

Challenges and Solutions of Philosophy in Islamic Studies in the Contemporary Era

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Abstract

This study examines the role of Islamic philosophy in addressing contemporary challenges faced by Muslim societies, particularly in relation to secularism, Western rationalism, globalization, and technological development. Although Islamic philosophy has a rich intellectual legacy in theology and metaphysics, its application to modern issues still faces inconsistencies, especially in integrating Islamic values with social realities and scientific progress. This research employs a qualitative approach through library research, with data analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that Islamic philosophy has great potential to serve as an instrument of reform in Islamic education by developing methodologies relevant to modern issues and integrating ethical principles with scientific and technological advancements. This article argues that the revitalization of Islamic philosophy is necessary to ensure its adaptability to global challenges without neglecting the fundamental principles of Islam. Thus, this study enriches the academic discourse by providing a deeper understanding of the contribution of Islamic philosophy in integrating spiritual values with the demands of modern life.

Keywords : *Islamic Philosophy, Contemporary Challenges, Reform in Islamic Thought*

Abstrak

Kajian ini menelaah peran filsafat Islam dalam menghadapi tantangan kontemporer yang dihadapi masyarakat Muslim, khususnya terkait sekularisme, rasionalisme Barat, globalisasi, dan perkembangan teknologi. Meskipun filsafat Islam memiliki warisan intelektual yang kaya dalam teologi dan metafisika, penerapannya pada isu-isu modern masih menghadapi ketidakkonsistenan, terutama dalam integrasi nilai-nilai Islam dengan realitas sosial dan perkembangan ilmu pengetahuan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi

kepuustakaan untuk menunjukkan bagaimana filsafat Islam berfungsi sebagai kerangka konseptual dalam menjaga integritas nilai agama, mengkritisi ideologi yang bertentangan, serta menawarkan solusi etis terhadap persoalan sosial seperti ketidakadilan dan kemiskinan. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa filsafat Islam memiliki potensi besar untuk menjadi instrumen reformasi dalam pendidikan Islam, melalui pengembangan metodologi yang relevan dengan isu-isu modern dan integrasi etika keilmuan dengan teknologi. Artikel ini berargumen bahwa revitalisasi filsafat Islam diperlukan agar tetap adaptif terhadap tantangan global, tanpa mengabaikan prinsip-prinsip fundamental Islam. Dengan demikian, studi ini memperkaya wacana akademik dengan memberikan pemahaman yang lebih mendalam mengenai kontribusi filsafat Islam dalam mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai spiritual dengan tuntutan kehidupan modern.

Kata Kunci : *Filsafat Islam, Tantangan Kontemporer, Reformasi dalam Pemikiran Islam.*

1. Introduction

Philosophy in the context of Islamic Studies refers to the effort to understand and explore the fundamental principles contained in Islamic teachings through a rational and critical approach (Watt, 2017). Generally, Islamic philosophy involves thinking about truth, justice, morality, ethics, and other aspects of life from the Islamic perspective, which is based on revelation and reason. In this regard, philosophy is not limited to the study of theology and metaphysics alone but also includes the study of other fields such as epistemology (knowledge), social ethics, politics, and economics (Jackson, 2014). Islamic philosophy aims to guide Muslims in systematically and logically applying religious principles in daily life, as well as forming a holistic worldview that encompasses both worldly and spiritual matters.

The importance of philosophy in the development of Islamic knowledge in the contemporary era is highly significant. The modern world is currently facing various challenges, including technological advancements, globalization, secularism, and social crises. In confronting these challenges, Islamic philosophy provides a solid and directed framework of thought to address emerging problems by referring to the profound and universal principles of Islam (Bhat, 2019). For instance, in the fields of science and technology, Islamic philosophy plays a role in ensuring that the development of knowledge remains aligned with the moral and ethical values of Islam, as contained in the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith (Watt, 2017). This is

crucial to prevent technological advancements from being misused or violating human boundaries.

Islamic philosophy also helps Muslims to evaluate and critique various thoughts and ideologies that are prevalent in the contemporary world. With its rational and critical approach, Islamic philosophy can provide a balanced perspective between worldly and spiritual interests, enabling Muslims to align their lives with religious demands (Nasr, 2020). For example, Islamic philosophy provides guidance on ethics in economic management, leadership, and the relationship between individuals and society (Adamson, 2016). Moreover, it strengthens critical thinking in addressing social issues such as injustice, poverty, and the violation of human rights that are increasingly dominating discussions at the global level.

In this context, Islamic philosophy is not merely a branch of knowledge discussing abstract concepts, but it is also an essential tool in solving contemporary issues faced by Muslim societies. Therefore, Islamic philosophy plays an invaluable role in the intellectual and spiritual development of Muslims, as well as in providing relevant and principled answers to current challenges.

2. Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach using library research. The data were obtained from primary and secondary literature, including books, journal articles, and scholarly works related to Islamic philosophy, Islamic education, and contemporary global challenges. The analysis was carried out descriptively and analytically by examining the thoughts of classical and modern Islamic philosophers and linking them to current issues such as secularism, globalization, and technological development.

The collected data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which consists of three main stages: data reduction (filtering and focusing information according to the research themes), data display (organizing information into structured conceptual narratives), and conclusion drawing/verification (formulating the main findings and verifying their relevance to the research objectives) (B. Miles et al., 2014). Through this approach, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of Islamic philosophy in addressing contemporary challenges while offering solutions in the fields of education, ethics, and the integration of science with Islamic values. This study used a qualitative research design to investigate the challenges of green development in the Global South, focusing specifically on Brazil, India, and South Africa.

3. Results

Main Challenges

a) The Challenge of Secularism and Western Rationalism

Secularism and Western rationalism present a major challenge to Islamic philosophy in the contemporary world. Secularism separates religion from worldly life, which contrasts with the Islamic view that sees religion as a comprehensive guide to life, including in the moral, social, political, and economic aspects. In many Western societies, thinking that emphasizes freedom of thought, logic, and rationalism is considered the main approach in the search for truth (Watt, 2017). This approach rejects revelation as a primary source of knowledge, instead prioritizing human reason as the sole tool for understanding the world.

Islamic philosophy, on the other hand, holds that revelation and reason must work together to achieve a comprehensive truth. For example, Islamic thinkers such as Al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd emphasized that human reason is capable of understanding Allah's revelation, but reason alone cannot provide a full understanding of absolute truth without the guidance of revelation (Jackson, 2014). Therefore, a significant challenge arises when Islamic philosophy faces secular thinking that treats religion as an entity separate from daily life. In this context, Muslim thinkers need to find ways to prove that religion and reason are inseparable and, in fact, complement each other.

b) Globalization and the Loss of Identity

Globalization has profound effects on the culture, thinking, and values within Islamic societies. The world is becoming increasingly interconnected through social media, technology, trade, and migration, leading to the flow of external values and ideologies into Muslim societies (Norris & Inglehart, 2012). Western culture, which emphasizes materialism, consumerism, and individualism, often contrasts with Islamic values that focus more on collectivism, ethics, and spirituality. This challenges Islamic philosophy, which has long supported values such as social harmony, togetherness, and moral responsibility to society (Aulya, 2020).

In this context, Muslim societies face the risk of losing their identity due to assimilation with foreign cultures. For example, in the economic field, the capitalist system, which prioritizes profit and free competition, becomes dominant but contradicts the principles of Islamic economics that emphasize justice, welfare, and

social responsibility. Islamic philosophy must address how to remain relevant in this increasingly complex global world without compromising religious values (Aulya, 2020). An Islamic philosophy capable of integrating Islamic thought with the demands of globalization while maintaining identity and core religious principles is urgently needed.

c) The Challenge of Reform in Islamic Philosophy

Reform in Islamic philosophy is a complex issue because it is closely related to the tension between tradition and change. Some argue that Islamic philosophy needs to be reformed to suit the times and contemporary challenges, while others contend that the inherited tradition of Islamic thought should be preserved because it contains timeless values. This issue has become increasingly important in the context of the rapidly changing modern world, where various new problems such as climate change, economic crises, and advanced technology require an innovative and flexible philosophical approach (Dacholfany, 2015).

Reform in Islamic philosophy does not necessarily mean removing the core religious values but rather developing and applying Islamic principles in new contexts. For example, in the field of ethics, modern Islamic thinkers such as Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida have worked to align Islamic teachings with contemporary social and political challenges. However, this approach often faces opposition from those who see reform as a threat to the sanctity of religious teachings. They argue that any change in Islamic philosophy could obscure the true meaning of revelation and the Sunnah.

In the fields of science and technology, Islamic philosophy faces a significant challenge in adapting traditional Islamic understanding to advancements in areas such as biotechnology, artificial intelligence (AI), and nanotechnology. Modern Muslim thinkers need to explore how Islamic principles can be applied to these issues, such as the use of biotechnology for genetic manipulation, which may involve ethical and moral dilemmas that require a more contemporary interpretation of Islamic philosophy (Nabila et al., 2023).

The Impact of Challenges on the Understanding of Philosophy in Ethics, Epistemology, and Methodology

a) Ethics

The challenges of secularism, Western rationalism, and the influence of globalization have significant effects on the understanding of Islamic philosophy, particularly in the aspect of ethics. Traditionally, ethics in Islam is rooted in the moral

principles found in the Qur'an and Hadith, which provide clear guidance on what is right and wrong, good and bad. Islamic ethical philosophy emphasizes values such as justice, goodness, and social responsibility (Nabila et al., 2023). However, the influence of secularism, which separates religion from life, and the influence of Western culture, which often prioritizes individual freedom and material achievement as primary goals, challenge the principles of Islamic ethics. For example, in the context of economic ethics, the global capitalist system, which emphasizes profit, often conflicts with the values of social justice in Islam, which prioritize collective welfare, avoiding exploitation, and promoting honesty in transactions. This challenge results in a clash between Islamic ethical values and more materialistic secular values, requiring adjustments in how Islamic thinkers view and apply ethics in modern life.

b) Epistemology

In terms of epistemology, the challenge of Western rationalism and the separation of religion from knowledge affects how knowledge is received and produced within the context of Islam. In the tradition of Islamic philosophy, knowledge is considered to come from two main sources: revelation (the Qur'an and Hadith) and reason (Dacholfany, 2015). Although reason is deemed important, it is not considered the primary source of truth on its own. Knowledge in Islam is the result of the interaction between revelation and reason.

However, with the advancement of secular thinking and rationalism, there is a tendency to prioritize human reason and experience as the primary sources of knowledge, dismissing revelation as a valid source. This raises questions in Islamic epistemology, especially regarding how far revelation and reason can be integrated in the search for truth in the modern era (Anwar, 2024). For example, this epistemological challenge requires Islamic scholars to find a more systematic approach to integrate modern knowledge with Islamic epistemological principles, which acknowledge the role of reason, but within a framework based on revelation.

c) Methodology

The challenges arising, particularly from secularism and globalization, also affect the methodology within Islamic philosophy. In traditional Islamic studies, the methodology focused on classical studies, emphasizing the interpretation of religious texts through exegesis (tafsir) and Islamic jurisprudence (shariah), as well as philosophical studies that relate Islamic thought theories to issues of faith and life (Nabila et al., 2023). However, with the influence of globalization, there is a push for more open and interdisciplinary methodologies that include the study of social sciences, psychology, and physical sciences. This change in methodology requires

Islamic thinkers to revisit the original sources of Islam and develop methodologies that are more appropriate for the challenges and issues of the modern era, such as complex social, economic, and political problems. There is a need to formulate methodologies that integrate Islamic thought with modern thinking while maintaining the integrity of religious principles (Mala & Hunaida, 2023).

Analysis of the Impact of These Challenges on the Effort to Strengthen Islamic Education

a) Islamic Education in the Context of Secularism and Western Rationalism

The challenge of secularism, which separates religion from life, impacts how Islamic education is delivered. In educational systems that prioritize rationalism and secular sciences, Islamic education is often viewed as a subject separate from core subjects such as mathematics, science, and history (Yani & Wijaya, 2024). This reduces the appreciation of religious education in shaping students' thinking and morals. To overcome this challenge, efforts to strengthen Islamic education should involve an approach that integrates Islamic values into the main curriculum (Sulayman, 2014). Islamic education should be given a more strategic position in forming a generation that is not only knowledgeable but also ethical and practices Islamic principles in daily life. Teaching that emphasizes the balance between worldly and spiritual knowledge should be introduced so that students can understand the relationship between both.

b) Globalization and Loss of Identity in Islamic Education

Globalization has a significant impact on Islamic education, especially in maintaining religious identity amid the influx of global thoughts and cultures. Islamic education needs to overcome the challenges posed by globalization, which increasingly blurs cultural and local value boundaries. The influence of foreign cultures through social media and technology brings challenges in preserving Islamic principles in education. To strengthen Islamic education, it is important to emphasize teaching that reinforces Islamic identity (Khotimah, 2009). This includes teaching Islamic history, Islamic philosophy, and the relevant ethical and moral principles of Islam in modern life. Islamic education should be adjusted to not only provide knowledge but also build the spiritual and intellectual resilience of students in facing the challenges of this global age. Educational programs that introduce dynamic Islamic thinking capable of competing in the global world are crucial to ensure that the younger generation continues to uphold Islamic values in an increasingly open world (Pewangi, 2017).

c) Reform in Islamic Education

The challenge of reform in Islamic philosophy also impacts the approach to Islamic education. There is a need to re-examine the Islamic education curriculum to make it more relevant to contemporary issues such as advancements in technology, ethics in science, and social issues (Dacholfany, 2015). The approach to Islamic education should be more flexible, dynamic, and open to meet the challenges of the modern world, without abandoning the core principles of religion. The process of reforming Islamic education should involve teaching that encourages critical, analytical, and creative thinking among students (Saepudin, 2022). This includes giving students space to understand contemporary contexts and relate Islamic teachings to modern problems. For example, Islamic education can integrate topics such as ethics in science and technology, social issues related to poverty and justice, as well as human rights within the framework of Islamic teachings (Khotimah, 2009).

Solutions

a) Holistic Approach in the Education System

A holistic approach in Islamic education involves integrating religious knowledge with worldly knowledge to ensure that students understand the relationship between the two. The curriculum should combine academic and moral aspects, emphasizing character development and Islamic values such as justice, compassion, and social responsibility (Sopian & Fuadi, 2023). Comprehensive teaching should also highlight the importance of ethics in every subject taught, so that students can apply Islamic principles in their daily lives (Huda, 2021). With this approach, Islamic education can shape a generation that is not only excellent in knowledge but also virtuous and responsible.

b) Empowerment of Islamic Philosophy Discourse at the Academic Level

To ensure that Islamic philosophy remains relevant, it is crucial to empower the discourse of Islamic philosophy among academics (Munir, 2018). This can be achieved through the promotion of research in Islamic philosophy that addresses contemporary issues such as ethics in biotechnology, artificial intelligence, and Islamic economics. Additionally, dialogue between Islamic philosophy and Western thought should be encouraged to foster critical and innovative thinking. Updating the Islamic philosophy curriculum with topics relevant to modern challenges, such as the integration of Islam with technology and social issues, is also important to ensure that Islamic philosophy contributes to global knowledge (Sopian & Fuadi, 2023).

c) Integration of Islamic Values with the Development of Science and Technology

To ensure that advancements in science and technology do not contradict Islamic principles, Islamic values need to be integrated into the education of science and technology. Courses discussing ethics in science and technology from an Islamic perspective should be introduced, as well as developing Islamic thought in fields like biotechnology and artificial intelligence. Digital technologies and online platforms can also be used to disseminate Islamic thought and philosophy to a wider audience (Khotimah, 2009). This will ensure that modern technological developments not only prioritize material achievements but also give attention to ethics, justice, and the welfare of the ummah.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the article discusses the major challenges faced by Muslim societies in the contemporary era, including secularism, technological advancements, and globalization. These challenges lead to a shift in values and identity, which can result in social injustice and poverty. In this context, Islamic philosophy plays an important role in ensuring the integrity of Islamic values is maintained and provides a solid framework for addressing pressing social issues.

The impact on Islamic education is also addressed, where religious education is often separated from other core subjects in a system that prioritizes rationalism and secular sciences. This separation diminishes the appreciation of religious education as a shaper of moral character and student thinking. Therefore, there is an urgent need to reorganize the Islamic education curriculum to place greater emphasis on the integration of Islamic values within learning.

To address these challenges, the article proposes several solutions, including reforms in Islamic education that are more flexible and open. This involves introducing methodologies that integrate Islamic thought with contemporary issues such as ethics in science and technology, as well as social problems. Through this approach, Islamic education can build the intellectual and spiritual resilience of students, equipping them with the knowledge and values needed to face an increasingly dynamic global world.

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