

The Sociology of Scientific Exegesis: *Tafsir Al-Jawāhir* and the Formation of a Muslim Middle-Class Scientific Community

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Abstract. The emergence of the Muslim middle class in contemporary times faces epistemological and structural challenges, mainly due to the colonial period that reinforced Western epistemology and sidelined science-oriented interpretations. Building upon the rationalist foundations laid by earlier reformist exegetes, *Tafsir Al-Jawāhir* by Ṭanṭāwī Al-Jawhari attempts to explain the relationship between the Qur'an and science, but often faces criticism from traditionalists. Using a qualitative library research approach and analyzing through the lens of the sociology of science, this study examines how scientific interpretation in *Tafsir Al-Jawāhir* can motivate the Muslim middle class as a catalyst for intellectual renewal, while also identifying obstacles to combining science with Islamic studies. This study outlines three main factors: (1) *Tafsir Al-Jawāhir* functions as a scientific encyclopedia that integrates contemporary science with the Qur'an, encouraging a scientific mentality; (2) Analysis of the decline of Islamic science and a call to revitalize the classical Islamic scientific ethos; (3) The function of tafsir in building a scientific tradition within the Muslim community. The findings suggest that scientific interpretation can serve as a catalyst for social and economic transformation within the Muslim middle class, leading them toward the formation of an engaged scientific community. This research is limited in its ability to ascertain the precise background of the Muslim middle class and the acceptance of this view worldwide. Therefore, additional research is recommended to examine scientific interpretation within specific societal frameworks, such as Indonesia, to gain a deeper understanding of its significance.

Keywords: Scientific interpretation; Muslim middle class; *Tafsir Al-Jawāhir*; sociology of science; scientific community

Introduction

Although the Muslim middle class continues to grow in modern times, its role in advancing Islamic scholarship faces numerous epistemological and structural obstacles.¹ A key source is the legacy of colonialism, which shaped a scientific worldview rooted in Western epistemology, leading to the marginalization of science-based interpretation within the Islamic world.² Ṭanṭāwī Jawhari's *Tafsir al-Jawāhir* attempts to reconstruct the relationship between the Qur'an and science through a scientific interpretative approach; however, his ideas are often criticized by traditionalists who consider it a deviation from classical interpretative methods.³

¹ Hodgson, *The Adventures of Islam, Conscience and History in World Civilization*, 3:417.

² Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam, Conscience and History in The World Civilization*, 3:419–20.

³ Daneshgar, *Ṭanṭāwī Jawhari and the Qur'an*, 5.

Furthermore, the lack of Islamic educational infrastructure and the inadequate integration of religious studies with scientific disciplines in the Muslim world hinder the development of a science-oriented Muslim middle class.⁴ This study aims to examine how scientific interpretation, particularly in *Tafsir al-Jawahir*, can enhance the role of the Muslim middle class as agents of intellectual renewal, while also exploring the challenges and opportunities in combining science-based interpretation with a modern Islamic scientific framework.

To comprehend the epistemological foundation of *Tafsir al-Jawābir*, it is imperative to situate its genesis within the broader trajectory of modern Islamic thought in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. During this period, the Muslim world was confronted with intense Western colonial expansion and the overarching hegemony of modern science. This socio-political reality triggered a profound intellectual awakening (*tajdid*) spearheaded by reformist figures such as Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī and Muḥammad ‘Abduh, who advocated for the reconciliation of Islamic doctrines with modern rationality.⁵ Operating within this dynamic intellectual milieu, Ṭaṭṭāwī Jawharī expanded upon ‘Abduh’s rationalist framework. He systematically integrated the natural sciences into Qur’anic exegesis to construct a pedagogical manifesto aimed at awakening the Muslim intellect from centuries of stagnation and proving the Qur’an’s absolute compatibility with modern scientific discoveries.⁶

Research on *Tafsir al-Jawahir* by Ṭaṭṭāwī Jawharī is growing, particularly in the context of scientific interpretation and the integration of Islam with science. This is due to the increasing academic attention to science-based interpretation as part of the decolonization of Islamic epistemology, as well as efforts to strengthen the role of the Muslim middle class in contemporary scientific discourse. Several studies have highlighted Tantawi Jauhari's scientific interpretation method and its relevance to the development of modern science.⁷ Furthermore, other research examines how *Al-Jawahir* responds to the dominance of Western epistemology, providing an alternative interpretation of the relationship between Islam and science.⁸ However, there is little research specifically highlighting how this interpretation can expand the role of the Muslim middle class as agents of social, intellectual, and economic transformation.

This study aims to identify how *Al-Jawābir fī Tafsīr Al-Qur’an Al-Karīm* connects science and Islam to foster the emergence of a Muslim middle class that becomes an agent of social, intellectual, and economic transformation. Three lines of evidence support this. *First*, *Tafsir Al-Jawahir* is described as a scientific encyclopedia that integrates modern scientific knowledge with the teachings of the Qur’an. This descriptive approach provides a framework for understanding how Islamic teachings can coexist with scientific inquiry, which is essential for

⁴ Hodgson, *The Adventures of Islam, Conscience and History in World Civilization*, 3:419–20.

⁵ Charles Kurzman, ed., *Modernist Islam, 1840-1940: A Sourcebook*, Oxford Reference (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 4–6.

⁶ Rotraud Wielandt, “Exegesis of the Qur’ān: Early Modern and Contemporary,” in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur’ān* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 2:130.

⁷ Daneshgar, *Ṭaṭṭāwī Jawharī and the Qur’an*; Araminingsih, “Scientific Tafsir Study: *Al-Jawābir Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur’ān Al-Karīm* by Shaykh Ṭaṭṭāwī Jawharī.”

⁸ Ramli, “Tantawi Jawhari and His Intellectual Response to the Dangers of Western Expansionism and the Dominance of Modern Western Civilization; A Study of His *Tafsir Al-Jawahir Fī Tafsir Al-Qur’an Al-Karīm*.”

cultivating a science-oriented mindset among the Muslim middle class. *Second*, the book critically examines the historical context of Islamic scientific achievements, particularly during the classical Abbasid Caliphate, and compares it with periods of decline. By highlighting the need to recapture the scientific spirit of early Islam, the book encourages a critical reassessment of Islamic teachings in the light of modern science.⁹ *Third*, it plays a transformative role by promoting a modernized interpretation of Islam that aligns with contemporary scientific paradigms. This transformation encourages the Muslim middle class to view scientific inquiry as an integral part of their religious and cultural identity, thereby empowering them to drive social, intellectual, and economic change.

This article argues that interpretive work can have transformative implications for the surrounding social context.¹⁰ New scholarly exegesis proposed that post-colonialism¹¹ has been a breath of fresh air for Muslim communities to compete with the Western world in scientific and technological advancement. For example, Ṭanṭāwī Jawharī's *Al-Jawābir fi Tafsīr Al-Qur'an Al-Karīm* includes a note discussing the decline of the Islamic world and the progress of the West, where Ṭanṭāwī states that the progress experienced by the West is due to their interaction with the Islamic world over several decades.¹² This shows that, in addition to responding to the decline of Islam that occurred post-colonialism, this interpretation also seeks to play a transformative role in the social conditions of Muslim communities.¹³

The theme of the expansion of the Muslim middle class through 'ilmi' interpretation is based on the discourse of 'ilmi' interpretation which is a response to colonialism and Western scientific hegemony.¹⁴ While classical exegetes such as Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī occasionally incorporated cosmological and philosophical discussions in *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, a systematic scientific exegesis is a distinctly modern phenomenon.¹⁵ Before Ṭanṭāwī Jawharī formulated his encyclopedic work, the foundation for science-oriented interpretation was laid by reformist scholars across the Muslim world. In the Indian subcontinent, Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān pioneered this approach by arguing that there could be no contradiction between the "Word of God" (the Qur'an) and the "Work of God" (nature).¹⁶ Concurrently in Egypt, Muḥammad 'Abduh utilized rationalism in *Tafsīr al-Manār* to awaken the Muslim intellect and demonstrate Islam's compatibility with modern rationality.¹⁷ Within this broader exegetical evolution, *Tafsīr Al-Jawābir* represents a unique culmination, transforming these rationalist defenses into a

⁹ Hodgson, *The Adventures of Islam, Conscience and History in World Civilization*, 3:335–36.

¹⁰ Sanusi Lafiagi Haruna, "Contemporary Approaches to the Hermeneutics of the Qur'an," 316.

¹¹ Patricia Crone, "Post-Colonialism in Tenth-Century Islam," *Der Islam* 83, no. 1 (January 2006): 25–26, <https://doi.org/10.1515/ISLAM.2006.002>.

¹² Daneshgar, "Ṭanṭāwī Jawharī," 164–65.

¹³ Daneshgar, "Ṭanṭāwī Jawharī," 165.

¹⁴ Yongbao, "The Impact of Colonialism and Nationalism on the Marginalization of Islamic Law in the Muslim World," 378.

¹⁵ Daneshgar, *Ṭanṭāwī Jawharī and the Qur'an*, 7 and 12.

¹⁶ Daniel W. Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 33 and 45.

¹⁷ Massimo Campanini, *The Quran: The Basics*, Second edition, trans. Oliver Leaman, Basics (New York, N.Y: Routledge, 2016), 103–4, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315619453>.

comprehensive scientific encyclopedia. Moreover, Guessoum, in his book *Islam's Quantum Questions: Reconciling Muslim Tradition and Modern Science*, as quoted by Daneshgar, states that none of the aforementioned reformers, either Aḥmad Khān or 'Abduh, were pioneers of the trend of scientific tafsir.¹⁸

The Muslim middle class, as a social group that realizes the importance of adapting to modernity without abandoning Islamic teachings,¹⁹ becomes the right object in developing a critical understanding of their religious texts, which allows them to question and innovate, which is necessary for intellectual growth and transformation. Data on the expansion of the Muslim middle class is collected through historical records written by Marshall Hodgson as primary data and articles and books that focus on the same discourse as secondary data. The data relates to 'ilmi' interpretation, especially *Al-Jawābir fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'an Al-Karīm* which is taken from this interpretation and other works of Jawharī as primary data, as well as related books and articles that discuss Ṭanṭāwī Jawharī, such as the article “Ṭanṭāwī Jawharī” (2024) and the book *Ṭanṭāwī Jawharī and the Qur'an: Interpretation and Social Concerns in the Twentieth Century* (2018) written by Madjid Daneshgar, are used as secondary data. Thus, this research is qualitative and sourced from literature (library research).

The scientific notes and spirit in the book *Al-Jawābir fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'an Al-Karīm* that Ṭanṭāwī Jawharī wants to echo and the characteristics of the Muslim middle class as the main recipient of information. In the commentary of *Al-Jawābir fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'an Al-Karīm* itself, these notes are not only found in the introduction of the book, but often accompany the verses he interprets. Middle-class Muslim figures are selected based on historical data presented by Marshall Hodgson in his book *The Venture of Islam* and other literary sources categorized by region. Both notes and historical data are analyzed using an interpretative method, where the concept of the sociology of science is used as one of the methods of thinking in the analysis.

Integration between Modern Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of the Qur'an in *Tafsīr Al-Jawābir*

The tafsir methodology introduced by scholars such as Majid Daneshgar in his commentary on Jawharī's commentary is very different from that of other scholars, both Muslim and non-Muslim. He identified at least four characteristics that Jawharī demonstrates in each of his verses: First, a clear theme related to Islam. He uses this first characteristic as the primary concern addressed by the Qur'an. Second, secular subjects. He uses this characteristic to explain fundamental concepts that illuminate knowledge, regardless of its origins in European, Arab, or Asian traditions. This aspect also enhances the status of Muslims in the contemporary industrial landscape. Third, narratives and tales. These serve to remind Muslims of historical and contemporary events, enabling them to understand the impact of these past

¹⁸ Daneshgar, *Ṭanṭāwī Jawharī and the Qur'an*, 59.

¹⁹ Hodgson, *The Adventures of Islam, Conscience and History in World Civilization*, 3:254.

events on their present circumstances. Fourth, insightful wisdom. He uses this characteristic to help readers grasp the key points he wishes to convey.²⁰

The four aspects mentioned above facilitate the integration of contemporary scientific knowledge with the teachings of the Qur'an, as demonstrated by Ṭanṭāwī Jawharī in his interpretation. In examining Surah Al-Fātiḥah, it is clear that Jawharī integrates aspects of contemporary scientific knowledge, although the main focus of the first characteristic is the explanation of religious issues discussed in the Qur'an.²¹ This element is evident in the ten sciences described in the Qur'an, including mathematics and medicine. Jawharī explains these ten disciplines as a consequence of *tarbiyatullāh li al-'ālamīn*, which he considers to be the teachings of *the rabb al-'ālamīn*.²² The use of modern scientific knowledge in this early feature illustrates Jawharī's attempt to align it with the teachings of the Qur'an, as this feature prioritizes the issues the Qur'an seeks to address over other characteristics.

The second aspect of Jawharī's interpretation refers to the scientific encyclopedic statements in his tafsīr.²³ This arises from the broad nature of science, which goes beyond the interpretations and lateral issues emphasized by the Qur'an. For example, when he explains the phrase *bismillāh ar-raḥmān ar-raḥīm*, he discusses God's mercy extensively through the interpretation of *ar-raḥmān ar-raḥīm*, highlighting the extraordinary characteristics of small creatures such as ants and bees. This is even though this discussion has already been addressed in the surahs and verses that specifically refer to these two animals, namely Surah An-Naml and An - Nahl.²⁴ In addition to interpreting the verses broadly to encompass scientific dimensions, Jawharī also incorporated contemporary scientific findings into his interpretations, exemplified by his analysis of the phrase *sab'a. samāwāt* in Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 29.

²⁰ Daneshgar, "Ṭanṭāwī Jawharī," 161.

²¹ Daneshgar, *Ṭanṭāwī Jawharī and the Qur'an*, 106.

²² Jawharī, *Al-Jawābir Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Karīm*, 1935, 1:21.

²³ Jawharī, *Al-Jawābir Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Karīm*, 1935, 3:105.

²⁴ Jawharī, *Al-Jawābir Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Karīm*, 1935, 1:4.

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السيارات وشمسنا إحدى تلك الشمس ، فولدت عطارد ، والزهرة ، والأرض ، والمريخ ، والمشتري ، وزحل ، وأورانوس ، وبتون ، فهذه ثمان سيارات ، ثم انهم وجدوا بين المريخ والمشتري نحو ٦٠٠ نجمة صغيرة جدا ولو اجتمعت كلها لم تصل لتقدار جرم القمر ، وأكبرها المسماة (سرس) لا يزيد قطرها عن خمسمائة ميل وبعضها لا يزيد قطره عن عشرة أميال ، وربما كان هناك نجيمات أصغر منها لا يمكن رؤيتها .

ثم ان هذه السيارات تدور حول الشمس ، فعطارد يتم دورته في ٢٨ يوما من أبلنا ، والزهرة في ٢٢٦ ، والمريخ في ٣٦١ ، والأرض في سنة ، والمشتري في ١١ سنة و٣١٣ يوما ، وزحل في ٢٩ سنة و١٦٧ يوما ، وأورانوس في ٤٨ سنة و٧٧ أيام ، وبتون في ١٦٨ سنة و٤٤٨ يوما ، ويظن أن هناك سيارات أخرى حول الشمس لم تظهر .

ومن عجائب العلم وفرائبه : أن علماء العصر الحاضر بحثوا عن تلك النجيمات الصغيرة التي بين المشتري والمريخ بحسب القاعدة التي وضوها لبعد السيارات عن الشمس فأنهم رأوا أنها هكذا :

العدد	يضاف إليه	يكون المجموع	يضرب في	٩	مليون ميل
٠	عطارد	٤	٤	٣٦ = ٩ ×	٣٦
٣	الزهرة	٤	٧	٦٣ = ٩ ×	٦٣
٦	الأرض	٤	١٠	٩٠ = ٩ ×	٩٠
١٢	المريخ	٤	١٦	١٤٤ = ٩ ×	١٤٤
٢٤	٤	٢٨	٢٥٢ = ٩ ×	٢٥٢
٤٨	المشتري	٤	٥٢	٤٦٨ = ٩ ×	٤٦٨
٩٦	زحل	٤	١٠٠	٩٠٠ = ٩ ×	٩٠٠
١٩٢	أورانوس	٤	١٩٦	١٧١٤ = ٩ ×	١٧١٤
٢٨٤	بتون	٤	٢٨٨	٢٥٩٢ = ٩ ×	٢٥٩٢

هذه هي أعداد السيارات عن الشمس : أي انها منظمة تنظيما تقريبا ، فإذا بعد عطارد عنها ٣٦ مليون ميل ، فقد فرضوا أن بعده ٤ بعد الصفر وهكذا الزهرة ٣ ، والأرض ٦ ، والمريخ ١٢ بطريق الضعيف ويضاف لكل ضعف ٤ ، وهذا العدد يضرب في ٩ مليون ميل ، فلما وصلوا إلى ما بين المريخ والمشتري وجدوا هناك مكانا خاليا ، فكان يجب أن يكون فيه كوكب ، فلما وجدوا تلك النجيمات المقدمة علنوها شظايا من تلك النجمة البائدة ، وأعلم أن هذه الأرقام الدالة على الأميال تقريبية ، فان بعد الزهرة ٦٧ وبعد الأرض ٩٣ ، وبعد المريخ ١٤٣ ، وبعد المشتري ٤٨٤ ، وبعد زحل ٨٨٧ ، وبعد أورانوس ١٧٨٢ وبعد بتون ٢٧٩٢ ، وهي تختلف عن الجدول السابق قليلا ، وهذه الأعداد ملايين الأميال .

وأعلم أن الزهرة وعطارد هما السيارتان الأديتان ، لأن فلكهما ضمن فلك الأرض ، أما بقية السيارات فتسمى السيارات العليا ، لأن فلكها خارج عن فلك الأرض : هذا ما أردت ذكره في المجموعة الشمسية . أما الكواكب الثابتة ، فانها لا يحصر عددها إلا الله ، ولقد بحثها العلماء فوصلوا منها إلى معرفة ثمان ملايين بالنظار المعظم ، وبالآلة الراسعة المسماة فتوغرافيا .

وأعلم أن نور الشمس يصل إلى الأرض في ٨ دقائق و ١٨ ثانية ، ولو أن أسرع قطار جرى من الأرض إلى الشمس ليلا ونهارا لم يتمكن من وصوله إليها في أقل من ثلثمائة وخمسين سنة ، وأنا ذكرت لك هذا لتعلم مقدار عظمة الله عز وجل ، وتفهيم مأسأذ كره لك في أعداد النجوم الثابتة .

واعلم

Al-Jawāhir fī Tafsīr Al-Qur`ān Al-Karīm vol. 3, 48.

In the document, Jawharī refers to the distance of each planet from the sun to determine the number of stars located between Mars and Jupiter.²⁵

In the third characteristic, Jawharī attempts to combine contemporary narratives with historical accounts, as demonstrated in his interpretation of the second segment of Surah Al-Baqarah, namely verses 177-286. In this section, Daneshgar asserts that this third aspect includes at least two narratives: the secret of Alif-Lām-Mīm at the beginning of Surah Al-Baqarah and the topic of education in Egyptian schools.²⁶ One of the two narratives is a story of wisdom originating from an Abbasid caliph, which is featured in Jawharī's interpretation of

²⁵ Jawharī, *Al-Jawāhir Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur`ān Al-Karīm*, 1:48.

²⁶ Daneshgar, *Tanṭāwī Jawharī and the Qur'an*, 108.

the term “Alam” in Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 246.²⁷ In this narrative, Jawharī attempts to underline the importance of referring to this story in his interpretation, among other aspects, as a source of inspiration for contemporary individuals. In this narrative, Jawharī articulates that the term Alam can benefit a person if he understands its hidden meaning. The same applies to the current generation, which will be a source of inspiration for future generations. Therefore, Jawharī anticipated that subsequent readers of the Qur'an would gain a deeper understanding of the mysteries of nature and the universal principles governing humanity after he explains of the term Nature (ALM) in this interpretation.²⁸

The fourth characteristic consists of documented reflections on the previous three characteristics. Daneshgar asserts that this characteristic allows the reader to understand the main aspects of²⁹ Jawharī's interpretation. In Surah An-Nisa, the second element often highlights the comparison of two poles: the West, symbolized by Europe, and the East, symbolized by the Islamic world. Jawharī uses this comparison of the two poles as a framework for discussing the verse on trade and murder (Surah An-Nisa [4]: 29), which he identifies as one of the matters covered by the first characteristic.³⁰

Furthermore, the third characteristic also helps generate reflection for the fourth characteristic. The narrative referred to by Daneshgar in the third characteristic³¹ concerns Alexander the Great and an Indian philosopher. In his writings, the Indian philosopher urged Alexander to adhere to the essential laws of leadership, specifically embodying wisdom, justice, beauty, and perfection. Jawharī contextualizes this narrative by showing that the Indian philosopher's call was intended to lift Alexander's spirits, even though those spirits had been tainted by lust and greed for conquering kingdoms.³² This evidence suggests that Jawharī used these four characteristics to synthesize the Qur'anic teachings contained in the verses with scientific principles, contextualizing the topics discussed in the verses with events and narratives.

1. Ṭaṭṭāwī Jawharī's Critique of Previous Studies

Jawharī's criticism of traditional Muslim scholars and their interpretation of the Qur'an stems from their inability to express the full range of knowledge and science contained in the Qur'an.³³ This failure stems from the interpreters' overly prolonged concentration on the laws of Fiqh. Jawharī's criticism of earlier Muslim scholars is clear, as he notes that they wrote extensive and relevant texts on inheritance laws (*farā'id*), despite their limited number of verses, no more than 150. In response, Jawharī expressed regret that Muslims rarely reflect on verses

²⁷ Jawharī, *Al-Jawābir Fī Tafṣīr Al-Qur'an Al-Karīm*, 1935, 3:246.

²⁸ Jawharī, *Al-Jawābir Fī Tafṣīr Al-Qur'an Al-Karīm*, 3:253.

²⁹ Daneshgar, *Ṭaṭṭāwī Jawharī and the Qur'an*, 105.

³⁰ Daneshgar, *Ṭaṭṭāwī Jawharī and the Qur'an*, 109.

³¹ Daneshgar, *Ṭaṭṭāwī Jawharī and the Qur'an*, 109.

³² Jawharī, *Al-Jawābir Fī Tafṣīr Al-Qur'an Al-Karīm*, 1935, 3:93.

³³ Daneshgar, “Ṭaṭṭāwī Jawharī,” 167; Ramli, “Ṭaṭṭāwī Jawharī and His Intellectual Response to the Dangers of Western Expansionism and the Dominance of Modern Western Civilization; A Study of His Tafṣīr Al-Jawābir Fī Tafṣīr Al-Qur'an Al-Karīm,” 97.

related to science and nature, which are discussed in the 750 verses of the Qur'an.³⁴ The prevalence of Muslims who never interact with scientific and natural verses, he argues, is due to the negligence of Muslim scholars, especially the Fiqh experts, in emphasizing the scientific principles that should be emphasized in the Qur'an. In response to this interpretive approach, Jawharī sought to spark a “revolution” to uncover the scientific truths contained in the Qur'an.³⁵

In addition to his criticism of the scholars of Islamic jurisprudence, he also rebuked theologians (*mutakallimūn*) who neglected the elegance and order of nature due to their involvement in vain theories. He asserted that scholars had been trapped in flawed translations of the texts of Greek philosophers, as Jawharī argued that such translations were superficial and failed to convey the intended meaning, thus fostering the belief that philosophy conflicted with religion.³⁶

The focus on philosophy on the one hand and Fiqh on the other—particularly referring to the scholars who established the core principles of the various schools of thought—has influenced the wealth of Islamic knowledge derived from both fields. However, this fixation has not advanced science due to the limitations imposed by each side. In philosophy, scholars consider it solely a secular discipline, while in Fiqh, they limit their investigations to the results of the *ijtihād* of their predecessors, arguing that the contemporary generation cannot uncover what the previous generation has revealed.³⁷ This makes the Qur'an merely an instrument of *tabarru'* (information dissemination) rather than a solution for society addressing the problems of the community, due to the prohibition of *ijtihād* in the Qur'an.

Amidst the debate between the two camps—jurisprudence scholars and philosophy scholars—a group falsified hadith, particularly those concerning the virtue of surahs. Their rationale was to divert the attention of the people from fiqh issues to the Qur'an. However, this was also criticized by Jawharī. He argued that this group's efforts actually strengthened the Qur'an's position as merely evidence of piety, not a guideline that provided meaningful solutions to the people's problems.³⁸ This critique of this phenomenon formed the basis for Jawharī's choice of tafsir.

Jawharī was considered to be at odds with the prevailing interpretations of his time.³⁹ He recognized that his Muslim audience was the least educated demographic of his time, as they prioritized doctrine and Fiqh, which had been the focus of inquiry by previous thinkers. Sharia, as a subset of Fiqh, was taught alongside religion throughout the Islamic world. Jawharī envisioned a future where Muslims would diligently study verses about the wonders of nature and cosmology, integrating them into their daily lives.⁴⁰ This would serve as a stimulus for Muslims to assume responsibility for reviving the glory achieved during the "golden age" of

³⁴ Jawharī, *Al-Jawābir Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Karīm*, 1935, 25:53.

³⁵ Daneshgar, *Tanṭāwī Jawharī and the Qur'an*, 12.

³⁶ Jawharī, *Al-Tāj al-Muraṣṣa' Bi-Jawābir al-Qur'ān Wa'l-'Ulūm*, 24.

³⁷ Jawharī, *Al-Tāj al-Muraṣṣa' Bi-Jawābir al-Qur'ān Wa'l-'Ulūm*, 25–26.

³⁸ Jawharī, *Al-Tāj al-Muraṣṣa' Bi-Jawābir al-Qur'ān Wa'l-'Ulūm*, 27.

³⁹ Daneshgar, *Tanṭāwī Jawharī and the Qur'an*, 6.

⁴⁰ Daneshgar, “Tanṭāwī Jawhari,” 167.

Islamic heritage and civilization. Therefore, Jawharī articulated at the outset of his commentary his intention for the book to address the challenges facing Muslims and encourage their unity.⁴¹

2. Tafsir Al-Jawāhir: Transformative Role in Tafsir Studies

The conflicting views between Ṭaṭṭāwī Jawharī and previous *mufasssīrīn* (exegetes) were rooted in fundamental methodological and epistemological divergences regarding the primary function of the Qur'an. Classical exegetes predominantly operated within the frameworks of *tafsīr bi al-ma'šūr* (tradition-based exegesis) and linguistic-legalistic *tafsīr bi al-ra'y*, concentrating heavily on jurisprudence (*fiqh*), theology (*kalām*), and Arabic rhetorics (*balāghah*).⁴² Jawharī explicitly criticized this traditional paradigm, arguing that classical scholars had disproportionately exhausted their intellectual efforts on approximately 150 verses concerning Islamic law, while profoundly neglecting over 750 verses about the cosmos and natural sciences.⁴³ Methodologically, Jawharī shifted the exegetical axis from a strict adherence to *asbab al-nuzūl* (occasions of revelation) and linguistic conservatism to a concordist approach, asserting that the Qur'an's relevance is proven through its alignment with modern empirical science. This epistemological shift—reading the Qur'an not merely as a prescriptive theological manual but as a descriptive scientific encyclopedia—disrupted established conventions.⁴⁴

Jawharī, who contradicted the mainstream views of his time, eventually drew criticism. The association of verses with scientific discoveries in his interpretations made the verses of the Qur'an vulnerable to debate, given that scientific understanding and theories were constantly evolving.⁴⁵ In addition to these concerns, criticisms discussing the grammatical errors of the Qur'an and the scientific theories included were not free from scrutiny. For example, Jawharī's error in interpreting the term *al-ardh* as earth or land resulted in the inclusion of the equatorial bulge theory in his commentary on Surah Ar-Ra'd [13]: 41. According to critic Muhammad Bahrāmī, *al-ardh* in this verse refers to the land of Hijaz.⁴⁶ This criticism later influenced the development of scientific interpretation.

In exegetical studies, Jawharī established a new approach that went beyond theological and jurisprudential frameworks, directing attention to scientific phenomena present in the Qur'an.⁴⁷ The evolution of his *tafsir* methodology was later adopted by scholars, including Muhammad Idrīs al-Marbawī (d. 1989), who created science-oriented *tafsir* in Jawi. *Tafsir Jawhari* is a reference to *Tafsir al-Quran al-Karim* written by Indonesian scholars Abdul Halim Hasan, Zainal Arifin Abbas, and Abdul Rahim Haitami, as well as *Makbẓan al-'Irfān dar Tafsir-i Al - Qur'an* by Banu Amin (d. 1983). Apart from that, his *tafsir* writings received admiration

⁴¹ Daneshgar, "Ṭaṭṭāwī Jawharī," 165.

⁴² Ulrika Mårtensson, "Early Medieval Tafsīr (Third/Ninth to the Fifth/Eleventh Century)," in *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies*, ed. Muhammad Abdel Haleem and Mustafa Shah (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 652–55, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199698646.013.33>.

⁴³ Daneshgar, *Ṭaṭṭāwī Jawharī and the Qur'an*, 12.

⁴⁴ Mhd Khairudin Jamil, *Scientific Signs in Surah Ar-Rahman According to Tantaṭṭawī Jawharī's Perspective in Tafsir al-Jawahir*, n.d., 258 and 266.

⁴⁵ Daneshgar, *Ṭaṭṭāwī Jawharī and the Qur'an*, 7.

⁴⁶ Daneshgar, *Ṭaṭṭāwī Jawharī and the Qur'an*, 7–8.

⁴⁷ Daneshgar, "Ṭaṭṭāwī Jawharī," 171.

from two leading tafsir scholars in the Persian Shia community, namely Abd al-Hujjat Balāghī (d. 1976) and Muhammad Taqī Shari‘atī (d. 1987), both affiliated with the Persian Shi‘a tradition.⁴⁸ This marked a new phase in contemporary Islamic interpretation.

Jawharī not only shaped trends in the field of exegesis but also disseminated them among Muslim and non-Muslim groups in the East and Europe.⁴⁹ This teaching was carried out through transcriptions of Jawharī’s commentaries, including the *Tafsīr Sūrah al-Fātiḥa*, which has been translated into Chinese and Persian. Furthermore, he received requests from several countries, including India, Turkey, and Turkistan, to translate his works into their respective languages. Daneshgar asserts that both Muslim and non-Muslim groups in the East were motivated to translate Jawharī’s writings because of the clear references to ancient and modern languages in his commentaries.⁵⁰

In Europe, Jawharī’s works, particularly his tafsir, have been thoroughly researched by scholars such as Martin Hartmann (d. 1918), David Santillana (d. 1931), and David Samuel Margoliouth (d. 1953). All three agree on the impact of Jawharī’s works, which is comparable to that of Muslim and non-Muslim philosophers and intellectuals of ancient times.⁵¹ Bajlon acknowledges Jawharī’s impact on the Muslim community’s pursuit of modern knowledge through his advocacy of scientific interpretation of the Qur’an.⁵² This recognition of the impact of Jawharī and his writings, particularly his tafsir, suggests that his interpretive contributions facilitated the eradication of stagnation in the Islamic world.⁵³

3. The Muslim Middle Class: The Transition from an Object of Scientific Interpretation Literature to a Scientific Community

In sociological discourse, the stratification of postcolonial Muslim societies into elite, middle, and lower classes is fundamentally determined by disparities in economic capital, political authority, and access to modern education. The elite class generally consists of political oligarchs and established traditional authorities who wield structural power and maintain the status quo.⁵⁴ Conversely, the lower class comprises the grassroots masses, who are often economically marginalized and tend to adhere to localized, traditionalist forms of piety.⁵⁵ Positioned between these two extremes is the Muslim middle class – an urbanized demographic characterized by economic independence, higher education, and a strong drive for upward mobility. It is within this specific stratum that the negotiation between Islamic principles and modernity becomes most pronounced.⁵⁶ Therefore, the interpretation of the Qur’an through scientific observation proposed by Jawharī is more appropriate for this Muslim

⁴⁸ Daneshgar, “Tanṭāwī Jawharī,” 161.

⁴⁹ Daneshgar, “Tanṭāwī Jawharī,” 161.

⁵⁰ Daneshgar, “Tanṭāwī Jawharī,” 163.

⁵¹ Daneshgar, “Tanṭāwī Jawharī,” 162.

⁵² Daneshgar, *Tanṭāwī Jawharī and the Qur’an*, 13.

⁵³ Daneshgar, *Tanṭāwī Jawharī and the Qur’an*, 15.

⁵⁴ Robert W. Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*, Princeton Studies in Muslim Politics (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 58 and 113.

⁵⁵ Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 119.

⁵⁶ Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 68 and 102.

middle class.⁵⁷ This is based on the general characteristics of the Muslim middle class, which combines Islamic beliefs and principles with modernity.⁵⁸

The attributes of the Muslim middle class and their reactions to Islamic ideals and principles, along with the interaction between these elements and modernity, are categorized into four segments: indifferent, rationalist, conformist, and universalist. The first category is apathetic, consisting of individuals who ignore the whole, including Islamic ideals and principles and their interaction with modernity. The second category consists of rationalists, a group that emphasizes modernity while ignoring Islamic norms and principles. The third sector consists of conformists, who emphasize Islamic norms and principles, often at the expense of modernity, particularly aspects that deviate from Islamic teachings. The fourth sector consists of universalists, a group that integrates Islamic beliefs and principles with modernity.⁵⁹ The last segment is more likely to adopt a scientific model of interpretation than the previous components.

The adaptive nature of middle-class Muslims in adopting Islamic principles and values⁶⁰ facilitates their inclination toward a scientific approach to Quranic studies. This adaptive nature is intrinsically linked to their literacy levels, educational attainment, and technological skills.⁶¹ Under these circumstances, the importance of religiosity and the inclination to achieve it are more readily accepted by them, as they prioritize spiritual benefits over mere material gain.⁶² Many of them demonstrate religious ideals through symbols and traits closely resembling modernity, such as fashion and art.⁶³ This will influence a new paradigm in Islamization.⁶⁴

Among the attributes of the Muslim middle class mentioned above, two important aspects made this group receptive to the concerns expressed by Jawharī. First, the integration of religious principles with modernity. Hodgson explains this in his book regarding Abdülhamid's response to modernity as a means to refine his ideology.⁶⁵ Second, adequate reading and education, coupled with a desire to explore religious principles, enabled individuals to use their literacy skills to understand these values. The translators of Jawharī's writings aimed to make their translations accessible for teaching and reading among Muslim communities in their respective countries.⁶⁶

⁵⁷ Daneshgar, *Taṭāwī Jawharī and the Qur'an*, 11–12.

⁵⁸ Hodgson, *Islamic Enterprise, Conscience and History in World Civilization*, 3:411; Jati, "Post-Reformation Political Radicalism of the Indonesian Muslim Middle Class," 214.

⁵⁹ Muary and Atikah, "QURAN MEMORIZATION CLASS," 55–56.

⁶⁰ Ulya and Nurhadi, "Sufi Education for the Muslim Middle Class (Construction of Religious Identity Based on the Sufi Order)," 182.

⁶¹ Qodir and Nashir, "Shaping Piety and Identity of the Muslim Middle Class in Yogyakarta," 352.

⁶² Alam, "Popular Piety and the Muslim Bourgeois Middle Class in Indonesia," 245.

⁶³ Alrasyid and Rofieq, "The Views of the Bekasi Muslim Middle Class on Identity Politics Reviewed from the Aspects of Organizational Membership and Education," 744.

⁶⁴ Alam, "Popular Piety and the Muslim Bourgeois Middle Class in Indonesia," 245.

⁶⁵ Hodgson, *The Adventures of Islam, Conscience and History in World Civilization*, 3:255–56.

⁶⁶ Daneshgar, "Ṭaṭāwī Jawharī," 163.

The emergence of the Muslim middle class transcended its role as a subject of scientific analysis. The resources of this group demanded an expansion of this role to become a scientific community. The phrase "scientific community" refers to the influence of a community on the scientific process or the impact of that process on the community.⁶⁷ The influence of a community can be seen through the interaction between science and society.

For the relationship between science and society to exist, a dominant worldview is required, whether it is a worldview constructed by the majority in that society or a worldview that already exists and coexists with it. The dominance of a worldview is synonymous with a shared worldview, indicating the congruence of fundamental ideas, assumptions, and conceptions within a society.⁶⁸ Middle-class Muslims, as a social group, embody two primary identities: one as Muslims who uphold the ideals of society rooted in religious faith, and the other as middle-class individuals who drive the economic engine.⁶⁹ Identifying as a Muslim can act as a fundamental element in defining one's worldview. Consequently, the worldview constructed by Jawharī through his interpretive descriptive style may have an impact on his audience, particularly middle-class Muslims with established educational and economic stability.

Jawharī is characterized by his focus on "Specific Religious-Islamic Topics",⁷⁰ which serve to engage the reader with the main points of the Qur'an he discusses. Jawharī's interpretation of Surah Āli 'Imrān clearly illustrates its relationship to the previous surah, similar to the approach of other commentators.⁷¹ This characteristic serves as a crucial component in his interpretation of the introduction of the concept of divinity and other important Islamic principles that can influence the reader's worldview. Consequently, the placement of Jawharī's second component, which outlines scientific ideas, is crucial for integrating science within an Islamic framework, given that the foundational elements of Islam were initially presented in the first.

While the Islamic worldview is mainstreamed in the first characteristic, Jawharī's second characteristic – which has led to the assumption that his interpretation is an encyclopedia of knowledge – actually cites many scientific theories generated by the Western worldview. Furthermore, he frequently refers to the works of European scholars in presenting his interpretation, such as the works of Kant and Lubbock, who considered the relationship between nature and education. This was later clarified by Daneshgar that although Kant and Lubbock were references in presenting his interpretation, Jawharī analyzed the topics discussed in an Islamic context, and according to Daneshgar, Jawharī Islamized these concepts.⁷² For example, the topic of coexistence between ants, plants, and aphids is explained by Jawharī differently from Lubbock. In his interpretation of Surah Al- Fātiḥah: 1, he presents this

⁶⁷ Açıkgenç, *Scientific Thought and Its Burden: A Study of the History and Philosophy of Science*, 163.

⁶⁸ Açıkgenç, *Scientific Thoughts and Its Burdens: A Study on The History and The Philosophy of Science*, 118–19.

⁶⁹ Malik, Irwan, and Wathani, "Halal Products and Formal Piety in the Life of the Muslim Middle Class in an Analysis of Religious Acceptance Theory," 63.

⁷⁰ Daneshgar, *Tanṭāwī Jawharī and the Qur'an*, 105.

⁷¹ Jawharī, *Al-Jawābir Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Karīm*, 1935, 2:4.

⁷² Daneshgar, "Tanṭāwī Jawhari," 169.

coexistence as evidence of God's love or mercy in His creation.⁷³ From here, Jawharī's consistency in introducing the Islamic worldview is clear, even though he cites scientific theories produced by the Western worldview.

Jawharī contextualizes the previous two theoretical elements with a third component, which involves the description of a hikayat or story to explain the poem as outlined in the previous subsection.⁷⁴ This narrative is not a story that has been previously explained in the Qur'an, unlike previous commentaries that explain stories in the Qur'an. This narrative relates to an event that occurred in history, from the classical and medieval periods to the present day. This characterization of the hikayat introduces a new aspect to the field of interpretation in that period.⁷⁵ This interpretation seeks to explain the worldview and aims to advance through language, the natural environment, and various social contexts,⁷⁶ recognizing that not all sections of the Muslim middle class experienced identical social circumstances. This contextualization in the explanation of the hikayat facilitates the development of a more optimal worldview.⁷⁷

The fourth aspect of his interpretation serves to refine the formation of the dominant worldview for the Muslim middle class, where Jawharī synthesizes the previous three aspects to convey teachings that readers must understand in the context of modernity. He offers advice and recommendations to readers for increasing responsiveness to modernity, grounded in the teachings of the Qur'an.⁷⁸ This feature provides a summary of Jawharī's interpretation for readers who cannot access the full verse commentary in *Tafsir Al-Jawāhir*.

Viewed through the lens of intertextuality, Jawharī's scientific exegesis did not emerge in a vacuum but represents a complex dialogical relationship with both classical Islamic texts and modern Western scientific literature. Intertextually, the most dominant classical influences shaping his interpretation are Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, from which Jawharī adopted a vast cosmological curiosity,⁷⁹ and Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, specifically its chapters emphasizing *tafakkur* (the deep contemplation of God's creation).⁸⁰ Jawharī hybridized these traditional theological frameworks with the European scientific encyclopedias of his era.⁸¹ By interweaving Qur'anic verses with the biological and natural treatises of scholars like John Lubbock, Jawharī created a transcultural textual web that redefined exegetical boundaries.⁸²

⁷³ Jawharī, *Al-Jawāhir Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Karīm*, 1935, 1:4.

⁷⁴ Jawharī, *Al-Jawāhir Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Karīm*, 1935, 3:246.

⁷⁵ Daneshgar, *Tanṭāwī Jawharī and the Qur'an*, 105.

⁷⁶ Açıkgenç, *Scientific Thought and Its Burden: A Study of the History and Philosophy of Science*, 80.

⁷⁷ Açıkgenç, *Scientific Thoughts and Its Burdens: A Study on The History and The Philosophy of Science*, 120.

⁷⁸ Daneshgar, *Tanṭāwī Jawharī and the Qur'an*, 106.

⁷⁹ Majid Daneshgar, "An Approach to Science in the Qur'ān," *Oriente Moderno* 95, nos. 1–2 (2015): 34, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22138617-12340076>.

⁸⁰ Daneshgar, *Tanṭāwī Jawharī and the Qur'an*, 32.

⁸¹ Daneshgar, "An Approach to Science in the Qur'ān," 33–34.

⁸² Jawharī, *Al-Jawāhir Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Karīm*, 1:4.

The four aforementioned characteristics influence the mindset of the Muslim middle class, enabling them to engage in scientific endeavors. Jawharī's view of scientific operations illustrates all the social dimensions present in scientific endeavors, particularly through the third characteristic. Therefore, to foster a reciprocal relationship between the literature of tafsir 'ilmi as a discipline and the Muslim middle class as a community, it is important to describe the Muslim middle class to ensure they embody the characteristics of a scientific community as articulated by Alparslan Açıkgenç.⁸³

Açıkgenç argues that the reciprocal interaction between science and society will produce at least four characteristics. First, there are Methodological Goals. Methodological goals are the goals of the community that distinguish it from others. Açıkgenç asserts that the scientific community must have goals that are different from those of the general public.⁸⁴ Second, Scientific Ideals encompass all the goals idealized in the scientific tradition.⁸⁵ Third, Formal Linkages relate to the interaction between teachers and students or leaders and their followers.⁸⁶ Fourth, Marginal Ideals refer to the often-ignored goals of scientific endeavor, including goals that ideally require strong financial, social, and political support.⁸⁷

Jawharī's critique of Islamic studies in general and exegetical studies in particular is evident. In response to this critique, he establishes new methodological goals in his interpretation.⁸⁸ Consequently, readers understand Jawharī's intentions and goals in undertaking his tafsir project more thoroughly than if they had engaged only with his characterization of the tafsir literature. The integration of descriptive reading and critical analysis, which served as the basis for the creation of that literature, stimulates the cognitive engagement of middle-class Muslim readers. This illustrates how Jawharī, as an academic, structured his community according to the needs of his activities.

His interpretations of literary descriptions, along with critiques of previous studies, formed a scholarly tradition that he promoted, particularly advocating a critical re-evaluation of Islamic teachings in the context of contemporary science. This scholarly tradition indirectly embodied scientific goals, particularly the revival of Islam⁸⁹ to restore its past glory. Daneshgar refers to these scholarly goals in his book *Ṭanṭāwī. Jawharī and the Qur'an: Interpretation and Social Concerns in the Twentieth Century*.⁹⁰ This underscores the application of the second characterization.

Jawharī affirmed scientific ideas and served to train readers in the proper approach to reading the Qur'an, to stimulate a scientific spirit within the Muslim community.⁹¹ The Muslim middle class, identified as the group most likely to foster that spirit based on the

⁸³ Açıkgenç, *Scientific Thought and Its Burden: A Study of the History and Philosophy of Science*, 123.

⁸⁴ Açıkgenç, *Scientific Thoughts and Its Burdens: A Study on The History and The Philosophy of Science*, 124.

⁸⁵ Açıkgenç, *Scientific Thoughts and Its Burdens: A Study on The History and The Philosophy of Science*, 125–26.

⁸⁶ Açıkgenç, *Scientific Thoughts and Its Burdens: A Study on The History and The Philosophy of Science*, 126.

⁸⁷ Açıkgenç, *Scientific Thoughts and Its Burdens: A Study on The History and The Philosophy of Science*, 127.

⁸⁸ Jawharī, *Al-Ṭāj al-Muraşşa' Bi-Jawābir al-Qur'ān Wa'l-'Ulūm*, 24–27.

⁸⁹ Chande, "The Global Politics of Knowledge Production," 273.

⁹⁰ Daneshgar, *Ṭanṭāwī Jawharī and the Qur'an*, 20.

⁹¹ Açıkgenç, *Scientific Thought and Its Burden: A Study of the History and Philosophy of Science*, 127.

aforementioned data, consisted of individuals directly connected through pedagogy, given that Jawharī was an educator who emphasized the educational framework in Egypt⁹² or indirectly through his writings, including his original compositions and translations, as did the Persian Muslim community.⁹³ Jawharī, as an educator, guided the study of science, while the Muslim middle class, as his followers, established formal relationships similar to scientific societies.⁹⁴

To operationalize this scientific spirit, Jawharī explicitly integrated several established and emerging scientific theories of his time into his exegesis. For instance, in the field of astronomy, he adopted contemporary theories regarding the solar system, utilizing the mathematical calculations of planetary distances and orbital mechanics to explain the physical grandeur of the heavens in verses related to cosmology.⁹⁵ In the biological sciences, he applied theories of botany, such as cross-pollination and plant reproduction, to interpret verses concerning the earth's vegetation. Furthermore, he incorporated modern embryological theories to detail the sequential stages of human fetal development, transforming abstract Qur'anic concepts into empirically verifiable phenomena.⁹⁶

The Muslim middle class, which serves as the economic engine, is well-versed in economics, technology, and societal transformation, and focuses on goals often neglected in scientific endeavors, including economic, social, and political objectives. In Indonesia, this group has begun to engage in various aspects of state affairs, including economics, education, politics, and social issues, since the 1998 revolution.⁹⁷ Furthermore, the Islamization of contemporary social symbols, including fashion, allows them to influence various Muslim demographics.⁹⁸ This capital strengthens the identity of the Muslim middle class as a focus of the literature on the interpretation of science to build a scientific society.

However, the reception of Jawharī's interpretation among prominent ulama reveals a spectrum of distinct advantages and disadvantages that must be acknowledged. The primary advantage, as praised by scholars like Shaykh Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī, is its profound pedagogical ability to reawaken the intellectual curiosity of Muslims, successfully demonstrating that the Qur'an is an ally, not an enemy, of modern scientific progress. Conversely, the methodology faces severe criticism from literary and traditionalist exegetes, most notably Amīn al-Khūlī and Maḥmūd Shaltūt. These ulama highlighted a fatal disadvantage: the peril of "concordism"—the forced alignment of eternal Qur'anic truths with mutable scientific theories. They argued that if the adopted scientific theories are eventually disproven by new empirical discoveries, tying them to the Qur'an could inadvertently undermine the sacred and absolute authority of the

⁹² Daneshgar, "Ṭanṭāwī Jawharī," 161.

⁹³ Daneshgar, "Ṭanṭāwī Jawharī," 163.

⁹⁴ Açıkgenç, *Scientific Thought and Its Burden: A Study of the History and Philosophy of Science*, 126–27.

⁹⁵ Ṭanṭāwī Jawharī, *Al-Jawābir Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Karīm* (Cairo: Muṣṭafā l-Bābī l-Ḥalabī, 1935), 10:32–34; Daneshgar, *Ṭanṭāwī Jawharī and the Qur'ān*, 106.

⁹⁶ Daneshgar, "An Approach to Science in the Qur'ān," 54.

⁹⁷ Malik, Irwan, and Wathani, "Halal Products and Formal Piety in the Life of the Muslim Middle Class in an Analysis of Religious Acceptance Theory," 63.

⁹⁸ Akmal Akmal et al., "Consumption and Piety: Raising the Curtain on the Islamization of Taste and Fashion in Kendari's Muslim Middle Class," *KnE Social Sciences*, April 8, 2022, 425, <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v7i8.10761>.

divine text itself.⁹⁹ Despite these methodological flaws, the sociological impact of the text remains significant.

The reciprocal relationship between the Muslim middle class and *Tafsir Al-Jawahir*, as a literary work advocating a scientific approach, culminates in the premise that research into scientific heritage is an essential component of their religious and cultural identity. The Muslim middle class, as influential figures who are widely engaged in the public arena as their existential platform,¹⁰⁰ can play a representative role in mainstreaming the Islamic narrative in that context. Consequently, because of their attributes, the Muslim middle class has the potential to play a transformative role for other Muslim communities in dealing with science in particular and modernity in general, thus embodying the scientific ethos articulated in *Tafsir Al-Jawahir*.

Conclusion

Tafsir Al-Jawāhir formulates his interpretation through four characteristics that are essential to both Qur'anic teachings and scientific inquiry. The scientific descriptions he encompasses can be separated from Western scientific paradigms; thus, in their integration, these descriptions only act as catalysts for the scientific inclinations of the Muslim community, rather than influencing their worldview. The characteristics of the tales and lessons facilitate Jawharī's interpretation, making it accessible to readers. Jawharī's critique of the previous Islamic scholarly tradition serves to strengthen the mission inherent in his interpretation. This critical perspective aims to transform the thinking of the Muslim community, enabling the Muslim middle class to engage with all forms of modernity through the teachings of the Qur'an.

This study concludes that the scientific interpretation within *Tafsīr Al-Jawāhir* functions far beyond a mere exegetical endeavor; it acts as a cultural and epistemological catalyst for expanding and cultivating the intellectual identity of the modern Muslim middle class. Based on the research objectives, the substance of this transformation is driven by three primary factors.

First, *Tafsīr Al-Jawāhir* operates as a comprehensive scientific encyclopedia that systematically integrates modern empirical knowledge with Qur'anic teachings. This descriptive integration provides a legitimate theological framework proving that Islamic doctrines can seamlessly coexist with scientific inquiry, which is essential for cultivating a rational, science-oriented mindset among educated middle-class Muslims. Second, the exegesis serves as a historical critique. By contrasting the scientific zenith of the classical Abbasid Caliphate with contemporary periods of intellectual stagnation, Jawharī's work actively encourages a critical reassessment of traditional Islamic teachings, urging the Muslim middle class to revitalize the dormant scientific ethos of early Islam. Third, the text plays a profound transformative role by

⁹⁹ Campanini, *The Quran*, 112.

¹⁰⁰ Jati, "Religious Moderation for the Indonesian Muslim Middle Class," 24–25.

promoting a modernized interpretation of religion that aligns with contemporary scientific paradigms. Through these methodological and scholarly goals, the Muslim middle class is empowered to transition from being passive consumers of religious literature into an active, engaged scientific community capable of navigating modernity and driving socio-economic transformation.

Jawharī and other works were transformed into scholarly literature within an Islamic paradigm through their descriptive and analytical framework. This literary scholarship engaged the Muslim middle class as a community through the depiction of the four aforementioned characteristics: Methodological Goals, Scientific Ideals, Formal Links, and Marginal Ideas. The material assimilated by this community transformed into scientific premises, which then manifested as a scholarly tradition within the group. This scholarly tradition manifested not only through the disseminated literature but also as a reflection of the interaction between the received scientific heritage and its social context. The Muslim middle class, as a more educated demographic, had to evolve from passive beneficiaries to an active scholarly community that fostered scientific endeavors aligned with its social function.

This study has shortcomings, particularly the lack of a definition of the Muslim middle class situated within a specific social framework. Al-Jawahir's interpretation has not yet achieved universal acceptance within the global Muslim community. This study proposes a depiction of the Muslim middle class within a specific context, such as Indonesia, and aims for a scholarly interpretation aligned with the context of Indonesian society, exemplified by the scholarly interpretation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

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