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# The Integration of Science and Spirituality: A Comparative Study of the Thought of Ismail Raji al-Faruqi and Seyyed Hossein Nasr

**Muhlas**
*Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati, Indonesia*
*muhlas@uinsgd.ac.id*

**Cr. Siti Fatimah Binti Abdul Gani**
*Universiti Putera Malaysia*
*sitifatimah@upm.edu.my*

**Aep Kusnawan**
*Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati, Indonesia*
*aep_kusnawan@uinsgd.ac.id*

**Naan**
*Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati, Indonesia*
*naan@uinsgd.ac.id*

**Muhammad Adress Prawira Negara**
*Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati, Indonesia*
*adressprawiranegara@uinsgd.ac.id*

## Abstract

Scholarly discourse on contemporary Muslim scholars has developed rapidly, both emerging from Islamic sources and adopted from other sources. The ideas of science are interesting subjects to be studied further, especially themes related to science and spirituality which are seen as separate from each other. This article examines the integration of knowledge and spirituality through a comparative analysis of the ideas of Ismail Raji al-Faruqi and Seyyed Hossein Nasr. The study aims to explain how both scholars understand the relationship between knowledge and spiritual values, as well as to identify their contributions to contemporary discourses on the integration of knowledge. This research employs a qualitative, library-based approach by collecting data from the primary works of both thinkers and relevant secondary academic literature, which are then analyzed using descriptive-comparative and interpretative methods. The findings show that al-Faruqi emphasizes the Islamization of knowledge as an epistemological framework rooted in the principle of tawhid, whereas Nasr highlights the importance of reviving sacred knowledge and metaphysical foundations as a response to the epistemic crisis of modernity. Both scholars reject the secular separation between knowledge and spirituality, yet they differ in methodological orientation: al-Faruqi focuses on epistemological reconstruction, while Nasr stresses the restoration of spiritual and metaphysical dimensions. The contribution of this research lies in its analytical and systematic comparative mapping of the two thinkers' approaches to integrating knowledge and spirituality within the context of modern intellectual challenges.


Keywords: Islamic epistemology, integration, Islamization of science, sacred science


## Abstrak

Wacana keilmuan pada sarjana muslim kontemporer telah berkembang pesat, baik yang muncul dari sumber Islam maupun yang diadopsi dari sumber lain. Ide-ide ilmu pengetahuan menjadi subjek menarik untuuk dikaji lebih lanjut, terutama tema yang berkaitan dengan ilmu pengetahuan dan spiritualitas yang dipandang saling berpisah. Artikek ini mengkaji hubungan antara ilmu pengetahuan dan spiritualitas melalui analisis komparatif terhadap pemikiran Ismail Raji al-Faruqi dan Seyyed Hossein Nasr. Tujuannya adalah untuk menjelaskan bagaimana kedua tokoh memahami relasi antara ilmu dan nilai spiritual, serta mengidentifikasi kontribusi mereka dalam wacana integrasi ilmu pada konteks kontemporer. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif berbasis studi pustaka dengan menghimpun data dari karya primer serta literatur akademik sekunder, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif komparatif dan interpretatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa al-Faruqi menekankan Islamisasi ilmu sebagai kerangka epistemologis yang berlandaskan prinsip tauhid, sedangkan Nasr menyoroti perlunya menghidupkan kembali pengetahuan sakral dan fondasi metafisik untuk menjawab krisis epistemik modernitas. Keduanya sama-sama menolak pemisahan tegas antara ilmu dan spiritualitas, namun memiliki orientasi metodologis yang berbeda. Al-Faruqi berfokus pada rekonstruksi epistemologi, sedangkan Nasr menekankan pemulihan aspek spiritual dan metafisik. Kontribusi penelitian ini terletak pada penyajian pemetaan komparatif yang lebih analitis dan tegas mengenai pendekatan kedua tokoh dalam mengintegrasikan ilmu dan spiritualitas khususnya pada zaman modern ini.

Kata kunci: Islamic epistemology, integration, Islamization of science, sacred science

## Introduction

The dichotomy between science and spirituality is one of the most fundamental epistemological issues in contemporary Islamic thought. The sharp separation between modern disciplines and Islamic scientific traditions has created dualism in the education system and the Muslim perspective on reality (Humairah, Marjuni, Mahmud, & Sukawati, 2024). This condition not only results in intellectual alienation from the heritage of the tradition itself but also creates a disorientation in responding to scientific and technological advances. (Muchasan & Naufal, 2025) Various attempts have been made by Muslim intellectuals to overcome this dichotomy, but two of the most influential and comprehensive approaches come from Ismail Raji al-Faruqi with his concept of 'Islamization of Science' and Seyyed Hossein Nasr with his concept of 'Sacred Science'.

In contemporary Islamic discourse, the term "spirituality" is not always synonymous with religion in the formal sense. Spirituality refers to inner awareness, transcendent experiences, and ethical orientations that give meaning to reality, although expressions can transcend institutional religious structures. Nasr asserts that spirituality is the deepest dimension of human religiosity, namely an awareness of sacred reality and a connection to metaphysical principles that transcend the material world (Nasr, 1981). In other words, spirituality is a source of knowledge that is not only rational but also intellectual and contemplative, enabling humans to understand the nonmaterial aspects of reality. Thus, spirituality can be linked to religion, but the two are not always identical, religion offers a doctrinal and ritual framework, while spirituality emphasizes inner experience and existential meaning.

This understanding is important because the integration of science and spirituality means connecting not only science with religious dogma but also with the metaphysical and ethical dimensions that provide orientation and purpose for scientific inquiry (Nasr, 1993). This dichotomy of knowledge does not arise in the course of history alone but is a direct consequence of the colonization and modernization that the Muslim world has experienced since the 19th century (Albayrak, 2022). The dualistic education system introduced by the colonial powers has created an institutional separation between

madrassas that maintain the teaching of traditional Islamic sciences and modern schools that adopt the Western curriculum. This separation is not only structural but also methodological and philosophical because the epistemology underlying modern Western sciences is fundamentally different from the traditional epistemology of Islam (Ridwan, 2022). Modern sciences are developed within the framework of secularism that separates knowledge from spiritual values, while classical Islamic scientific traditions are built on the foundation of monotheism that integrates various dimensions of knowledge in unity (M. Rahman, 2023). As a result, contemporary Muslims often experience an inner conflict between religious beliefs and the demands of modern science that leads to various forms of intellectual disintegration.

The Muslim response to this dichotomy of knowledge has created a broad spectrum of attitudes-from a total rejection of modernity to an uncritical assimilation of Western epistemology (Rozali & Lubis, 2024). On the one hand, traditionalists tend to limit themselves to classical Islamic sciences and view modern science with suspicion (Volet Kibongani, Scavone, Catalán-Matamoros, & Capuano, 2022). On the other hand, the modernist group seeks to adopt Western science and technology without questioning the underlying philosophical assumptions (Murad, 2023). Between these two extremes, various epistemological reconstruction efforts have emerged aimed at bridging the gap between science and spirituality. It is in this context that al-Faruqi and Nasr's thinking becomes particularly significant because they both offer a systematic approach to establishing a dialogue between modern science and the Islamic tradition, albeit with different epistemological and methodological departure points. The comparative study of the thinking of these two figures not only contributes to the enrichment of theoretical discourse but also has practical implications for the development of Islamic educational curricula and research methodologies that integrate Islamic values.

Several studies have examined the integration of science and Islamic epistemology, highlighting the ongoing efforts of Muslim scholars to bridge the gap between modern science and spirituality. Muslih, Khakim, & Sahidin (2024) analyze al-Faruqi's Islamization of science through Thomas Kuhn's paradigm shift theory and conclude that the success of Islamization depends on collaborative epistemic reconstruction based on a monotheistic worldview. Abduh & Kerwanto (2023) explore Seyyed Hossein Nasr's views on science-Islam integration, emphasizing that Nasr's spiritual approach allows Muslims to advance scientifically without abandoning metaphysical principles. Rahman

(2023) evaluates Nasr's critique of positivistic modern science, demonstrating that his sacred science framework bridges secular scientific rationality and Islamic metaphysics.

Subsequent research has expanded this discussion by exploring the broader epistemological and educational implications of science integration within Islamic thought. Zuhri & Mundhir (2023) compare the perspectives of Nasr, al-Faruqi, and al-Attas arguing that all three share a metaphysical foundation that seeks to transcend modern materialism through a synthesis of revelation and intellect. Rahman & Amir (2023) revisit al-Faruqi's *tawhidic* approach, explaining that it provides a coherent epistemological basis for the Islamization of modern scientific disciplines. Similarly, Amir & Rahman (2022) examine the practical dimensions of al-Faruqi's thought and its implementation in Islamic education, suggesting that integration requires the reconstruction of curricula based on a monotheistic paradigm. Edison, Anwar, & Mamla Saidah (2022) propose an Islamization model inspired by al-Faruqi's methodology to address the challenges of 21st-century education, emphasizing the need to realign modern science with Islamic values.

Lestari (2020) analyzed al-Faruqi's typology of science and religion, demonstrating that his Islamization project serves as a dialogical framework between Western epistemology and Islamic metaphysics. Mumtazah (2025) explored the integration of Qur'anic education and modern science, arguing that it offers a solution to the spiritual disconnection produced by secularism. Hidayatullah, Arif, & Kuswanjono (2023) examined Seyyed Hossein Nasr's perennialist approach, highlighting its significance for developing integrative and spiritually grounded religious studies in contemporary Indonesia. Collectively, these studies demonstrate a sustained scholarly commitment to reconstructing knowledge systems that unite scientific rationality with spiritual and ethical dimensions.

Although numerous previous studies have addressed the integration of science and Islamic epistemology, most have focused separately on either the conceptual framework of Islamization or the metaphysical foundations of sacred science. Only a few have provided a comprehensive comparative analysis that brings together Ismail Raji al-Faruqi's reformist-tawhidic perspective and Seyyed Hossein Nasr's traditionalist-metaphysical approach within a single analytical framework. This gap in the literature suggests that the dialogical relationship between practical Islamization and metaphysical revival remains underexplored. By addressing this gap, this study positions itself as a

comparative investigation that analyzes how both thinkers conceptualize the unity of knowledge and the integration of spirituality and science, thus offering a clearer understanding of their epistemological convergences and divergences in contemporary Islamic thought.

This study employs a qualitative-descriptive method with a comparative philosophical approach to examine the epistemological framework of Ismail Raji al-Faruqi and Seyyed Hossein Nasr in integrating science and spirituality. The data were gathered through documentary research by reviewing their primary works-such as Islamization of Knowledge (1982), *Tawhid*: Its Implications for Thought and Life (1982), Knowledge and the Sacred (1981), and The Need for a Sacred Science (1993)-as well as secondary literature from academic journals and books related to Islamic philosophy of science. The research procedure follows the qualitative framework outlined by Creswell and Moleong, emphasizing interpretive depth rather than quantification (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Data used source triangulation and conceptual cross-validation as suggested by Denzin and Lincoln to ensure data credibility (Lincoln, 2018). The analysis process applied Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, which interprets meaning through historical and contextual understanding, combined with comparative analysis to identify similarities and differences in the epistemological patterns of both thinkers.

## The Historical Roots of the Separation of Science and Spirituality

The separation between science and spirituality in the modern Muslim world cannot be fully understood without considering how Ismail Raji al-Faruqi and Seyyed Hossein Nasr interpret its epistemological roots. For al-Faruqi, this separation began when Muslims unconsciously adopted the secular and dualistic worldview of Western modernity introduced through colonial education (Al-Faruqi, 1982). He argued that the colonial system divided knowledge into two conflicting realms-religious and worldly-which destroyed the *tawhidic* vision of reality. Al-Faruqi viewed this division as a betrayal of Islam's original unity of knowledge, in which revelation, reason, and empirical inquiry function harmoniously within a single framework of divine purpose (Al-Faruqi, 1992). He believed that such fragmentation led to a civilizational crisis: Muslims became consumers of Western science but lost the spiritual orientation that once guided intellectual activity (Lestari, 2020).

Nasr provided a deeper philosophical explanation for the same crisis. He traced the problem not merely to colonial modernity but to the broader

epistemological transformation of Western civilization since the Renaissance, when the sacred dimension of nature and knowledge was abandoned (Nasr, 1976). For Nasr, the modern scientific worldview replaced the symbolic and spiritual perception of the cosmos with a mechanistic and materialist one, producing what he called "the desacralization of knowledge" (Nasr, 1993). He emphasized that Muslims, in uncritically imitating Western science, internalized its metaphysical errors and thus alienated knowledge from its divine source (Nasr, 1989). The dichotomy between *'ilm* and *ma'rifah*, between empirical observation and spiritual realization, emerged because knowledge was no longer seen as a means to approach God but merely as a tool for domination over nature.

Both al-Faruqi and Nasr therefore viewed the historical separation of science and spirituality as the result of a deeper epistemological deviation. Al-Faruqi responded through the reconstruction of methodology and educational institutions based on *tawhid*, while Nasr sought to restore the metaphysical foundations of knowledge through his doctrine of *Sacred Science* (Zuhri & Mundhir, 2023). In their shared vision, the unity of knowledge is not only a philosophical claim but also a theological imperative that must guide the revival of Islamic civilization (Nasr, 1989).

## Islamic Scientific Issues and the Context of al-Faruqi and Nasr's Thought

The emergence of the ideas of Ismail Raji al-Faruqi and Seyyed Hossein Nasr began with an epistemological crisis that struck the modern Islamic world. With the arrival of Western modernity, the Islamic knowledge system experienced a sharp dichotomy between religious knowledge and general knowledge. Colonialism reinforced the secularization of education and separated revelation from scientific rationality. As a result, Islamic knowledge lost its spiritual orientation and became fragmented. This phenomenon is known as the Islamic scientific problem, namely the disconnect between empirical science and transcendental values, which causes disorientation in the worldview of Muslims. This crisis poses a major challenge for Muslim intellectuals to rebuild a scientific paradigm rooted in tawhid, where all branches of knowledge are viewed as a unity originating from the will and wisdom of God, which fully integrates the spiritual and rational dimensions (Lestari, 2020).

Ismail Raji al-Faruqi responded to this issue through a practical and methodological reformist approach. Through the concept of Islamization of Knowledge, he emphasized the need to restore Islamic values to the structure of modern secular science. According to him, Muslims must first master Western knowledge, then integrate it into the Islamic value system so that it becomes a means of worship and civilization development. This project seeks to overcome the division between religion and science by making tawhid the principle of unifying knowledge. Al-Faruqi believes that knowledge based on tawhid not only leads humans to material progress but also to ethical awareness and social responsibility. In this case, al-Faruqi emphasizes that modern Islamic education must be based on the integration of revelation, reason, and empirical experience that complement each other (Syihabuddin, Manggala, & Mustofa, 2023).

Meanwhile, Seyyed Hossein Nasr presents a more philosophical critique of the crisis in modern science. He argues that contemporary science has lost its sacred dimension by removing metaphysics and spirituality from the realm of knowledge. Through the idea of Sacred Science, Nasr invites Muslims to restore the awareness that true knowledge comes from God and aims to understand a higher reality (M. Rahman, 2023). According to him, modernity has caused moral, ecological, and spiritual crises because humans view nature only as an object of exploitation, not as a manifestation of divine attributes. By reviving the Islamic cosmological view, Nasr emphasizes that the universe is a sign of God (ayat kauniyah) that requires humans to reflect, not dominate (M. Rahman, 2023). For Nasr, science must be a contemplative path that connects reason, revelation, and spiritual intuition in a balanced manner.

Both figures offer two different but complementary approaches to addressing the scientific problems of Islam. Al-Faruqi emphasizes the renewal of the education system and the reconstruction of modern social sciences to be oriented towards Islamic values. Conversely, Nasr proposes a paradigm shift through the revival of metaphysical and spiritual awareness in science. Both seek to restore the position of science as a path to truth and devotion to God, not merely a rational tool for mastering nature (Zuhri & Mundhir, 2023). The synthesis between al-Faruqi and Nasr's approaches enriches the discourse on contemporary Islamic epistemology, as both offer a philosophical and methodological basis for the integration of science in Islamic educational institutions (Zuhri & Mundhir, 2023). Therefore, both become important

foundations for the development of a modern Islamic civilization that balances technological progress with the depth of human spirituality.

## Islamization of Science in al-Faruqi's Thought

The Islamization of Science developed by Ismail Raji al-Faruqi began with his concern about intellectual decline and the identity crisis experienced by Muslims. This concept began to take shape in various intellectual meetings in the late 1970s, especially at the First World Conference on Islamic Education in Makkah in 1977 and the International Conference on the Islamization of Science in Islamabad in 1982. Al-Faruqi observed that the education system in Muslim countries has adopted the Western way of thinking without being critically filtered, thus creating a dualism that separates religious and secular science. According to him, the "malaise," or disease, experienced by Muslims is the result of an education system that is detached from Islamic values, which ultimately gives birth to a generation of Muslims who are alienated from their own traditions but are not fully part of Western civilization (Al-Faruqi, 1982).

Al-Faruqi's main criticism of modern science and Islamic education centers on the problem of epistemological dualism that he identifies as the root of the problem in contemporary Muslim thought. Al-Faruqi criticized modern science that is built on secular, positivist, and materialist assumptions that he considers to be contrary to the Islamic view of reality. In addition, he also criticized traditional Islamic education, which tends to be dogmatic, too textual, and less responsive to the development of the times. In his view, these two education systems have failed to produce Muslim intellectuals who are able to think creatively and critically within the framework of Islam to answer the challenges of modernity (Al-Faruqi, 1981). As a bridge between al-Faruqi's criticism of the education system and its epistemological foundation, it should be understood that his criticism is not just a rejection of modernity but an attempt to reconcile modernity with Islam. He sees the need for fundamental reform in the way Muslims view science, which starts from a re-understanding of the concept of monotheism as the principle of unification of knowledge.

The concept of monotheism is the main foundation in al-Faruqi's thought. He understood monotheism not only as a theological doctrine about the oneness of God but as a comprehensive principle that unites all aspects of life and knowledge. Al-Faruqi explains monotheism as a worldview that includes the principle of duality (the difference between Khaliq and makhluq), ideality (the purpose of creation), and human capacity (free will and

responsibility). For al-Faruqi, monotheism implies the unity of knowledge that rejects all forms of compartmentalization of knowledge, thus becoming the epistemological basis for the project of Islamization of Science (Al-Faruqi, 1992). Based on a deep understanding of monotheism as an epistemological foundation, al-Faruqi then developed a practical methodology to implement his vision of the integration of science. This shows that the project is not just a theoretical discourse but a transformative agenda with concrete steps.

al-Faruqi formulated methodologies and systematic measures to integrate modern disciplines into the framework of Islamic values. He identified 12 methodological steps starting from mastering modern disciplines, mastering Islamic treasures, critically analyzing of both traditions to rearranging disciplines within the framework of Islam. This approach does not simply add verses of the Qur'an or Hadith to modern theories but involves a fundamental reconstruction of philosophical assumptions, methodologies, and scientific goals in accordance with the monotheistic view (Al-Faruqi, 1988). Al-Faruqi emphasized the importance of mastering this dual-scientific tradition where a Muslim scholar must understand both the Islamic scientific tradition and the modern discipline that he wants to be Islamized. Although al-Faruqi's methodology is aimed at all fields of science, it pays special attention to the social sciences and humanities. This shows his awareness that the social and cultural transformation of Muslims needs to start from the reconstruction of sciences that are directly related to human life and society.

The concept initiated by al-Faruqi pays special attention to the Islamization of social sciences and humanities disciplines because he considers that this field is most vulnerable to Western cultural and philosophical biases. Al-Faruqi criticized Western social science that is built on the foundations of positivism, secularism, and materialism that are contrary to Islamic values. He called for the development of alternative social research methodologies that integrate transcendent, ethical, and teleological dimensions rooted in Islamic views. Through various conferences and publications, al-Faruqi and his colleagues have laid the theoretical foundations for the development of Islamic economics, Islamic psychology, Islamic sociology, and Islamic political science that integrate Islamic values and principles. In order to realize and institutionalize this ambitious vision, al-Faruqi understood the need for a permanent institution that could support the research and development of the idea of the Islamization of Science. This is the background for the

establishment of IIIT as a forum for a global Muslim intellectual network. (Muslih, 2023).

The International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) plays an important role in institutionalizing and disseminating al-Faruqi's vision of the Islamization of Science. The institution was founded in 1981 in Virginia, United States. IIIT serves as a center for research, publishing, and intellectual networks dedicated to advancing the agenda of the Islamization of Science (Ba-Yunus, 1988). The institution has sponsored various international conferences, workshops, and educational programs to promote dialogue between Islamic scientific traditions and modern disciplines. IIIT's publishing program has produced hundreds of works in multiple languages that explore the theoretical and applicative aspects of knowledge integration. Through collaboration with universities in various Muslim countries, IIIT has contributed to the development of an integrated curriculum and pedagogical approach that addresses epistemological dualism. After al-Faruqi's death in 1986, IIIT continued to develop and refine the methodology of Islamization of Science, which is now better known as knowledge integration to avoid terminology misunderstandings (Hanafi, 2021).

The Islamization of Science al-Faruqi project represents one of the most systematic attempts in modern history to address an epistemological crisis in Muslim thought. Although it has received criticism from various circles, both from secular thinkers and traditionalists of Islam, al-Faruqi's contribution in raising awareness about the importance of scientific reconstruction within the framework of Islamic values remains significant to this day. In the context of Indonesia and the contemporary Muslim world, the idea of the integration of science has become one of the main themes in the reform of Islamic higher education. The challenge ahead is how to develop more sophisticated and contextual methodologies to implement the vision of knowledge integration across various disciplines while remaining open to critical dialogue with various global scientific traditions (Sardar, 1989).

## Sacred Science in the Thought of Seyyed Hossein Nasr

The concept of Sacred Science developed by Seyyed Hossein Nasr is a fundamental idea that emphasizes the need to restore the sacred dimension in modern epistemology. He sees that Western civilization after the Enlightenment has experienced a desacralization of knowledge—that is, a disconnect between science and its metaphysical sources. According to Nasr,

this crisis marks a radical shift from the religious worldview of the Middle Ages to a mechanistic view that treats nature as a neutral and exploitable material object (Nasr, 1993). Modernity, in Nasr's view, is not merely technological development but also a spiritual decline that causes human alienation from divine reality. Therefore, the concept of Sacred Science emerged as a response to the loss of ontological and ethical orientation in modern science, emphasizing that true science must be rooted in the existential unity between God, nature, and humans.

The intellectual roots of Sacred Science can be traced back to the traditions of Islamic philosophy and mysticism, particularly Suhrawardi's philosophy of illumination *(Ishraqiyyah)*, Ibn 'Arabi's doctrine of *Wahdat al-Wujud*, and Mulla Sadra's *irfani*-philosophical synthesis. These three traditions emphasize that true knowledge is not only obtained through empirical reason but also through intellectual illumination *(al-'aql al-kulli)* and spiritual purification (Nasr, 1964). Nasr combines these traditions with the perennialist philosophy of figures such as René Guénon, Ananda Coomaraswamy, and Frithjof Schuon. Through this synthesis, Nasr seeks to reaffirm that all great civilizations have a sacred worldview rooted in a single metaphysical principle (Guénon, 2001). In Islam, this principle is embodied through the concept of tawhid, which affirms the unity of reality and the integration of science, ethics, and spirituality. Thus, Sacred Science functions as a contemporary form of Islamic epistemology rooted in the classical metaphysical heritage but relevant to the modern crisis.

Nasr's criticism of modern science is not based on a rejection of empirical methods but rather on ontological reductionism that ignores the non-material dimensions of reality. He argues that the scientific revolution of the 17th century, pioneered by Galileo and Newton, replaced sacred cosmology with a mechanistic view that only recognizes quantitative dimensions. In this paradigm, nature is understood as a purposeless machine, and knowledge is considered valid only if it can be empirically verified (Nasr, 1976). According to Nasr, the fundamental error of this paradigm lies in the elimination of formal and final causality (causes of form and purpose) that were previously recognized in classical Aristotelian and Islamic philosophy. As a result, modern humans have lost the ability to understand reality as a meaningful order. Sacred Science is here to restore the awareness that all true knowledge must be oriented towards Divine truth and have a spiritual purpose that transcends mere material utility.

Within his epistemological framework, Nasr offers the concept of a hierarchy of knowledge. At the top of this hierarchy is scientia sacra, which is knowledge that comes directly from the highest metaphysical principles.

Scientia sacra is not merely a theory but a form of gnosis (ma'rifah) obtained through intellectual intuition and spiritual illumination (Nasr, 1993). Below this are the traditional sciences that elaborate on these principles in various disciplines such as cosmology, medicine, and mathematics. At the lowest level are empirical sciences and technologies that deal with the material aspects of life. This hierarchy reflects the layered structure of the cosmos, from Absolute Reality to the manifestations of the physical world. Thus, Nasr's epistemology rejects the horizontal equality of all forms of knowledge, as in modern science, and replaces it with a vertical view that places all sciences in hierarchical connection with God.

This hierarchical framework of Sacred Science forms the basis for Nasr's critique of modern science, which rejects metaphysics. He asserts that every system of knowledge, including modern science, is implicitly based on certain metaphysical assumptions, even though these are often unacknowledged. In Nasr's view, modern science is rooted in the assumption that reality is only what can be sensed and measured, thereby denying the existence of transcendent reality (M. Rahman, 2023). Sacred Science, on the other hand, seeks to restore the awareness that knowledge originates from divine principles and must be oriented towards virtue and beauty (truth, goodness, and beauty). With this foundation, science not only serves to master nature but also to understand and respect it as a reflection of God's will. This principle affirms that scientific activity has a moral and spiritual dimension, so that science and ethics become two sides of the same epistemological coin.

In an ontological context, Nasr understands the universe as a theophany, that is, a manifestation of God's name and attributes. This view has significant cosmological implications: every natural phenomenon, whether macrocosmic or microcosmic, contains symbolic meaning that points to a higher metaphysical reality. Nature is not merely a material object that can be manipulated but rather a network of divine signs that invite humans to contemplate. By reviving this symbolic cosmology, Nasr asserts that understanding nature requires three instruments at once: empirical observation, rational reasoning, and spiritual contemplation (Nasr, 1989). This approach paves the way for the integration of science and spirituality, as both are seen as means of knowing God through the interpretation of His creation.

Therefore, within the framework of Sacred Science, scientific activity is an intellectual worship that demands purity of intention and spiritual sincerity.

Nasr's concept of Sacred Science rejects the dichotomy between empirical science and religious science. He asserts that modern science can be accepted as long as it is reoriented within a sacred framework. For example, ecological research must be guided by the awareness that nature is a divine trust, not merely an economic resource. In this way, Nasr offers a model of integration between science and values that can respond to the challenges of modernity, such as the environmental crisis and moral degradation. This paradigm has direct implications for Islamic education, which should not only emphasize the transfer of technical knowledge but also the formation of metaphysical awareness and spiritual responsibility (Nasr, 1990). Education, for Nasr, is a process of self-knowledge that leads humans to knowledge of God-in line with the principle *man 'arafa nafsahu faqad 'arafa rabbahu* (Those who know themselves also know their God).

Conceptually, Nasr's thinking is closely related to Ismail Raji al-Faruqi's ideas on the Islamization of Knowledge. Both start from an awareness of the crisis of modern epistemology and seek to integrate revelation with scientific rationality. However, the fundamental difference lies in the level of epistemological intervention. Al-Faruqi operates in the methodological and institutional realm, devising systematic steps to Islamize modern disciplines through education, research, and publication. Meanwhile, Nasr emphasizes a more fundamental paradigmatic reconstruction, namely the restoration of metaphysical and sacred consciousness as the foundation of all scientific activity (Lestari, 2020). Thus, al-Faruqi seeks to operationalize Islamic values within academic structures, while Nasr seeks to rebuild the ontological foundations that underpin the validity of science itself. Both represent two different but complementary stages in the effort to build an integral Islamic epistemology.

The synthesis between Nasr and al-Faruqi's thinking contributes significantly to the development of contemporary Islamic epistemology. Islamization of knowledge can be understood as a strategic step to translate the principles of Sacred Science into scientific and educational practices. In this framework, Nasr's metaphysical vision provides orientation and direction, while al-Faruqi's integrative methodology provides the instruments of application (Zuhri & Mundhir, 2023). The synergy between the two opens up space for the development of a scientific paradigm that emphasizes not only

efficiency and objectivity but also spiritual values, ethics, and sustainability. Thus, Sacred Science and the Islamization of knowledge are not contradictory but rather mutually reinforcing: one provides direction, the other provides the path. This paradigm is expected to become the conceptual foundation for the reconstruction of Islamic science that is relevant to global challenges while remaining rooted in the consciousness of tawhid.

## Comparative Analysis: Theoretical Orientations, Epistemological Distinctions, and Intellectual Contributions

The comparative framework between the thought of Ismail Raji al-Faruqi and Seyyed Hossein Nasr reveals not only similarities and differences but also distinct intellectual contributions that have shaped contemporary debates on Islamic epistemology. Both thinkers begin from the same diagnosis: the epistemic crisis of the Muslim world originates from a deep separation between scientific knowledge and transcendent values, a division that has weakened the unity of Islamic civilization. Yet despite sharing a common point of departure, they propose sharply different pathways for rebuilding an integrated system of knowledge. Al-Faruqi locates the root of the problem in the dualistic educational structure that separates religious sciences from modern disciplines without a unifying epistemological foundation (Al-Faruqi, 1982). Nasr, however, argues that the crisis is fundamentally metaphysical, stemming from the loss of a sacred vision of reality that reduces knowledge to material and quantitative dimensions (Nasr, 1989). This divergence reflects two different modes of critique: al-Faruqi is institutional–methodological, whereas Nasr is metaphysical–civilizational.

Both al-Faruqi and Nasr reject the claim that modern science is value-free, but they do so from different epistemological orientations. For al-Faruqi, knowledge alienated from *tawhid* becomes morally directionless and unable to serve human welfare (Al-Faruqi, 1992). His project of Islamization is therefore designed as a systematic program for reintegrating revelation and reason through restructuring modern disciplines within a *tawhidic* worldview (Lestari, 2020). Nasr, on the other hand, critiques modernity for severing the connection between human beings and transcendent reality, asserting that true knowledge must be rooted in the sacred dimension of existence (Nasr, 1993). While al-Faruqi operates within the methodological reform of disciplines, Nasr works within the metaphysical restoration of the hierarchy of being, emphasizing spiritual cosmology and the contemplative dimension of

knowledge (Nasr, 1976). Thus, the two thinkers represent complementary but distinct forms of epistemological reconstruction.

The distinction between the two becomes clearer in their conceptualization of revelation and reason. Al-Faruqi views revelation as the source of ethical and normative values that guide scientific inquiry, while reason serves as an instrument for interpreting empirical reality in harmony with divine principles (Al-Faruqi, 1992). His position aims to discipline modern rationality without rejecting its analytical tools (M. Rahman, 2023). Nasr, however, employs a broader philosophical understanding of reason-*al-'aql al-kulli*-which he regards as an emanation of the Divine Word that allows intuitive access to metaphysical truth (Nasr, 1989). For Nasr, revelation and reason are intimately connected as two expressions of a single sacred source (Nasr, 1996). This leads to a key conceptual difference: al-Faruqi is rationalist-reformist, while Nasr is contemplative-traditionalist (Zuhri & Mundhir, 2023). Both reject secular epistemology, yet their frameworks diverge in their respective conceptions of the human intellect.

Their contrasting responses to modernity further highlight their epistemological orientations. Al-Faruqi adopts a constructive and selective accommodation of modern scientific methods, arguing that their analytical strengths can be preserved if reoriented within an Islamic worldview (Al-Faruqi, 1988). The Islamization of Knowledge, with its methodological steps and curricular applications, attempts to produce a disciplined procedure for transforming modern sciences in line with revelation. Nasr rejects such a reformist stance, contending that modernity itself is built on a rupture from metaphysical truth; thus, what is needed is not methodological adjustment but a reestablishment of the sacred order of knowledge (Nasr, 1976). He calls for restoring traditional cosmology and metaphysical awareness as the antidote to spiritual alienation. Where al-Faruqi seeks reform within modernity, Nasr proposes a recovery from modernity.

Different understandings of "tradition" also separate the two thinkers. For al-Faruqi, Islamic tradition is a dynamic resource that can be creatively reinterpreted to confront contemporary challenges (Al-Faruqi, 1992). Authenticity lies in loyalty to the principle of *tawhid*, not in reproducing past forms. His view promotes intellectual adaptability and civilizational renewal. Nasr interprets tradition as a repository of eternal metaphysical truths transmitted through revelation and preserved by spiritual authority (Nasr, 1987). Tradition, for him, is not primarily historical but ontological. Reviving

tradition is therefore essential for healing the existential crisis of modern humanity, which has lost contact with transcendent meaning. This contrast underscores al-Faruqi's reformist–historical approach and Nasr's perennial–metaphysical approach. The intellectual contributions of both thinkers manifest in different practical implications. Al-Faruqi's ideas have driven educational reforms through the development of integrative curricula, the establishment of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), and the production of textbooks and research programs that link revelation and modern disciplines (Al-Faruqi, 1988). His work provides concrete methodological tools for reshaping contemporary Islamic higher education. Nasr's contributions, in contrast, emphasize the formation of a holistic human being through an educational model that integrates intellectual, spiritual, and ethical cultivation (Abduh & Kerwanto, 2023). By linking knowledge with spiritual realization, Nasr promotes an educational vision that reconnects humans with nature, beauty, and transcendence (Nasr, 1996). While al-Faruqi offers institutional mechanisms for reform, Nasr offers ontological depth and spiritual direction.

When viewed together, the differences between the two thinkers do not imply mutual exclusivity but rather complementarity (Zuhri & Mundhir, 2023). Al-Faruqi constructs the epistemological and methodological structure for an Islamic knowledge system, while Nasr restores the metaphysical and spiritual foundation necessary for its orientation. Al-Faruqi provides the "how," whereas Nasr provides the "why." Synthesizing their frameworks produces a more complete model of Islamic epistemology: al-Faruqi's rational–systematic tools aligned with Nasr's sacred–metaphysical vision. Both ultimately contribute to reintegrating revelation, reason, and empirical reality into a unified system of knowledge centered on *tawhid* as the highest principle of truth (Nasr, 1987).

## Conclution

Based on the various explanations above, the two figures offer different but complementary solutions to the epistemological dichotomy in contemporary Islamic thought. Al-Faruqi, with his reformist-pragmatic approach, developed a systematic methodology for the reconstruction of modern disciplines within the framework of monotheism that has influenced the development of integrative curricula in various Islamic educational institutions, while Nasr, with his traditionalist-metaphysical approach, offers

a more fundamental paradigmatic transformation through the concept of a hierarchy of knowledge and cosmological understanding that recognizes the sacred dimension of the universe. An important finding of the study is that the differences in the approaches of the two figures do not reflect contradictions but rather strategies that can be implemented at different levels—al-Faruqi's approach is more appropriate for short to medium-term reform of the education system, while Nasr's vision provides a long-term philosophical framework for a more fundamental paradigmatic transformation. For further development, research is needed on the practical implementation of these two approaches in the context of contemporary Islamic higher education in Indonesia, especially in the development of integrative curricula and research methodologies as well as comparative studies with other models of scientific integration, such as those developed by Naquib al-Attas, Fazlur Rahman, and Ziauddin Sardar, to obtain a more comprehensive perspective on various efforts to overcome the dichotomy of science in contemporary Islamic thought.

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