

Qur'anic Phenomenology: How Can the Researcher Reach the Real Topic?

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The cornerstone of research (*taḥqīq*) is topic identification, which emerges from the primary research question. Qur'anic phenomenology provides criteria for selecting a perceivable and describable research topic and delineates conditions for the researcher (*moḥaqīq*) to approach and uncover the truth (*ḥaqīqah*) of the topic under investigation. Accordingly, the primary question of this paper is: How does Qur'anic phenomenology facilitate the identification of an authentic research topic and guide the researcher toward uncovering its epistemological and ontological dimension? The proposed hypothesis claims that the Islamic, and particularly Qur'anic, phenomenology provides an epistemological framework that facilitates the identification of authentic research topics through the dynamic interaction between the researcher (subject) and the empirical world (object), integrating both ontological (*sharī'ah*) and epistemological (*ṭarīqah*) dimensions. This approach emphasizes experiential engagement, intellectual reflection, and heartfelt intuition with the material and immaterial aspects of phenomena or topic, aiming to uncover deeper truths (*ḥaqīqah*) beyond the limits of sensory perception. This study employs a hermeneutic-phenomenological approach rooted in Qur'anic phenomenology, which integrates ontological (*sharī'ah*) and

epistemological (*ṭarīqah*) dimensions in the pursuit of truth (*ḥaqīqah*). The methodology emphasizes interpretive engagement with both textual and experiential phenomena, drawing on Qur'anic instructions to observe, reflect, and intuit. Primary data were derived from Qur'anic verses and classical commentaries, complemented by relevant philosophical and scientific literature. Qur'anic phenomenology offers an epistemological and ontological model that may inform both the selection of authentic research topics and the methodological uncovering of their deeper realities. Yet, its specific contributions to these processes remain largely unexplored. This article aims to address this gap and is anticipated to contribute to prevailing research paradigms, especially those pertaining to phenomenology.

The Concept of Research

The term *research* is etymologically derived from the fusion of re-, signifying repetition, and search, embodying a quest for knowledge (*al-'ilm*). Linguistically, the term research finds its Arabic as well as classical and modern Persian equivalents in *taḥqīq*, deriving from the root *ḥaqq*, while in Arabic, it is referred to as *al-baḥṭh*. *Taḥqīq* connotes the discovery of truth (*ḥaqīqah*) and the apprehension of the essence of a phenomenon or object, as it is and as it should be, necessitating the separation of realities from illusions. Raghīb Isfahānī (d. 502 AH/1109 CE), in his book, entitled *al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur'ān* defines the essence of the word *ḥaqq* as meaning conformity with reality.¹ From a historical vantage point, research traces back to the dawn of human civilization on Earth. In the history of Islamic thought and civilization, *taḥqīq* is recognized as an epistemological approach rooted in rational and genuine inquiry. It is often contrasted with imitation (*taqlīd*), which

1. See Abū al-Qāsim al-Husayn ibn Muḥammad al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur'ān* [*Dictionary of Qur'anic Terms*], ed. Ṣafwān Adnān Dāwūdī (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2009).

signifies uncritical adherence to established authority or tradition. Similarly, in English research is defined as the creation of true knowledge and facts through systematic methods and methodologies. It is composed of two syllables, a prefix *re* (again) and a verb *search*. Search means to examine and investigate closely and carefully to find the truth of a phenomenon or topic. As such, research involves the repeated pursuit of true (*ḥaqīqah*) knowledge, It is the careful study of a topic, particularly aimed at discovering new facts or principles. Research therefore comprises two fundamental components: Firstly, the individual researcher (in Arabic as well as classical and modern Persian: *moḥaqiq*) or the subject who actively participates in the *taḥqīq* process. Secondly, the *taḥqīq* topic assumes the role of the object. Muslim hakīms (a very wise men or the so-called 'the wise') refer to object as *nafs al-amr*.

Throughout the Qur'an life is described as a journey and knowledge. The word *saiyr*, which means travel or move with all its variations, appears in the Qur'an total 27 times. The Qur'an promotes travel as a potential pilgrimage and confrontation with those real topics and phenomena in the world. Based on various verses in Qur'an, such as verse 20 of Surah Ankabut (Q.29: 20) and verse 46 of Surah Hajj (Q.22:46), traveling, studying the nature, and purposeful excursion is a duty and value. This verse and the other verses in the Holy Qur'an invite people to travel on the earth in order to observe kinds of living creatures, and phenomena. Accordingly, the experimental and scientific voyages are some worthy things which lead to the way of development of knowledge. In the relevant scientific field, the researcher, in addition to observing, confrontation, and reflecting on the surrounding phenomena, or through a general and critical review of the research literature in this area, reaches a level of knowledge and understanding where he identifies a scientific gap as a research question. This process sparks a new idea and thought in the researcher's mind, which can serve as the topic (object or noumenon) and be considered the beginning of new research. In other words, the initial practical step in the scientific research is *topic*

identification that originates from a question and a scientific spark in the researcher's mind.²

Literature Review

A review of the literature on the Islamic approach to research reveals that although researchers have addressed various aspects and characteristics of research, there has been no focused study on religious phenomenology in the selection of research topics. Some Muslim scholars provide a definition of research or *taḥqīq* within the context of Islam. F. M. Faridi defines Islamic research as a method of scientific research based on the Qur'an and the prophetic Sunnah.³ Alternatively, Fazlur Rahman offers an different perspective, contending that knowledge remains neutral and devoid of inherent values.⁴ Several Muslim scholars have presented different procedures and work plans in the light of Islamic principles to cultivate an Islamic-oriented research approach. Isma'īl Rājī al-Fārūqī (1921 - 1986) and Seyed Muhammad Naqub al-Attās (b. 1931) stand as pivotal figures in this endeavor. Fārūqī's main focus was on Islamization of Knowledge.⁵ Al-Attās discusses the process and framework of Islamizing the self in detail, unlike Fazlur Rahman who advocates the

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2. Ahmad Pākatchī, Majmū'ah-ye Dars-Gūftārḥāyī Darbāreh-ye Ravish-e Taḥqīq-e 'Umūmī bā Rūykard-e 'Ulūm-e Insānī-ye Islāmī [A Collection of Lectures on General Research Method with an Approach of Islamic Human Science] (Tehran: Dānishgāh-e Imām Šādiq, 1388 [2009 or 2010]), 30–43.
 3. For his four characteristics of what defines research based on the Qur'an, see F. M. Faridi, "Islamic Research Methodology: Some Reflections," in *Research Methodology in Islamic Perspective*, ed. Mohammad Muqim (Lahore, Pakistan: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1994), 29–41.
 4. Fazlur Rahman, "Islamization of Knowledge: A Response," *American Journal of Islam and Society* 5, no. 1 (1988): 3–11.
 5. Isma'īl Rājī al-Fārūqī, *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan*, Islamization of Knowledge Series, no. 1 (Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1989).

idea of Islamizing the human mind.⁶ Louay Safi emphasized the pivotal role of revelation as a major source for constructing both social and scientific theories.⁷ Ibrahim Ragab, in particular, should be noted for his contribution to this project.⁸ Those interested in this field are encouraged to explore an array of scholarly contributions.⁹

The Qur'an and the Sunnah serve as the primary sources of Islamic belief and practice. Muslims regard the Qur'an as the literal word of Allah, revealed to the Prophet Muhammad through the angel Gabriel. The Sunnah, on the other hand, comprises the sayings, deeds, and tacit approvals of the Prophet Muhammad. From a Sunni perspective, the Sunnah is limited to the Prophet's own actions, whereas in Twelver Shia' Islam, it also includes the actions and teachings of his daughter Fatima

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6. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education* (Singapore: Islamic Academy, 1980).
 7. Louay M. Safi, *The Foundation of Knowledge: A Comparative Study in Islamic and Western Methods of Inquiry* (Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1998).
 8. Ibrahim Ragab, "Islamic Da'wah: A Framework for a Qur'anic Hermeneutics," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 17, no. 1 (2006): 1–17.
 9. Ziaul Haque, *The Prophet and the Miracles: The Traditional and the Qur'anic Conceptions of Prophecy* (Lahore: Pakistan National Council of the Arts, 1976); Abdul Rashid Moten, *Political Science: An Islamic Perspective* (London: Macmillan, 1996); Fathi Hasan Malkawi, *The Problem of Methodology in Islamic Studies* (Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2014); Mughal Junaid, "Epistemology in Islam: A Qur'anic Perspective," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 5, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 45–56; Khairul Firdaus Khairulidin, "Epistemological Foundation of Islamic Science: An Analysis of the Views of al-Ghazali and Sayyed Hossein Nasr," *Journal of Islam in Asia* 14, no. 1 (2017): 165–82; Shahir Akram Hassan, "Exploring the Epistemological Foundations of Islamic Sciences: The Philosophical Legacy of Ibn Sīnā," *Journal of Islam in Asia* 14, no. 1 (2017): 183–200; Waseem Gul, "Qur'anic Epistemology of Knowledge: An Analytical Study," *Al-Basirah* 8, no. 2 (December 2019): 1–15; Iffat Masood Javed, "Epistemology of Revelation: A Qur'anic Perspective," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 9, no. 1 (Spring 2019): 19–35; Marina Abu Bakar et al., "Qur'anic Hermeneutics and the Epistemology of Islamic Scientific Inquiry," *Journal of Islam in Asia* 19, no. 1 (2022): 215–3.

and the Twelve Imams, collectively known as the Fourteen Infallibles (*ma'sūmīn*). Phenomenology is not only a diverse branch of philosophy, but also an analytical method employed in the study of subjects and objects across the humanities.¹⁰ This article seeks to bring them into conversation. In order to most effectively facilitate this, author places greater emphasis on the Qur'an rather than the Sunnah. Consequently, Qur'anic phenomenology is adopted as the preferred approach within the framework of Islamic phenomenology.

Despite the significance of the topic, the existing literature on Islamic and Qur'anic phenomenology and research topic remains sparse, indicating a clear gap that this study aims to address. The main question that may arise is: How does Qur'anic phenomenology facilitate the identification of an authentic research topic and guide the researcher toward uncovering its epistemological and ontological dimension? It should be noted that the secular phenomenology, which currently dominates the paradigm of research methods and methodologies, leads researchers to approach the research topic from a secular and materialistic perspective, focusing exclusively on its material and physical dimensions. In contrast, religious and specifically Qur'anic phenomenology encourages researchers to explore both the material and immaterial aspects of the topic. Moreover, it directs attention not only to the outward and physical dimensions but also to the inner and metaphysical realms. Theoretically, Edmund Husserl¹¹ and Martin Heidegger's phenomenology¹² sought to describe the phenomena as they manifest in the external world, emphasizing their physical characteristics. In line with their original endeavours, Henry Corbin's

10. Valerie Gonzalez, "Phenomenology of Qur'anic Corporeality and Affect: A Concrete Sense of Being Muslim in the World," *Religions* 14, no. 7 (July 2023): 827, 2.

11. Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology* (Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999), XIII-XVI.

12. Martin Heidegger, *The Phenomenology of Religious Life* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 5254.

Islamic phenomenological approach integrates both the physical and metaphysical dimensions. In Corbin's new settings, physical and metaphysical phenomenology function to both replace and complement the physical phenomenology advanced by Husserl and Heidegger.¹³

Every human action has two dimensions: *the sharī'ah*, or external practice, which is rooted in belief; and the *ṭrīqah*, or internal intention. Similarly, research encompasses these same aspects: the *sharī'ah* of research, including elements such as the topic, research questions, and data collection, and the *ṭrīqah* of research, which involves topic identification, reasoning, and data analysis. The alignment of the *sharī'ah* and *ṭrīqah* of research is crucial for applying the Qur'anic indicators in identifying a genuine research topic and the criteria that guide the researcher toward the truth (*ḥaqīqah*) of the subject or phenomenon under investigation. In other words, the researcher's genuine belief and certainty in the Qur'anic criteria and indicators can transform the research process into a practical and actionable endeavor throughout the course of the investigation.¹⁴

The methodology of Qur'anic phenomenology is capable of bringing the researcher closer to the truth of a phenomenon. This approach is consistent with the fundamental purpose of research or *taḥqīq*, wherein the researcher or *moḥaqīq*, through the application of a sound and appropriate methodology, can uncover the true nature of the research topic. Addressing the issue of the contribution of Qur'anic phenomenology to the process of topic selection in research, this paper is expected to make a significant contribution to the modern academic literature on research methods and methodologies, thereby complementing modern phenomenology.

13. Roxanne D. Marcotte, "Phenomenology through the Eyes of an Iranologist: Henry Corbin (1903–1978)," *Bulletin of the Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies* 14, no. 3–4 (1995): 55–56; 66–67.

14. Seyed Mohammad Hūshī Sādāt, *Moqaddameh-ī bar Ravish va Metodūlūzhī-ye Taḥqīq-e Islāmī* [An Introduction to Islamic Research Method and Methodology] (Tehran: Intishārāt-e Mīzān, 1401 [2022]), 654–55, 740–67.

Topic Identification: Characteristics

Conducting research, or *taḥqīq*, mandates a proper confrontation and dialectic between subject and object. Its primary objective is to elucidate an unknown real object or phenomenon (the research topic). The *moḥaqīq*, as the seeker of *ḥaqq* or truth, serves as intermediary linking the natural world, as the object, with the world of intellect (‘*aqḥ*) and a priori knowledge (*naql*), as the subject. The two pillars of *taḥqīq* are articulated in verse (āyah) 53 of Surah Fuṣṣilat: “God shall show them Divine Signs in every region of the earth and in themselves, until it becomes clear to them that this is the Truth. Is it not enough that your God witnesses everything.”¹⁵ This verse, or *āyah*, interprets the external world to humans as *āfāq* (object) and the internal world of humans as *anfūs* (subject) or selves, aiming to elucidate the truth and *ḥaqīqah* of that object’s reality for the selves (*moḥaqīq*) through their genuine dialectical relationship.¹⁶

The researcher endeavors to navigate the *taḥqīq* process in pursuit of or approximation to the truth (*ḥaqīqah*) concerning the phenomenon or topic. The objective is to comprehend the current state and subsequently identify a pathway toward the desired or ideal state by addressing and resolving the problem or research question. Reviewing existing literature and prior research is one method through which a researcher can identify a new research topic, thereby building upon the work of others. The second method involves the researcher’s observation and attentiveness to the phenomena of the world. The insights gained from these sensory experiences, when combined with reflection and contemplation, lead to the formulation of a problem in the researcher’s mind and the emergence of an original research topic. Consequently,

15. Qur’an 41:53. (سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ)

16. Henry Corbin, *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism* (New York: Omega Publications, 1994), 123–32.

proposing a research topic in problem-based research is a posteriori rather than a priori. In contrast, a topic-oriented research approach involves a predetermined topic, typically suggested to the researcher by others. Consequently, problem-based research takes precedence over topic-based research, as it involves directly addressing and resolving a real-world issue, rather than merely building upon the values and prior knowledge of other researchers. Therefore, the cornerstone of research is identifying the true topic, which arises from a need within the surrounding environment that the researcher seeks to address. By resolving this need, the researcher aims to transition from the current state to an improved state by the end of the research.¹⁷

The research topic chosen by the researcher must initially be of personal interest. This criterion is considered the first for selecting a research topic. The second criterion, from the perspective of original religious sources such as the Qur'an, is that the reality and the actual phenomenon, or the research topic, exist independently of the human mind. According to both the Qur'an and Islamic traditions, the world outside the human mind is real, as indicated in verses 20 and 21 of Surah al-Dhāriyāt: "And on the earth are signs for those who have faith with certitude (21) And also in [the creation of] your own selves [are Signs of Divine Omnipotence, Grandeur, and Wisdom]. Will you not then see [with your inward sight]?"¹⁸

The term 'āyāt' in these verses refers to clear and evident signs both on earth and within the human body. The Qur'an encourages individuals to seek knowledge and to reflect upon the universe and the signs of Allah within it. Consequently, research and *taḥqīq* have always been integral aspects of Islamic teachings. The Qur'an considers a prepared heart and mind as prerequisites for receiving guidance and achieving certainty through the real signs of nature. Numerous verses in

17. Mohammad-Taqī Ja'farī, *Falsafah-ye 'Ilm* [Philosophy of Science] (Tehran: Mu'assasah-i Tadwīn va Nashr-i Āthār-i Allāmah Ja'farī, 1393 [2014]), 117–18.

18. Qur'an 51:20–21. (وَفِي الْأَرْضِ آيَاتٌ لِلْمُوقِنِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَفِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ)

the Holy Qur'an invite individuals to observe and reflect on the phenomena and objects in the universe, indicating that realities exist independently of the human mind. If human mental images do not align with the external realities of phenomena or objects, these mental images are merely illusions and do not lead the researcher to the truth (*ḥaqīqah*) of the research topic or object. The belief in the existence of a real world independent of the human mind underpins all natural and social sciences.¹⁹ From the Qur'anic phenomenological perspective, a key feature of a research topic is adherence to the principle of reality recognition. This implies that the phenomenon and research topic, or object, must have an external existence. Without this condition, an illusory matter may replace a real one in the researcher's mind, leading to scientific deviation in the research process. The reality of a phenomenon and its existence is confirmed by affirmatively answering the *is* question. Once this is established, the researcher can proceed to the *what*-oriented question so as to describe the phenomenon or object. Therefore, phenomenology involves describing phenomena as they actually exist and appear. One of the ontological pillars of a phenomenon in original Islamic sources, especially the Holy Qur'an, is the acknowledgment of its existence as an independent, external reality.

The affirmation of external realities in the universe is axiomatic in the Qur'an and accepting reality from both a religious methodological and phenomenological perspective is imperative. The term *waqi'ah* in the Qur'an, as illustrated in the first and second verses of Surah al-Wāqi'ah, is derived from the term reality and signifies an embodiment of reality: "When the Great Event [Resurrection] befalls (2) There can be no denial of its befalling."²⁰ Thus, the prerequisite for any event or occurrence is the existence of reality. By employing this approach, phenomena that genuinely exist are distinguished from illusory notions

19. Mehdi Golshani, *The Holy Qur'an and the Sciences of Nature* (Fairfield, IA: Maharishi International University Press, 2021), 127.

20. Qur'an 56:1-2. (إِذَا وَقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ ۖ لَيْسَ لَهَا كَافِرَةٌ)

and phenomena that are merely perceived to have external existence. The principle of reality recognition in the Qur'anic phenomenology is so crucial that, for instance, when the prophet 'Uzayr (Ezra) passed by a ruined village and asked God to show him the reality of the resurrection on the Day of Judgment, God caused him and his donkey to remain in a state of death for a hundred years. After this period, the Prophet 'Uzayr was revived, and Allah also resurrected the donkey accompanying him, thereby demonstrating the reality of resurrection to His prophet. This story is narrated in verse 259 of Surah al-Baqarah, illustrating that the pursuit of knowledge and the attainment of truth are so valuable that a prophet would endure a century of death to witness something in its true form: "Or like him (Ezra) who passed by a town and it had fallen on its roofs, he said: 'How shall Allah bring this to life again after its death?' So Allah made him die a hundred years, then He raised him up and said: 'How long have you tarried?' He said, '(Perhaps) I have tarried a day or a part of a day.' He said: 'Nay, you have tarried (thus) a hundred years. But look at your food and your drink-they show no effect of age; and look at your ass; and that We may make of you a sign for people; and look at the bones, how We assembled them together and then clothed them with flesh! So, when it became clear to him, he said: 'I know that Allah is All-Powerful over all things.'"²¹

In the second article of the first volume of *'Principles of Philosophy and the Method of Realism* (in Persian: *Usul-i falsafeh va ravesh-i ri'alism*) titled 'Philosophy and Sophistry or Realism and Idealism', allāmeḥ Seyyed Mohammad Hossein Tabātabāi (AH 1321-1402 / AD 1903–1981) indicates that accepting external reality or waqi'ah by humans is considered a rational and innate proposition. Allāmeḥ Tabātabāi identifies external reality as the 'known.' He

21. Qur'an 2:259 (أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا قَالَ أَنَّى يُحْيِي هَذِهِ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا فَأَمَاتَهُ اللَّهُ مِائَةَ عَامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُ قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتَ قَالَ لَبِثْتُ يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالَ بَلْ لَبِثْتَ مِائَةَ عَامٍ فَانْظُرْ إِلَى طَعَامِكَ وَشَرَابِكَ لَمْ يَتَسَنَّهْ وَانْظُرْ إِلَى جُمَّارِكَ وَلِنُجْعَلَ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَانْظُرْ إِلَى الْعِظَامِ كَيْفَ نُنْشُرُهَا ثُمَّ نَكْسُوهَا لَحْمًا فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ قَالَ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ)

highlights that humans are continually seeking to reach the knowledge, which resides in the mind, seeks to align itself with the known as external reality. The five senses, along with subsequent thought and reasoning, aim to lead humans to the true nature or ḥaqīqah of objects and phenomena.

The second aspect of the principle of reality recognition is that the research topic must be aligned with reality and an actual phenomenon, avoiding baseless speculation and conjecture (*zann*). In other words, both the Qur'an and Sunnah present reasoning as a tool and source for recognition of reality, as exemplified in verses 170 and 171 of Surah al-Baqarah: "And when it is said to them: 'Follow what Allah has revealed,' they say: 'Nay! we follow what we found our fathers upon.' What! and though their fathers had no sense at all, nor did they follow the right way (170). And the parable of those who disbelieve is as the parable of one who calls out to that which hears no more than a call and cry; deaf, dumb (and) blind, so they do not understand."²² The third aspect of the objectivity of the research topic pertains to the researcher. The researcher must possess the necessary pragmatic or realistic approach and not deny reality, which requires the exercise of philosophical thinking, or *hikmī* reasoning, according to the Qur'an.

The experiential dimension of the universe's phenomena and the reality of the research topic is a crucial issue for the researcher and constitutes the third criterion. Experience addresses the question beginning with *is*, specifically the question regarding whether this phenomenon or research topic is real and existent? The answer to this question is revealed through the researcher's direct confrontation with that real topic and the experience derived from it. Therefore, the researcher's experience results from his engagement with the actual environment. The researcher is expected to establish a genuine

22. Qur'an 2:170–71. وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا أَلْفَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا أَوَلَوْ كَانَ آبَاؤُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٧٠﴾ وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي يَدْعُو بِمَا لَا يَسْمَعُ إِلَّا دُعَاءً وَنِدَاءً صُمُّ بُكْمٌ عُمْيٌ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٧١﴾

relationship with the relevant phenomenon using tools and sources of knowledge based on sensory, rational, and heartfelt experiences, in order to attain true knowledge and understanding. The story of the Prophet 'Uzayr (Ezra) in verse 259 of Surah Baqarah, as previously mentioned, illustrates the importance of experiential learning for a researcher as emphasized in the Qur'an. Similarly, verse 260 of the same Surah, al-Baqarah, highlights the experiential learning of Prophet Abraham regarding the resurrection: "And when Abraham said: 'My Lord! Show me how you give life to the dead,' He said: 'Do you not believe?' 'Yes,' said Abraham, 'but to make my heart at ease.' He said: 'Take four of the birds. Then make them to incline unto you and (cutting them into pieces) place a part of them on each mountain, and thereafter, call them. They will come to you in haste. And know that Allah is the Mighty, the Wise."²³ Fourteen verses in the Qur'an encourage people to travel the earth and gain knowledge through experiential learning. Examples of such verses include Surah Al-i-'Imrān (Q.3:137), Surah Nahl (Q.16:36), Surah Naml (Q.27:69), Surah Fatir (35:45), Surah Yusuf (Q.12:109), Surah 'Ankabut (Q.29:20), and Surah Muhammad (47:10). Additionally, verses 82 to 98 of Surah Kahf (Q.18:82-98) describe the travels of Dhul-Qarnayn and the experiences he acquired during his journeys.

Needs assessment and usefulness of the research topic constitute the fourth criterion in the research process. When selecting a research topic, the researcher must focus on a specific need or problem and aim to address it, with the goal of transitioning from the current state to an improved state. The foundation of research lies in recognizing a real and tangible need or challenge, which the researcher must address. This involves collecting data using appropriate methods and developing a robust framework for data analysis and final inference. From this perspective, the researcher engages in a scientific field driven by a sense

23. Qur'an 2:260. (وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ أَرِنِي كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى قَالَ أُولَئِمُتُؤْمِنُ قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَٰكِن لَّا يَظُنُّونَ ۖ قُلُوبِي قَالَ فَخُذْ أَرْبَعَةً مِّنَ الطَّيْرِ فَصُرْهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ اجْعَلْ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِّنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ يَأْتِينَكَ سَعْيًا وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ)

of responsibility.²⁴ Thus, the primary factor in selecting a research topic and framing the research problem is the consideration of tangible needs and issues within society, driven by the researcher's sense of responsibility. These needs are assessed based on the researcher's interests in various dimensions, including religious, political, cultural, ethnic, or personal aspects.²⁵

A researcher must offer a precise and realistic definition and description of the topic, ensuring a clear understanding of what is being sought and the potential positive impacts of resolving this issue on the surrounding environment. Therefore, the researcher should aim to frame the research topic as a statement derived from the main research question. This approach helps to clarify the main focus of the research question. Consequently, both the research topic and question should be beneficial and practical, addressing a real and substantial need. To distinguish this real need from a false one, the reverse thinking technique' can be employed. Accordingly, the researcher should answer these two questions precisely and transparently: "What will happen if this problem is not resolved, and why is there a need for such research?"²⁶ The Qur'an, in Surah Al-Kahf (Q.18:22), underscores the importance of needs assessment and beneficial knowledge. It advises researchers to look beyond the number of the Companions of the Cave and instead seek the underlying truth behind their actions: "Soon they will say: '(They were) three, the fourth of them was their dog;' and (some) say: 'Five, the sixth of them was their dog,' guessing at the unseen, and (yet the others) say: 'Seven, and the eighth of them was their dog.' Say: 'My Lord knows best their number, none knows them but a few.' So do not dispute with

24. Mohammad Dashtī, *Ravishhā va Abzārkhā-ye Pazhūhish: Barrasī-ye Ravish va Guzīnīsh dar 'Ulūm-e Islāmī* [Methods and Tools of Research: A Study of Method and Selection in Islamic Sciences] (Qom: Mu'assasah-i Taḥqīqāt-i Amīr al-Mu'minīn, 1382 [2003]), 46.

25. Ja'farī, *Falsafāh-ye 'Ilm*, 117-118

26. Amīr Mas'ūd Hājī Ebrāhīmī, *Rāhnamā-ye Sādeh-ye Pazhūhish* [A Simple Guide to Research] (Mashhad: Mu'assasah-i Muṭāla'āt-i Rāhburdī-yi 'Ulūm va Ma'ārif-i Islāmī, 1391 [2012]), 71.

them, except in outward disputation, and do not ask any one for a pronouncement about them.”²⁷

The principle of limitation or niche, as the fifth criterion of a research topic, must be observed to avoid excessive generalization. Instead, the topic should be articulated in a specific and detailed manner, enabling the researcher to concentrate on addressing a genuine need with the resources available.²⁸ The research topic should also avoid broad generalizations, utilizing clear and precise terminology to delineate the scope and direction of the research. The Qur'an highlights the importance of details, with approximately 750 verses addressing natural phenomena in the world. On this basis, research topics and phenomena can be categorized into four groups based on perception. The first category consists of matters that are ‘neither perceivable nor describable (*lā yudrīk wa lā yusaf*)’. This category includes the essence of the divine nature, as understood from various verses of the Holy Qur'an, including verse 180 of Surah al-Ṣāffāt: "Glory be to your Lord, the Lord of Honour, far above that which they ascribe (unto Him)."²⁹

The second category encompasses matters that are perceivable and describable (*yudrīk wa yusaf*), meaning they can both be perceived and described by a subject. Sensory perceptions and empirical findings predominantly fall into this category. For example, the characteristics of autumn can be both perceived and described. There are more than 750 verses in the Holy Qur'an that are related to nature and natural phenomena in the world. Fourteen chapters of the Qur'an are named after certain animals and natural incidents, such as: the Cow, the Cattle, the Thunder, the Bee, the Ant, the Daybreak, the Sun, the Night, the Fig and the Elephant. Moreover, there are many cases in which Allah takes an

27. Qur'an 18:22. (سَيَقُولُونَ ثَلَاثَةٌ رَّابِعُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ خَمْسَةٌ سَادِسُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ رَجْمًا بِالْغَيْبِ وَيَقُولُونَ سَبْعَةٌ وَثَامِنُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ قُلْ رَبِّي أَعْلَمُ بِعَدَّتِهِمْ مَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ فَلَا تُمَارَ فِيهِمْ إِلَّا مِرَاءً ظَاهِرًا وَلَا تَسْتَنَفِثَ فِيهِمْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا)

28. Hājī Ebrāhīmī, *A Simple Guide*, 71.

29. Qur'an 37:180. (سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ)

oath by some natural phenomena like: the dawn in first verse of Surah Fajr (Q.89:1), the sun, moon, day, night, sky, and earth in verses 1 to 6 of Surah Shams (Q.91:1-6), and the fig and olive at the beginning of Surah Tin (Q.95:1).

The third category includes matters that are perceivable but not describable (*yudrīk wa lā yusaḥ*), meaning they can be perceived by an individual but cannot be adequately described. This category encompasses prophetic revelations, mystical experiences, and heartfelt intuitions. For example, Allah mentions in verse 74 of Surah al-An‘ām: “And thus did we show Abraham the dominions of the heavens and the earth and that he might be of those who are sure.”³⁰ As such, whoever recognizes the truth, Allah bestows upon him a heavenly light, like Prophet Abraham, whom the above verse referred to.³¹ However, these mystical and revelatory matters can only be incorporated into scientific research if they are transformed into rational concept (*mathum*) and argument (*burhān*) within the intellectual domain. Indeed, understanding observations and transforming these perceptions into concepts through rational methods can elevate Intuitive knowledge from a personal experience. For instance, Mullā Sadrā’s philosophy in Shi’a Islam attempts to bridge the gap between heartfelt insights and rational arguments, thereby addressing this challenge.³²

The fourth category includes matters that are not perceivable but describable (*lā yudrīk wa yusaḥ*). Such matters can lead to distortions in research, as it is impossible to accurately describe something without understanding it, the so-called illusion (*wham*). The Holy Qur’an, in verse 116 of Surah al-An‘ām, warns against following baseless

30. Qur’an 674. (وَكَذَٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ لِبَنِي إِسْرَٰهِيْمَ مَلَكُوْتِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَلِيَكُوْنُوْا مِنَ الْمُؤَقِنِيْنَ)

31. Seyyed Muhammad Hussein Tabātabā’ī, *Tafsīr al-Mizān: An Exegesis of the Qur’an*, vol. 13, trans. Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi (Sydney, Australia: Towheed Institute Australia Ltd., 2023), 187–89.

32. See Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Hikmat al-Muta‘āliyah fī al-Asfār al-‘Aqliyah al-Arba‘ah* [The Transcendent Philosophy in the Four Intellectual Journeys], ed. Muḥammad Riḍā Muẓaffar, 3rd ed., 9 vols. (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1981).

conjectures and unfounded prejudices or assumptions: “And if you obey most of those in the earth, they will lead you astray from the way of Allah. They follow nothing but conjecture; and they do nothing but surmise.” Verse 36 of Surah Yūnus emphasizes that baseless conjectures never suffice for the truth and do not lead humans to the *ḥaqīqah*: “And most of them follow nothing but conjecture: truly, conjecture can be of no avail against the Truth. Verily Allah is well aware of what they do.”³³ Therefore, a notable example of deviation from true research is the avoidance of reality, the pursuit of conjecture, and superficial engagement with developments and phenomena. Verse 28 of Surah al-Najm regards reliance on conjecture, or *ẓann*, as a deviation from the truth or *ḥaqīqah*: “But they have no knowledge thereof.”³⁴

Therefore, a researcher should not describe a phenomenon without understanding it, as this could lead to a cycle of illusion, pseudo-science, or even anti-science. In the research process, a researcher concentrates on matters and phenomena that are both perceivable and describable, as outlined in the second category.

Truth of the Topic: Conditions

Given the characteristics of a research topic in Islamic and Qur'anic phenomenology outlined in response to the first question of this article, the second question can address the conditions under which, according to the Qur'an, a researcher, can approach or even attain the truth of the research topic or phenomenon under investigation. The first condition of objects and phenomena in Qur'anic phenomenology highlights that the real phenomena in the universe are continuously created by God and are also evolving, as mentioned in verse 5 of Surah al-Hajj: “O, people! if

33. Qur'an 6:116. (وَإِنْ تَطِعْ أَكْثَرَ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يُضِلُّوكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ)

Qur'an 10:36. (وَمَا يَتَّبِعْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ إِلَّا ظَنًّا إِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ)

34. Qur'an 53:28. (وَمَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا)

you are in doubt about the Resurrection, then (consider that) verily We created you from dust, then from sperm, then from a clot, then from a lump of flesh, partly formed and partly unformed, that We may manifest (Our power) to you. And We cause what We will to remain in the wombs for an appointed time, then We bring you out as babes, then that you may attain your maturity, and some of you are called to die, and some of you are kept back to the worst part of life so that they know nothing after having known (much), and you see the earth dried, dead, but when We send down the water on it, it stirs and swells and brings forth every kind of attractive herbage (in pairs).”³⁵

Moreover, the phenomena of the universe are signs (*āyāt*) of God and manifestations of His attributes and names, as discussed in various verses of the Qur’an, including verses 20 and 21 of Surah al-Dhāriyāt: “And on the earth are signs for those who have faith with certitude ﴿﴾ And also in [the creation of] your ownelves [are Signs of Divine Omnipotence, Grandeur, and Wisdom]. Will you not then see [with your inward sight]?”³⁶

From the perspective of a religious worldview, the essence and nature of this reality can be understood through the eternal will and tradition of God, which is referred to as *sunnat Allah*. God expounds *sunnat Allah*, the principles governing the order of creation and existence, being enshrined in the divine law or *Lawḥ-i Maḥfūz* (the Heavenly Guarded Tablet),³⁷ as mentioned in verses 21 and 22 of Surah al-Burūj: “Nay! it is a glorious Qur’an ﴿﴾ in a Preserved Tablet [*Lawḥ Maḥfūz*].”³⁸ Verse 38 of Surah al-Aḥzāb refers to *Sunnat Allah* that have persisted across all epochs and locations: “There is no difficulty to the Prophet (in doing)

35. Qur’an 22:5. (يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّنَ الْبَعْثِ فَإِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِّنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ مُّضْغَةٍ مُّخَلَّقَةٍ وَغَيْرِ مُخَلَّقَةٍ لِّبَيِّنٍ لَّكُمْ وَ نُقِرْ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ مَا نَشَاءُ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ نُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوا أَشُدَّكُمْ وَ مِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يَّتَوَفَّى وَ مِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُّرَدُّ إِلَىٰ أَرْدَلِ الْعُمرِ لِكَيْلَا يَعْلَمَ مَن بَعْدَ عِلْمٍ شَيْنًا وَ تَرَى الْأَرْضَ هَامِدَةً فَإِذَا أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا الْمَاءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَ رَبَّتْ وَ آتَيْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ رُوحٍ نَبْهِيحَ)

36. Qur’an 51:20–21. (وَ فِي الْأَرْضِ آيَاتٌ لِّلْمُوقِنِينَ ﴿﴾ وَ فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ)

37. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Ideals and Realities of Islam* (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 2000), 72.

38. Qur’an 85:21–22. (بَلْ هُوَ قُرْآنٌ مَّجِيدٌ ﴿﴾ فِي لَوْحٍ مَّحْفُوظٍ)

that which Allah has ordained for him, and such has been the way of Allah with those who have passed before, and the command of Allah is a decree determined.”³⁹ Similarly, verse 137 of Surah Āl-i-‘Imrān also addresses this matter: “Indeed, there have been institutions before you, therefore travel in the earth and see what has been the end of the rejecters.”⁴⁰ According to the Qur’an, the phenomena of the universe possess two aspects: the physical (*mulk* or *ālam al-shahādah*) and the metaphysical or spiritual (*malakut* or *ālam al-ghayb*). These aspects operate within a networked system where all components and phenomena are interconnected and move towards a specific goal under divine will or Sunnat Allah, constituting the second condition. The phenomenological language of the Qur’an aims to reveal truths beyond the observable phenomena in nature. A researcher with a divine and religious worldview does not separate the realm of the physical from the metaphysical realm.⁴¹ This concept is articulated in verse 22 of Surah al-Ḥashr: “He is Allah, beside Whom none has the right to be worshipped but He, the Omniscient of the unseen [*Ālam al-Ghayb*] and the seen [*Ālam al-Shahādah*]. He is the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.”⁴² Additionally, it is mentioned in Surah al-Tawbah, *āyah* 105: “And say: ‘Act you (as you will)! Allah will see your work and (so will) His Messenger and the believers, then soon you will be returned to the Knower of the Unseen [*Ālam al-Ghayb*] and the visible [*Ālam al-Shahādah*], and He will inform you of what you used to do.”⁴³ Therefore, understanding the truth of an object requires moving from the apparent

39. Qur’an 33:38. (مَا كَانَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ مِنْ حَرَجٍ فِيمَا فَرَضَ اللَّهُ لَهُ سِنَّةَ اللَّهِ فِي الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قَدَرًا مَقْدُورًا)

40. Qur’an 3:137. (فَقَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ سُنَنٌ فَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكْذِبِينَ)

41. Iffat Masood Javed, “Guiding Principles in Islamic Research Methodology: Need of New Elements,” *International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews* 6, no. 2 (June 2019): 211-212.

42. Qur’an 59:22. (هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ)

43. Qur’an 9:105. (وَقُلْ اْعْمَلُوا فَسَيَرَى اللَّهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَسَتُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَ الشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ)

sensory perceptions (*maḥsusāt*) to rational concepts (*ma'qulat*), and from details or particulars (*masādīq*) to true meanings and concepts (*ma'fāhīm*). Through recognizing these processes, one can grasp the divine tradition or Sunnat Allah. A researcher must not merely stop at the apparent aspects of a phenomenon or research topic but should also explore its multiple dimensions. By examining various facets of an object or topic, the researcher can approach or even reach the truth of that topic.⁴⁴

As such, a phenomenological researcher moves from the natural or physical realm (*māfi al-tabi'ah*) to the supernatural or metaphysical realm (*māba'd al-tabi'ah*) and vice versa, in order to understand the essence and the ḥaqīqah of the research topic or object. Qur'anic phenomenology entails the genuine understanding of the realities of the phenomena, such that the researcher, endowed with a degree of revelation of the hidden (*kashf al-mahjub*), aims to transcend the veils towards reaching the truth of objects, which the Holy Qur'an refers to as interpretation (*ta'wīl*).⁴⁵ Consequently, it returns the meaning of every subject and phenomenon to its original essence. In verse 14 of Surah al-Muṭaffifin, Allah states: "Nay, Rather what they used to do has put rust upon their hearts."⁴⁶ Seyyed Muhammad Hussein Tabātabā'ī in his *Tafsīr al-Mīzān* comments on this verse, stating that human sins hinder the perception of truth of the real world.⁴⁷ In other words, the more one distances oneself from sin and worldly desires, and while purifying oneself, both physically and spiritually, one gains a deeper understanding of the phenomena of the world and perceives reality and ḥaqīqah as it truly is.⁴⁸ Therefore, Qur'anic phenomenology addresses the

44. Henry Corbin, *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism*, 36.

45. Marcotte, "Phenomenology," 59-60.

46. Qur'an 83:14. (كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ)

47. See Seyyed Muhammad Hussein Tabātabā'ī, *Tafsīr al-Mīzān: An Exegesis of the Qur'an*, vol. 40, trans. Tawus Raja and Amina Inloes (Sydney, Australia: Towheed Institute Australia Ltd., 2021).

48. Seyyed Muhammad Hussein Tabātabā'ī, *Tafsīr al-Mīzān: An Exegesis of the Qur'an*, vol. 40, trans. Tawus Raja and Amina Inloes (Sydney, Australia: Towheed Institute Australia Ltd., 2021), 122-27.

multidimensional nature of a phenomenon or the research topic. As such, every researcher may observe a phenomenon or event from a different aspect. Each phenomenon has multiple aspects, and the more facets and angles of the topic a researcher examines, the closer he gets to the *ḥaqīqah* of that phenomenon.

It is essential for the researcher to use philosophical or *ḥikmī* reasoning to examine the various dimensions and parts of a topic within a networked perspective to approach or reach the truth, which is the third condition in Qur'anic phenomenology. Accordingly, the researcher seeks to investigate and discover the genuine (*ḥaqīqī*) relationships between the phenomenon in question and other phenomena in the universe, referred to as a network approach within a cohesive structure. The Qur'anic verses refers to those researchers, or *moḥaqīqs*, who engage in true contemplation and possess '*ʿaql-i hikmī*, as *ulul-albab* (men of understanding), a term reiterates 16 times. Among these verses, one can refer to verses 17 and 18 of Surah al-Zumar: "Those who avoid false deities [powers antithetical to God] by not worshipping them and turn to Allah, for them are glad tidings; so announce the good news to My servants ﴿٥﴾ Those who listen to the Word and follow the best thereof, those are [the ones] whom Allah has guided and those are men of understanding [*Ulul-Albab*]."⁴⁹ The fourth condition of the research topic from the perspective of Qur'anic phenomenology is that the objective phenomena possess varying degrees of consciousness. In numerous verses, the Holy Qur'an emphasizes the continuous glorification of creation, reflecting the love and devotion of all creatures to their Creator. Several verses from the Noble Qur'an, including verse 44 of Surah al-Isrā', highlight that the seven heavens, the earth, and everything within them are engaged in the praise and glorification of Allah: "The seven heavens and the earth, and every being therein, celebrate His glory, and there is not single thing but glorifies Him with His Praise, but you do not

49. Qur'an 39:17–18. ﴿٥﴾ وَالَّذِينَ اجْتَنَبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ أَنْ يَعْبُدُوهَا وَأَنَابُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَىٰ فَمِثْرَ عِبَادِ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمْ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

understand their glorification; verily He is Forbearing, Forgiving.”⁵⁰ Additionally, the first verse of Surah al-Jumu‘ah underscores the glorification by all entities: “Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth glorifies Allah, the Sovereign, the Holy, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.”⁵¹ Moreover, Surahs Hadid (Q.57:1), Hashr (Q.59:1) and Saff (Q.61: 1) commence with the word ‘*sabbaha*’ (glorify), Surah Taghābun (Q.64:1) with the word *Yusabbihu* (glorify), Surah Isra (Q.17:1) with the word *subhan* (glory), and Surah A’lā (Q.87:1) with the command ‘*Sabbih isma rabbika*’ (praise the name of your Lord). The fifth condition in Qur’anic phenomenology is the recognition of the hierarchical nature of phenomena. In terms of ontology and the study of the phenomena of the universe, there are cognitive tools available that humans can employ to gain a true understanding of real objects and phenomena in their environment. These tools include the five senses and experience, reason (‘*aqh*), and the heart (*qalb*). These tools do not conflict with one another; instead, they complement each other to provide a more comprehensive understanding of a topic or phenomenon. According to Qur’anic verses, individuals are bestowed by God with these tools, which enable them to progressively recognize and become aware of the real phenomena of the universe. One such verse is Surah al-Nahl, āyah 78: “And Allah has brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers (while) you knew nothing, and He appointed for you hearing and sight and hearts; that perhaps you may give thanks.”⁵² From this perspective, sensory, rational, or intellectual (‘*aqh*), and spiritual or heartfelt (*qalb*) intuitions work together to achieve a more genuine understanding of the phenomena of the universe or the research topic, operating in a hierarchical and interrelated manner. From birth, individuals gradually develop their understanding through reflection and contemplation on the phenomena

50. Qur’an 17:44. (تَسْبِيحٌ لَهُ السَّمَاوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ خَلِيفاً غُفُوراً)

51. Qur’an 62:1. (يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ)

52. Qur’an 16:78. (وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُمْ مِنْ بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئاً وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ)

of the world. By employing inductive (from instance to concept), deductive (from concept to instance), and comparative methods, individuals strive to acquire knowledge and awareness of the truth of surrounding objects and phenomena.

Through contemplation and the application of appropriate methodologies, researchers are capable of uncovering the truth of a topic or phenomenon, commensurate with their level of rationality (*'aqlānīyyah*) and the effort invested in the investigative process. Although the entire reality of a topic may not be fully comprehensible, a substantial understanding of this reality can be achieved by utilizing epistemic sources, including sensory, rational (*'aqlī*), and spiritual (*qalbī*) intuitions, as well as the Qur'an and sunnah (*naql*). Moreover, with the correct application of these sources and tools, researchers have the potential to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the truth of the research topic.

The sixth condition in Qur'anic phenomenology is adherence to the principle commonly known in modern times as *epoché*, as outlined by Husserl. Accurate knowledge and understanding of a genuine phenomenon are attained when the researcher, in the initial stages of investigation, refrains from introducing prejudices and preconceived values, whether correct assumptions or misassumptions, into the research process. Instead, the researcher should bracket these biases and conduct the research by describing the phenomenon as it truly exists. In this stage, known as reflection, previously accepted facts related to the research topic and the phenomenon under investigation are re-examined and critically questioned. Facts that had been overlooked resurface and are subjected to meticulous scrutiny. Consequently, the researcher must demonstrate open-mindedness, particularly during the phases of topic identification and data collection, to attain a more accurate understanding of the phenomenon. During the data analysis phase, the researcher must differentiate between genuine and false data. The Holy Qur'an, in verse 39 of Surah Yūnus, critiques individuals who dismiss and reject

statements or texts without first listening to and reflecting upon them thoroughly: “Nay, they belied that which they comprehended not with the knowledge of it, which whose interpretation has not yet come to them. Even thus did belie those before them, see then what was the end of the unjust ones.”⁵³ This verse explicitly admonishes those who, despite lacking a complete understanding of a topic, prematurely label it as false. Similarly, verses 151 to 153 of Surah An’am (Q.6:151-153) advocate for a fresh and open-minded approach, emphasizing the importance of abandoning preconceived notions and biases when engaging with the Prophet’s message.

Conclusion

Islamic and Qur’anic phenomenology offers an epistemological framework that not only aids in identifying meaningful research questions but also guides the researcher toward experiential and ontological engagement with the topic matter. By integrating the dimensions of *sharī‘ah* (ontological aspect) and *ṭarīqah* (epistemological aspect) of a topic, this approach fosters a deeper understanding of the wholistic truth (*ḥaqīqah*) of phenomena or topic. The Qur’an illustrates this methodology through narratives that require empirical engagement with metaphysical concepts, for example, the stories of ‘Uzayr and Ibrahim’s encounters with resurrection underscore the necessity of empirical experience even in theological investigation (Q.2:259-260). Moreover, Qur’anic phenomenology emphasizes the generation of research questions through interaction and dialectics of the researcher (subject) with the external world (object). Commands to observe and reflect on historical outcomes, travel the earth (*sīrū fī al-arḍ*), and contemplate the fate of past civilizations exemplify how engagement

53. Qur’an 10:39. (بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِمَا لَمْ يُحِيطُوا بِعِلْمِهِ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِهِمْ تَأْوِيلُهُ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الظَّالِمِينَ)

with the real environment leads to the emergence of research-worthy topic. The narrative of Dhul-Qarnayn in Surah Al-Kahf (Q.18:83-98) illustrates a dynamic interaction between the researcher (subject) and the empirical world (object) through his three distinct journeys. As such, the religious phenomenology presents an integrative model for scholarly research topic that seeks both empirical grounding and spiritual depth. Additionally, research topics must emphasize specificity and avoid vague generalizations, an approach consistently reflected in the Qur'an's attention to concrete phenomena within creation. The fig, the olive, the date palm, the honeybee, and even the spider's web are all presented not merely as metaphors, but as distinct subjects of reflection, underscoring the importance of focused, detail-oriented topic.

Qur'anic phenomenology not only offers criteria for selecting a research topic, but also provides a methodological pathway toward uncovering the truth of that, a process referred to as the epistemological aspect of topic (*tarīqah*). A real and experiential research topic, from this perspective, must be both describable and perceivable. Qur'anic phenomenology offers an epistemological framework that unites empirical observation with spiritual cognition. It emphasizes examining both the material (*'ālam al-shahādah*) and immaterial (*'ālam al-ghayb*) dimensions of a phenomenon, recognizing it as a creation and a sign (*āyah*) of Allah. A key contribution of this method lies in its emphasis on intellect or *'aql-i ḥikmī (fu'ād)* and a spiritually sound heart (*qalb-i salīm*) as necessary tools for uncovering truth beyond what the five senses alone can access. Thus, Qur'anic phenomenology is not only a tool for describing phenomena, but also a methodology for discovering their divinely embedded significance. This approach contributes to a more integrative research paradigm, one in which reason (*'aql*), revelation (*wahy*), and perception (*ḥiss*) are harmonized in the pursuit of knowledge.

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