knowledge, methods of understanding, and criteria of truth related to the concept of human creation from an Islamic perspective. Data were collected from various national and international scholarly articles relevant to Islamic epistemology, scientific exegesis, and the concept of human creation in the Qur'an. The findings reveal that the Qur'anic concept of human creation encompasses both biological and spiritual dimensions that are integrally interconnected. Revelation serves as the primary source of knowledge, while reason and empirical inquiry function as instruments for interpretation and contextualization. The stages of human creation, such as *nutfah* (drop of fluid), *'alaqah* (clinging substance), and *mudghah* (chewed-like lump), demonstrate conceptual relevance to modern embryology; however, they should not be regarded as absolute scientific equivalence. The study also finds that Islamic epistemology adopts an integrative framework through the *bayani*, *burhani*, and *irfani* approaches. Furthermore, the findings affirm that the relationship between revelation and science is complementary in nature. Consequently, the Qur'an should be understood not only as a source of divine guidance but also as an epistemological foundation for comprehending the nature of human beings in a holistic manner.*

**Keywords:** *Epistemology, human creation, human beings and Qur'an.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The creation of human beings is one of the fundamental themes discussed in the Qur'an and has attracted the attention of scholars from various disciplines, including Qur'anic studies, theology, philosophy, education, and science. The Qur'an describes human creation through several stages, beginning with clay (*turab*), then *nutfah* (a drop of fluid), *'alaqah* (a clinging substance), *mudghah* (a chewed-like lump), the formation of bones and flesh, and finally the breathing of the spirit (*ruh*) into the human being. These stages are mentioned in several Qur'anic verses, including Q.S. Al-Mu'minun (23): 12–14, Q.S. Al-'Alaq (96): 2, and Q.S. As-Sajdah (32): 7–9 [1], [2].

The Qur'anic explanation of human creation is not limited to biological descriptions but also contains theological, philosophical, and spiritual dimensions. Human beings are portrayed as creatures possessing both material and immaterial dimensions, endowed with intellect, moral responsibility, and a mandate as Allah's vicegerent (*khalifah*) on earth [2], [3]. Therefore, the concept of human creation in the Qur'an serves not only as an explanation of human origins but also as a foundation for understanding human nature, purpose, and existence.

Studies on human creation in the Qur'an have developed through various approaches. The first approach is descriptive and exegetical studies that focus on interpreting Qur'anic verses related to human creation [2], [4]. These studies generally emphasize linguistic aspects, contextual meanings, and the theological messages contained within the verses. The second approach is the integration of the Qur'an and modern science, particularly embryology, which attempts to examine the relationship between Qur'anic descriptions of human creation and scientific findings regarding embryonic development [5]–[8]. The third approach is philosophical and epistemological studies that examine the sources, methods, and validity of knowledge concerning human creation from an Islamic perspective [9]–[12].

Despite the growing number of studies on human creation, most existing research remains concentrated on textual interpretation and scientific integration. Studies specifically addressing the epistemological structure underlying the Qur'anic concept of human creation are still relatively limited. In fact, epistemology plays a crucial role in understanding how knowledge regarding human creation is acquired, validated, and developed within the Islamic intellectual tradition [9], [10].

Islamic epistemology recognizes revelation (*wahy*), reason (*'aql*), and empirical experience (*tajribah*) as interconnected sources of knowledge. Revelation occupies the highest position as the primary source of truth, while reason and empirical observation function as instruments for understanding and contextualizing divine guidance [9], [13], [14]. This integrative epistemological framework distinguishes Islamic thought from epistemological traditions that rely exclusively on rationalism or empiricism.

In the context of human creation, the epistemological perspective becomes increasingly relevant because the Qur'an not only provides information about the biological process of creation but also offers explanations regarding the spiritual dimension, human purpose, and moral responsibilities. Consequently, a comprehensive understanding of human creation requires an integrative approach that combines revelation, reason, and empirical inquiry [10], [11].

Several contemporary studies have emphasized the importance of integrating Qur'anic knowledge and scientific findings. However, such integration should not be understood merely as an attempt to confirm scientific theories through Qur'anic verses. Rather, it should be viewed as an effort to develop a holistic understanding of human beings that encompasses biological, intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions [5], [6], [15]. In this regard, the Qur'an functions as a source of guidance and values, while science explains observable phenomena through empirical investigation [16].

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the epistemology of human creation in the Qur'an through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. Specifically, this study seeks to identify the sources of knowledge, methods of acquiring knowledge, and the validity of knowledge concerning human creation from an Islamic perspective. In addition, this study examines the integration of revelation

and science in understanding human creation and explores the implications of the Qur'anic concept of humanity for contemporary Islamic thought.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the development of Islamic epistemological discourse concerning human creation. By employing a systematic review methodology, this research synthesizes previous findings and develops a comprehensive epistemological framework for understanding human creation in the Qur'an. Furthermore, the study contributes methodologically by demonstrating the applicability of the Systematic Literature Review approach in Islamic studies research [17].

## II. METHODS

This study aims to analyze the concept of human creation in the Qur'an from the perspective of Islamic epistemology. The focus of the study is directed toward the sources of knowledge, methods of acquiring knowledge, and the validity of truth regarding human creation through the integration of revelation, reason, and science, as well as its relevance to the development of modern scientific knowledge [9]–[11].

This research employed the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, which is a systematic approach used to identify, select, evaluate, and synthesize various studies relevant to a particular topic [17]. This approach was chosen because it is capable of providing a comprehensive overview of the development of epistemological studies on human creation in the Qur'an from the perspectives of Qur'anic exegesis, Islamic philosophy, and science.

The research process was conducted through several stages, namely the formulation of research questions, literature searching, literature selection, data extraction, and the analysis and synthesis of research findings. Literature searches were carried out through Google Scholar, Garuda, and SINTA-indexed national journals using the keywords “human creation in the Qur'an,” “Islamic epistemology,” “scientific exegesis,” and “human creation in Quran.”

The selected articles consisted of scholarly publications relevant to the research theme, published between 2015 and 2025, and discussing epistemological, exegetical, Islamic philosophical, or scientific aspects related to human creation. The selection process was conducted through a review of titles, abstracts, and full-text manuscripts to ensure their suitability with the objectives of the study.

The obtained data were subsequently analyzed using thematic analysis and content analysis. Thematic analysis was employed to identify the major themes emerging from the literature, while content analysis was used to examine concepts of human creation in the Qur'an, such as *nutfah*, *'alaqah*, and *mudghah*. Furthermore, an epistemological analysis was conducted to examine the sources of knowledge, methods of understanding, and validity of truth concerning the concept of human creation from the

Qur'anic perspective. The results of these analyses were then synthesized to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the epistemology of human creation in the Qur'an.

### III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### 1. Literature Synthesis Results

Based on the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) process, a number of articles relevant to the theme of human creation in the Qur'an were identified. The selection results indicate that the analyzed studies can be classified into three major themes:

##### ***Descriptive-Exegetical Studies on the Verses of Human Creation***

Descriptive-exegetical studies focus on the interpretation of Qur'anic verses explaining the process of human creation, such as Q.S. Al-Mu'minun (23): 12–14, Q.S. Al-'Alaq (96): 2, and Q.S. As-Sajdah (32): 7–9. Studies within this category explain the stages of human creation beginning from clay (*turab*), *nutfah*, *'alaqah*, *mudghah*, and culminating in the breathing of the spirit (*ruh*) as the spiritual element of human beings. Luthifah et al. explained that these verses describe a systematic and gradual process of human creation while simultaneously affirming the power of Allah as the Creator of humankind [6]. Similarly, Shihab stated that the concept of human creation in the Qur'an not only explains the biological origin of human beings but also contains theological messages concerning the purpose of human creation as servants and vicegerents (*khalifah*) on earth [2]. These exegetical studies generally emphasize linguistic aspects, symbolic meanings, and the moral and spiritual messages contained in the verses of human creation.

The majority of studies regard the verses on human creation as explanations that are not merely biological in nature but are also rich in theological and philosophical meanings. Interpretations of the stages of human creation, ranging from *turab*, *nutfah*, *'alaqah*, to *mudghah*, demonstrate that the Qur'an presents the process of human creation in a systematic and gradual manner [6]. This explanatory structure reflects order and purpose in the creation of humankind, thereby affirming Allah's power as both the Creator and Sustainer of human life [2].

Exegetical studies further reveal that the verses concerning human creation are not intended solely to explain the physical origin of human beings but also to cultivate spiritual and moral awareness. The breathing of the spirit in the process of creation indicates that human beings possess a non-material dimension that distinguishes them from other creatures. Thus, from the Qur'anic perspective, humans are understood as multidimensional beings composed of both body and spirit and entrusted with responsibilities as servants and vicegerents of Allah on earth [2], [25].

From an epistemological perspective, the descriptive-exegetical theme demonstrates that revelation serves as the primary source of knowledge regarding the nature of human creation. Such knowledge is acquired through the interpretation of Qur'anic texts using linguistic, contextual, and philosophical approaches [18]. This indicates that Qur'anic exegesis functions not only to explain the textual meaning of

verses but also to develop a conceptual understanding of human nature and the purpose of human existence. Nevertheless, the synthesis results indicate that most studies still focus on descriptive interpretations of the verses, while discussions concerning the structure of Islamic epistemology in understanding human creation remain limited and insufficiently systematic [9].

### ***Integrative Studies between the Qur'an and Science (Embryology)***

The second theme concerns integrative studies between the Qur'an and modern science, particularly embryology. Research within this category seeks to relate the stages of human creation described in the Qur'an to the development of the human embryo according to modern medical science. Studies have explained that the term *nutfah* may be understood as the initial phase of human reproduction, *'alaqah* describes an embryo attached to the uterine wall, and *mudghah* corresponds to the stage of tissue formation [6]. Research findings also indicate conceptual relevance between the Qur'anic description of human creation and modern embryological theories [5]. This approach has developed through scientific exegesis (*tafsir 'ilmi*), which seeks to demonstrate harmony between revelation and scientific discoveries.

Research by Ihyaudin et al. revealed that the description of the stages of human creation in the Qur'an corresponds with several findings in modern embryology, particularly concerning embryonic development [7]. These findings suggest that the Qur'an can serve as a source of inspiration for the advancement of scientific knowledge while strengthening belief in the greatness of Allah as the Creator.

Nevertheless, several studies emphasize that the relationship between the Qur'an and science should not be understood as an absolute scientific equivalence. Qardhawi argued that the Qur'an is not a scientific textbook but rather a book of guidance containing universal values concerning humanity and life [19]. Therefore, the integration of revelation and science must be understood proportionally so that the Qur'an is not reduced to merely legitimizing scientific theories that are inherently dynamic and subject to change.

Studies on human creation in the Qur'an demonstrate that revelation and science occupy different yet complementary domains of inquiry. Science explains the empirical aspects of biological human development, whereas the Qur'an provides moral, spiritual, and philosophical foundations regarding the purpose of human creation [2]. Thus, the relationship between the Qur'an and science is more appropriately understood as complementary rather than identical.

### ***Epistemological Studies from an Islamic Perspective***

Epistemological studies discuss the sources of knowledge, methods of acquiring knowledge, and the validity of truth in understanding the concept of human creation. The synthesis results indicate that epistemological studies remain relatively limited compared with exegetical and science-integration studies. Several studies explain that Islamic epistemology views revelation as the primary source of knowledge, integrated with reason and empirical experience [9].

According to Al-Attas, Islamic epistemology possesses an integrative character because it combines revelation (*naqli*), rationality (*'aqli*), and empirical experience (*tajribi*) in the construction of knowledge [11]. This approach positions revelation as the primary foundation that guides the use of reason and empirical observation, thereby producing a comprehensive understanding of reality.

In contemporary Islamic thought, epistemological approaches have also been explained through the methods of *bayani*, *burhani*, and *irfani* [9]. The *bayani* approach focuses on the analysis of revealed texts, *burhani* employs rationality and logical reasoning, while *irfani* emphasizes spiritual and intuitive experience. These three approaches complement one another in developing an understanding of human nature and creation.

Epistemological studies indicate that the concept of human creation in the Qur'an is not understood merely as biological information but also as a foundation for shaping humanity's worldview regarding its own nature. Human beings are viewed as creatures possessing both material and spiritual dimensions; therefore, understanding human existence requires the integration of revelation, reason, and empirical experience [9], [11].

Overall, the synthesis results demonstrate that the epistemology of human creation in the Qur'an is constructed through the integration of three primary sources of knowledge: revelation, reason, and empirical experience. This integration produces a comprehensive understanding of the origin, purpose, and nature of human beings as Allah's creatures who possess moral and spiritual responsibilities in life [9], [11].

## 2. Sources of Knowledge on Human Creation in the Qur'an

Based on the analysis of various literature sources, knowledge concerning human creation in the Qur'an originates from revelation (*naqli*), which is regarded as the primary source of truth in Islamic epistemology. However, understanding revelation is not limited to a textual approach but also involves reason (*'aqli*) and empirical experience (*tajribi*). These three elements complement one another in the process of acquiring knowledge, thereby generating a more comprehensive understanding of the nature and process of human creation. Thus, Islamic epistemology demonstrates an integrative character that connects revelation, reason, and empirical experience in understanding human reality [14], [6].

The Qur'anic verses that serve as the epistemological foundation regarding human creation include Q.S. Al-Mu'minun (23): 12–14, which explains the biological stages of human creation:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِنْ طِينٍ . ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً فِي قَرَارٍ مَكِينٍ . ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظْمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظْمَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ ۗ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ

"And indeed We created man from an extract of clay. Then We placed him as a sperm-drop in a firm lodging. Then We made the sperm-drop into a clinging clot, and We made the clot into a lump [of flesh], and We made [from] the lump bones, and We

*covered the bones with flesh; then We developed him into another creation. So blessed is Allah, the Best of Creators."* (Q.S. Al-Mu'minun: 12–14).

Q.S. Al-Mu'minun verses 12–14 explain that human creation proceeds through several orderly stages, beginning from an extract of clay, then becoming *nutfah* (a sperm-drop), developing into *'alaqah* (something that clings to the uterine wall), *mudghah* (a lump of flesh), bones, and finally being clothed with flesh until becoming a complete human being [17]. This verse indicates that human life does not occur by chance but unfolds through a process determined by Allah SWT with precision and wisdom. In addition to explaining the origin of humanity, the verse invites human beings to reflect upon the greatness of Allah as the Creator and Sustainer of life [7]. Several contemporary exegetical studies demonstrate that the stages of creation mentioned in this verse are related to embryological development recognized in modern science, thereby illustrating a dialogue between revelation and science in understanding the nature of human creation [12], [17].

Q.S. Al-'Alaq (96): 2 explains that human beings were created from a clinging substance:

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ

*"He created man from a clinging substance."* (Q.S. Al-'Alaq: 2).

Q.S. Al-'Alaq verse 2 states that human beings were created from *'alaq*, which literally means something that clings or a clot-like substance. This verse emphasizes that the origin of humanity comes from something simple that subsequently develops into a perfect being through the will of Allah SWT. Classical and contemporary exegetes explain that the use of the term *'alaq* describes the early stage of embryonic development attached to the uterine wall, while simultaneously serving as evidence of Allah's power in the process of human creation [13]. Contemporary interpretative studies also suggest that the meaning of *'alaq* can be understood in harmony with modern embryological findings concerning the early stages of fetal development, making this verse a frequently cited example of the relationship between revelation and science in Islam [18].

Q.S. As-Sajdah (32): 7–9 further emphasizes the material and spiritual dimensions of human beings:

الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ وَبَدَأَ خَلْقَ الْإِنْسَانِ مِنْ طِينٍ. ثُمَّ جَعَلَ نَسْلَهُ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِنْ مَاءٍ مَهِينٍ. ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِهِ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ

*"Who perfected everything He created and began the creation of man from clay. Then He made his descendants from an extract of a humble fluid. Then He proportioned him and breathed into him from His spirit and made for you hearing, sight, and hearts; little are you grateful."* (Q.S. As-Sajdah: 7–9).

Q.S. As-Sajdah (32): 7–9 explains that Allah created human beings in stages, beginning from clay and continuing through descendants originating from an extract of a humble fluid, until Allah perfected their form and breathed His spirit into them. In addition to describing the origin of humanity, this verse emphasizes that human beings

are endowed with hearing, sight, and hearts as instruments for acquiring knowledge and recognizing their Creator. Therefore, humans possess not only a physical dimension but also a spiritual dimension that forms the basis of their nobility among created beings [22]. Studies on human creation in the Qur'an further indicate that this verse portrays the integration of biological and spiritual aspects in human formation, meaning that human existence cannot be understood solely from a material perspective [8].

The synthesis results demonstrate that the concept of human creation in the Qur'an is constructed through the integration of revelation, reason, and empirical experience. Revelation serves as the primary source explaining the origin and purpose of human creation, while reason is employed to understand the meaning and wisdom underlying the process. At the same time, modern scientific developments contribute to explaining the biological aspects of human creation without diminishing the role of revelation. Therefore, Islamic epistemology views knowledge as the result of synergy between revelation, reason, and science in comprehending the nature of humanity as a whole [6], [14].

### 3. Stages of Human Creation in the Qur'anic Perspective

#### a. Material (Biological) Dimension

Based on the content analysis of various literature sources, the Qur'an explains that human creation occurs gradually and systematically. These stages demonstrate that human beings are created through an orderly biological process while simultaneously containing theological and philosophical dimensions. The primary explanation regarding the stages of human creation is found in Q.S. Al-Mu'minun (23): 12–14.

#### *Clay (Turab/Tin)*

The initial stage of human creation originates from clay (*turab* or *tin*). The Qur'an explains that the first human being, Prophet Adam, was created from clay as the fundamental element of human life. Q.S. As-Sajdah (32): 7 states that Allah initiated human creation from clay:

الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ وَبَدَأَ خَلْقَ الْإِنْسَانِ مِنْ طِينٍ

"Who perfected everything He created and began the creation of man from clay." (Q.S. As-Sajdah: 7).

The Qur'an explains that human beings originate from clay, indicating a close relationship between humanity and nature as part of Allah's creation. Clay is understood not only as the physical substance forming the human body but also as a symbol of humility, limitation, and dependence upon God. Awareness that humans come from clay and will eventually return to it serves as a reminder of human mortality and encourages humility in life. Thus, the concept of creation from clay not only explains humanity's biological origin but also contains profound spiritual and philosophical messages [7], [5].

### **Nutfah**

The stage of *nutfah* in Q.S. Al-Mu'minun (23): 13 refers to a sperm-drop placed in a secure lodging (*qarār makīn*), namely the womb. This stage describes the beginning of human life from an extremely small and weak substance that subsequently develops through an orderly process according to Allah's decree. In exegetical and scientific studies, *nutfah* is often associated with fertilization, namely the union of sperm and ovum that marks the beginning of embryonic formation. This explanation demonstrates that human creation occurs according to orderly natural laws (*sunnatullah*), illustrating harmony between revelation and scientific knowledge concerning human reproduction [17], [7].

### **'Alaqah**

The stage of *'alaqah* is described in the Qur'an as something that clings to the wall of the womb. During fetal development, this stage represents the phase in which the embryo attaches itself and receives nutrients necessary for continued growth. Exegetes explain that the use of the term *'alaqah* illustrates that human life develops gradually, progressing from a very simple form to an increasingly complex structure.

Contemporary studies also indicate that the meaning of *'alaqah* is related to the process of embryo implantation recognized in modern embryology. This demonstrates that the Qur'anic explanation of human creation possesses not only theological dimensions but also scientific relevance [17], [18].

### **Mudghah**

The stage of *mudghah* in Q.S. Al-Mu'minun (23): 14 is interpreted as a lump of flesh formed after the *'alaqah* phase. At this stage, the embryo undergoes more complex development and begins forming the foundations of various bodily organs. Researchers explain that *mudghah* represents an early growth phase during which body tissues begin differentiating before reaching a complete form.

This demonstrates that the Qur'an portrays human creation as a gradual, orderly, and continuous process. In scientific studies, the *mudghah* stage corresponds to phases of tissue and organ formation during embryonic development [17], [8]

### **Formation of Bones and Flesh**

The stage of bone formation and the covering of bones with flesh is described in Q.S. Al-Mu'minun (23): 14 as part of the process of human physical perfection. At this phase, the embryo undergoes further structural development through the formation of the skeletal framework and muscular tissues. This description indicates that the human body is not formed instantaneously but rather through orderly and interconnected stages. From a scientific perspective, this process corresponds to the development of the skeletal and muscular systems during embryonic growth. Such orderliness constitutes evidence of Allah's perfection and precision in creating human beings [17], [11].

Analysis of this stage indicates that the Qur'an describes the biological structure of human beings in a sequential and orderly manner. The explanation demonstrates that

the human body is formed through a complex and carefully planned developmental process. This orderliness reflects the perfection of human creation as a sign of Allah's power.

### **Perfection of Human Form**

The final stage of human creation is marked by the breathing of the spirit (*ruh*), as explained in Q.S. As-Sajdah (32): 9. After the physical form of the human being has been perfected, Allah bestows the spirit, which enables human consciousness, intellectual capacity, and moral responsibility. Therefore, human beings are understood not merely as biological creatures but also as spiritual beings who maintain a relationship with their Creator. This concept indicates that the nature of humanity in the Qur'an encompasses the unity of body and spirit, making it necessary to understand human beings through both physical and spiritual dimensions [22], [15].

### **b. Non-Material (Spiritual) Dimension**

Literature analysis indicates that the spiritual dimension constitutes a fundamental aspect of human creation, marked by the breathing of the spirit by Allah as explained in Q.S. As-Sajdah (32): 9 and Q.S. Al-Hijr (15): 29.

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ

*"So when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of My spirit, then fall down before him in prostration."* (Q.S. Al-Hijr: 29).

The breathing of the spirit emphasizes that human beings consist not only of physical elements but also possess a spiritual dimension that serves as the source of consciousness, intellect, and moral responsibility. Through the spirit, humans acquire the ability to think, understand, and distinguish between right and wrong. Consequently, human beings are regarded as creatures possessing a special status among all of Allah's creation [22].

From the Islamic perspective, the unity of body and spirit constitutes the complete nature of humanity; therefore, human life cannot be understood solely through biological approaches. The spiritual dimension also forms the basis of humanity's role as *khalifah* (vicegerent) on earth, entrusted with managing life according to divine values. Thus, knowledge, freedom of choice, and moral responsibility are consequences of the divine gift of the spirit bestowed upon human beings [6], [22].

The synthesis results demonstrate that the spiritual dimension of human creation reinforces the view that the Qur'anic concept of humanity is holistic and integrative. The human body explains the material and biological aspects of existence, whereas the spirit explains consciousness, morality, and spirituality. Therefore, the Qur'anic account of human creation not only describes the biological process of life but also develops an understanding of the human being as both a physical and spiritual entity in a comprehensive manner.

#### 4. Integration of Revelation and Science in Human Creation

The synthesis of the literature indicates that the relationship between the Qur'an and science in the study of human creation can be understood through an integrative approach. The Qur'an provides explanations concerning the origin and purpose of human creation, whereas science assists in explaining its biological processes through observation and empirical research. Studies on the stages of *nutfah*, *'alaqah*, and *mudghah* reveal points of convergence between information contained in the Qur'an and findings in modern embryology, although both operate within different scopes [17], [8].

In Islamic epistemology, revelation and science are not viewed as contradictory but rather as complementary. Revelation functions as a source of values, meaning, and guidance, while science explains natural phenomena through rational and empirical approaches. Consequently, the integration of revelation, reason, and empirical experience constitutes an essential foundation for understanding the nature of humanity comprehensively. This approach is not limited to scientific verification but also aims to cultivate ethical and spiritual awareness in the development of knowledge [6], [14].

Science enables human beings to understand natural phenomena empirically, whereas revelation provides moral and spiritual guidance for the application of knowledge. This analysis demonstrates that the integration of the Qur'an and science should not be oriented solely toward scientific validation but also toward the development of a holistic, ethical, and human-centered paradigm of knowledge.

#### 5. The Nature of Human Beings in the Qur'anic Perspective

Based on thematic analysis of various literature sources, the concept of humanity in the Qur'an encompasses several principal characteristics, namely human beings as the best of creation (*ahsani taqwim*), possessors of intellect and knowledge potential, dualistic beings composed of body and spirit, and vicegerents (*khalifah*) on earth. These concepts indicate that human beings in the Qur'an are not understood merely as biological entities but also as spiritual, intellectual, and social beings who bear responsibilities toward themselves, society, and the environment.

The first characteristic is that human beings are the best of creation (*ahsani taqwim*), as stated in Q.S. At-Tin (95): 4:

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ

"Indeed, We have certainly created man in the best form." (Q.S. At-Tin: 4).

The concept of *ahsani taqwim* in Q.S. At-Tin verse 4 indicates that human beings were created in the finest and most perfect form compared to other creatures. This perfection encompasses not only physical aspects but also intellect, reasoning ability, moral awareness, and spiritual potential, enabling human beings to know Allah and fulfill their role as vicegerents on earth. However, the Qur'an also warns that this excellence can decline if human beings fail to utilize their intellectual and moral capacities properly. Therefore, human nobility lies in the ability to develop intellectual and spiritual potential in a balanced manner throughout life [21], [9].

The second characteristic is that human beings possess intellect and the potential for knowledge. The Qur'an places reason as the primary instrument through which human beings understand the signs of Allah's power and acquire knowledge. Q.S. Al-Baqarah (2): 31 explains that Allah taught Prophet Adam the names of all things as a symbol of humanity's capacity for knowledge:

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

*"And He taught Adam the names of all things; then He presented them to the angels and said, 'Tell Me the names of these, if you are truthful.'"* (Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 31).

From the Islamic perspective, the ability to think is one of the distinctive qualities that differentiates human beings from other creatures. Through reason, humans are able to observe, analyze, and develop knowledge to understand various phenomena of life. However, knowledge in Islam is not viewed merely as a means of controlling nature, but rather as a pathway to recognizing the greatness of Allah and establishing a life based on moral values. Consequently, the development of knowledge is always associated with ethical responsibility so that its benefits may be experienced by humanity and the environment as a whole [6], [14].

The third characteristic is that human beings are dualistic beings composed of body and spirit. The Qur'an explains that humans were created from material elements in the form of clay and spiritual elements in the form of the spirit breathed into them by Allah (Q.S. As-Sajdah [32]: 7–9).

The Qur'an views human beings as creatures consisting of two complementary elements: body and spirit. The body is related to physical needs and biological processes, whereas the spirit serves as the source of consciousness, moral values, and spiritual capacity. Therefore, the nature of humanity cannot be understood solely from a material or biological perspective. The unity of body and spirit forms the complete human being, who bears responsibilities toward oneself, fellow human beings, and God. This perspective demonstrates that the Islamic concept of humanity is holistic because it integrates physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions into a single inseparable unity [22], [6].

The fourth characteristic is that human beings serve as vicegerents (*khalifah*) on earth, as explained in Q.S. Al-Baqarah (2): 30:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

*"And [mention] when your Lord said to the angels, 'Indeed, I will make upon the earth a vicegerent.' They said, 'Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we glorify You with praise and sanctify You?' He said, 'Indeed, I know that which you do not know.'"* (Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 30).

The concept of *khalifah* indicates that human beings have been entrusted with the responsibility to preserve, manage, and cultivate the earth in accordance with divine values. The concept further demonstrates that humanity has not only been

granted a distinguished status but also entrusted with the duty of managing life on earth. This responsibility includes maintaining environmental balance, upholding justice, and fostering harmonious relationships with fellow human beings and nature. Therefore, the status of *khalifah* should not be understood as unrestricted authority but rather as a trust that must be exercised according to moral values and divine guidance. From the Islamic perspective, success as a *khalifah* is measured by one's ability to utilize knowledge and power for the common good rather than for causing harm to humanity and the environment [5], [20].

Analysis of the concept of *khalifah* indicates that human beings possess not only freedom of thought and action but also ethical responsibility for all their actions.

The synthesis results indicate that the concept of humanity in the Qur'an not only explains human origins but also emphasizes humanity's existential purpose as a being endowed with moral, social, and spiritual responsibilities. Human beings are positioned as creatures possessing intellectual potential, freedom of thought, and spiritual capacity while remaining dependent upon Allah as the source of life and truth. Therefore, the nature of humanity in the Qur'anic perspective is integrative because it encompasses biological, intellectual, moral, social, and spiritual dimensions in a comprehensive manner.

## 6. Epistemological Analysis

Based on the epistemological analysis of various literature sources, the structure of knowledge concerning human creation in the Qur'an demonstrates an integrative epistemological system that combines revelation, reason, and empirical experience. Islamic epistemology does not separate spiritual, rational, and empirical dimensions but rather integrates them into a unified framework for understanding the nature of humanity and the reality of life. Within Islamic epistemology, all knowledge ultimately originates from Allah SWT, whether conveyed through revelation or acquired by human beings through reason and experience. Revelation serves as the primary foundation that provides direction and values, while reason functions to understand, interpret, and develop such knowledge. Empirical experience complements this process through observation and investigation of reality. Consequently, knowledge in Islam is not constructed solely upon reason or experience but through the integration of revelation, reason, and empiricism that mutually support one another in the pursuit of truth [6], [14].

### *Sources of Knowledge*

The primary source of knowledge regarding the concept of human creation is revelation (*naqli*). Revelation is understood as an absolute source of knowledge because it originates directly from Allah as the Creator of humanity and the universe. Knowledge concerning human origins, the process of creation, the purpose of life, and the nature of humanity is explained in Qur'anic verses related to creation, such as Q.S. Al-Mu'minun (23): 12–14, Q.S. Al-'Alaq (96): 2, and Q.S. As-Sajdah (32): 7–9.

Islamic epistemology places revelation as the primary source of knowledge because it originates from Allah and serves as the basis for determining truth. Revelation is then understood through reason, which functions to interpret, analyze, and explain the meanings contained within Islamic teachings. In addition, empirical experience plays a role in examining natural phenomena through observation and research. In the study of human creation, empirical approaches help explain the biological stages mentioned in the Qur'an, while revelation provides theological foundations and meaning. Therefore, knowledge in Islam is constructed through the integration of revelation, reason, and empirical experience, which complement one another in understanding human reality and the universe [6], [14], [17].

### ***Methods of Knowledge***

Islamic epistemology recognizes three principal approaches to acquiring knowledge, namely *bayani*, *burhani*, and *irfani*. The *bayani* approach is based on revelation and the interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith as the primary sources of truth. The *burhani* approach employs reason, logic, and rational argumentation to understand various issues of life, including the nature of humanity and its creation.

The *irfani* approach, meanwhile, emphasizes spiritual experience and purification of the soul as pathways to attaining a deeper understanding of reality. These three approaches are not contradictory but rather complementary in constructing comprehensive knowledge. Thus, Islamic epistemology is not founded solely upon textual sources and rationality but also acknowledges the importance of spiritual experience in understanding human beings and their relationship with God [6], [14], [1].

### ***Validity of Knowledge***

In Islamic epistemology, revelation occupies the highest position as a source of truth because it originates from Allah and remains unaffected by changes in time and space. Revelation serves as the fundamental basis for understanding humanity, nature, and the purpose of life. Nevertheless, human understanding of revelation is realized through the process of interpretation (*tafsir*), which is dynamic and capable of developing in accordance with changing contexts and advancements in knowledge. Therefore, differences in interpretation do not alter the substance of revelation but rather reflect humanity's efforts to comprehend its meanings more profoundly.

On the other hand, science contributes to explaining empirical aspects that can be observed and tested through research. Consequently, knowledge in Islam is structured hierarchically: revelation as the foundation, reason as the instrument of understanding, and empirical experience as the means of contextualization. This structure demonstrates that Islamic epistemology not only develops rational and scientific knowledge but also preserves moral and spiritual dimensions in understanding the nature of humanity [1], [6], [14].

## 7. Synthesis of Research Findings

Based on the literature review, the concept of human creation in the Qur'an demonstrates that human beings are created through a gradual process, beginning from clay, *nutfah*, *'alaqah*, *mudghah*, the formation of bones and flesh, and culminating in the breathing of the spirit. These stages not only explain the biological origin of human beings but also reveal a spiritual dimension that endows humans with intellect, consciousness, and moral responsibility [17], [22].

From the perspective of Islamic epistemology, knowledge concerning human creation is constructed through the integration of revelation, reason, and empirical experience. Revelation serves as the primary source that explains the nature and purpose of human creation, while reason functions to understand and interpret the meanings contained within revelation. Meanwhile, empirical approaches assist in explaining the biological aspects of human creation through the development of modern scientific knowledge, particularly embryology. These three sources of knowledge are not positioned separately but rather complement one another in constructing a comprehensive understanding of humanity [6], [14].

The synthesis results further indicate that the relationship between the Qur'an and science is more appropriately understood within an integrative framework rather than merely a confirmatory one. The Qur'an does not function as a scientific textbook but rather as guidance that provides theological, moral, and philosophical foundations. Conversely, science contributes to explaining the phenomenon of human creation empirically without replacing the role of revelation as the primary source of truth. Therefore, the concept of human creation in the Qur'an presents a holistic paradigm of knowledge that integrates biological, rational, spiritual, and moral dimensions in understanding the nature of human beings [8], [1].

## IV. RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION

This study provides a significant contribution to the development of Islamic epistemological studies, particularly within Qur'anic scholarship concerning human creation. The study reinforces the view that the concept of human creation in the Qur'an can be understood not only through normative exegetical approaches but also through an epistemological framework that examines sources of knowledge, methods of acquiring knowledge, and the validity of truth. Consequently, this research expands Qur'anic studies from a descriptive perspective toward a more systematic philosophical and epistemological analysis.

This study also introduces the use of the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach in Islamic studies. The application of the SLR method enables the processes of identification, selection, evaluation, and synthesis of literature to be conducted systematically, transparently, and rigorously. This approach provides a more comprehensive overview of the development of research on human creation in the Qur'an while simultaneously identifying dominant themes, methodological tendencies,

and research gaps in previous studies. Therefore, this study offers a methodological contribution to the advancement of Islamic studies through more scientific and measurable literature-based research [21].

Furthermore, this study emphasizes that Islamic epistemology is inherently integrative because it connects revelation, reason, and science in understanding the nature of humanity. Revelation is positioned as the primary source of knowledge, whereas reason and empirical experience function as instruments for interpretation and contextualization. The findings demonstrate that the relationship between the Qur'an and science is complementary rather than contradictory, allowing the concept of human creation to be understood simultaneously from biological, philosophical, and spiritual perspectives [6], [14].

Another major contribution of this study is the formulation of a systematic epistemological framework concerning human creation in the Qur'an. This framework encompasses sources of knowledge in the form of revelation, reason, and empirical experience; methods of knowledge acquisition through the *bayani*, *burhani*, and *irfani* approaches; and the validity of knowledge that distinguishes between the absolute truth of revelation and the interpretive nature of human exegesis. This framework demonstrates that Qur'anic epistemology possesses a multi-layered and integrative structure of knowledge in understanding the nature of humanity [1], [6], [14].

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