

## The Epistemology of Islamic Law and Its Implications for Legal Thought Reform

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<b>Keywords:</b> epistemology of Islamic law, Islamic legal reform, <i>uṣūl al-fiqh</i> , <i>maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah</i> , legal thought.	This article examines the epistemology of Islamic law and its implications for the reform of Islamic legal thought in modern social contexts. The central issue addressed is the epistemological fragmentation within contemporary Islamic legal reform, characterized by the isolated use of <i>bayani</i> reasoning, rational hermeneutics, <i>maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah</i> , and ethical approaches without an integrated evaluative framework. This study employs a normative juridical method using conceptual and doctrinal approaches to analyze the epistemic structure of classical Islamic law and the challenges facing modern reform efforts. The findings indicate that the crisis of Islamic legal reform does not stem from a lack of substantive norms, but from the erosion of epistemological discipline in legal reasoning. The study argues for the reconstruction of an integrative epistemology that reaffirms <i>uṣūl al-fiqh</i> as a structural framework, textual authority as the normative foundation, <i>maqāṣid</i> as an orientation toward justice, and rational reasoning as a controlled contextual instrument. Such reconstruction is essential to preserve legitimacy, methodological coherence, and the adaptive capacity of Islamic law in the contemporary era.

### INTRODUCTION

The epistemology of Islamic law constitutes the foundational structure upon which Islamic legal reasoning, authority, and reform are constructed. Islamic law is not merely a normative system prescribing permissible and impermissible conduct, but a sophisticated epistemic tradition that governs how legal knowledge is derived, validated, and applied across changing social contexts. Consequently, any attempt to reform Islamic law without critically examining its epistemological foundations risks producing fragmented, inconsistent, or normatively weak legal outcomes. The contemporary discourse on Islamic legal reform therefore necessitates a systematic

engagement with epistemological questions concerning sources of law, methods of interpretation, and the relationship between revelation and reason.<sup>1</sup>

Classical Islamic jurisprudence developed a coherent epistemological framework through *ushul al fiqh*, which functioned as a meta legal discipline regulating the production of legal norms. Within this framework, revelation remained the primary source of law, yet its application depended on human reasoning structured through recognized methodologies such as linguistic analysis, analogy, and consensus. Syafrin emphasizes that this epistemological architecture was designed to ensure both fidelity to divine texts and responsiveness to social realities.<sup>2</sup> Islamic law was thus neither purely textual nor purely rational, but operated through an integrated epistemic model that balanced normativity and adaptability.

However, the historical development of Islamic legal thought was not static. Over time, political consolidation, institutionalization of madhhab authority, and colonial legal encounters contributed to the narrowing of interpretive space. Takim identifies this process as a gradual erosion of *ijtihad* in favor of *taqlid*, resulting in epistemic rigidity rather than methodological continuity.<sup>3</sup> This shift did not signify the disappearance of legal reasoning, but rather its confinement within inherited interpretive boundaries that were increasingly detached from emerging social conditions.

In the modern era, Islamic law confronts epistemological challenges of unprecedented scale. Rapid social transformation, technological advancement, and the dominance of nation state legal systems have introduced legal problems that exceed the classificatory capacity of classical jurisprudence. Issues related to bioethics, gender relations, financial systems, and digital technology demand interpretive responses that cannot be resolved through literal textualism alone. As‘ad, Musyahid, and Sultan argue that contemporary *ijtihad* increasingly requires the integration of *bayani*, *ta‘lili*, and *istislahi* approaches to address these complexities.<sup>4</sup> Yet, the absence of epistemological consensus has resulted in methodological fragmentation within Islamic legal discourse.

This fragmentation is evident in contemporary reform debates, where competing epistemic paradigms operate without a shared evaluative framework. Rationalist hermeneutics inspired by Muhammad Abduh emphasize contextual interpretation and moral reasoning, while *maqasid* based approaches prioritize substantive justice and public interest. Amir and Rahman demonstrate that Abduh’s epistemology represents an effort to reconcile revelation with rational inquiry, yet its application remains contested within traditional legal circles.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, *irfani* and ethical epistemologies challenge the dominance of formal legal reasoning by emphasizing moral consciousness and spiritual intuition. Saharuddin and Mahsyar note that while such approaches enrich ethical discourse, they raise questions regarding methodological accountability.<sup>6</sup>

In Indonesia, epistemological contestation is reflected in institutional practices such as fatwa issuance, judicial reasoning, and legislative reform. Firdaus and Achmad show that fatwa institutions frequently negotiate between textual authority, social context, and state regulation, revealing how epistemological assumptions directly shape

<sup>1</sup> Savluk, “The Relation Between Ontology and Epistemology in Islamic Legal Thought,” *Rumeli İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi* (2022).

<sup>2</sup> Syafrin, “Konstruk Epistemologi Islam,” *Tsaqafah* 5 (2009).

<sup>3</sup> Takim, “Islamic Law and the Neoijtihadist Phenomenon,” *Religions* (2020).

<sup>4</sup> As‘ad, Musyahid, and Sultan, “Teori Penemuan Hukum Islam,” *Al-Qiblah* 4, no. 4 (2025).

<sup>5</sup> Amir and Rahman, “Muhammad Abduh’s Rational Hermeneutics,” *Al-Daulah* 14, no. 1 (2025).

<sup>6</sup> Saharuddin and Mahsyar, “Telaah Epistemologi Pendekatan Irfani,” *Jurnal Riset Rumpun Agama dan Filsafat* 4, no. 1 (2025).

legal outcomes.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, the adoption of maqasid al shariah as a reform paradigm has produced diverse interpretations, ranging from principled legal renewal to instrumental policy justification. Azhar argues that without clear epistemological limits, maqasid reasoning risks becoming a rhetorical device rather than a disciplined legal methodology.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the extensive literature on Islamic legal epistemology, a critical research gap persists. Existing studies tend to focus on individual thinkers, specific methodologies, or isolated reform movements without systematically analyzing how epistemological assumptions structure broader patterns of legal reform. Moreover, many discussions remain confined to philosophical abstraction, neglecting the practical implications of epistemological choice for legal certainty, authority, and legitimacy. This article addresses this gap by positioning epistemology as the central analytical lens through which Islamic legal reform must be understood.

Accordingly, this study argues that the reform of Islamic legal thought requires epistemological reconstruction rather than mere doctrinal adjustment. Legal reform that fails to engage epistemological foundations risks producing incoherent norms, authority disputes, and normative instability. By examining the evolution of Islamic legal epistemology, identifying contemporary epistemic challenges, and proposing a normative framework for reform, this article contributes to a more coherent and methodologically grounded discourse on Islamic law in the modern era.

## METHODOLOGY

This research employs a normative juridical method to analyze the epistemology of Islamic law and its implications for legal thought reform. The normative approach is appropriate because the study focuses on epistemic structures, interpretive methodologies, and legal legitimacy rather than empirical legal behavior.<sup>9</sup>

The study applies three analytical approaches. First, a conceptual approach is used to examine epistemological theories in Islamic legal thought, including bayani, ta‘lili, irfani, and maqasid based reasoning. Second, a doctrinal approach analyzes classical and contemporary legal texts to assess how epistemological assumptions shape legal interpretation. Third, a comparative approach evaluates reformist legal thought across different scholarly traditions.<sup>10</sup>

Through critical interpretation and normative evaluation, this research formulates prescriptive conclusions aimed at reconstructing Islamic legal epistemology to support coherent, accountable, and context responsive legal reform.<sup>11</sup>

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Classical Epistemology of Islamic Law and the Structure of Legal Knowledge

The first result demonstrates that classical Islamic law was constructed upon a layered and disciplined epistemological structure that regulated not only legal outcomes but also the legitimacy of legal reasoning itself. Islamic law did not emerge as an

<sup>7</sup> Firdaus and Achmad, “Studi Epistemologi Hukum Islam dalam Konteks Fatwa MUI,” *Jurnal Pusaka* 14, no. 1 (2024).

<sup>8</sup> Azhar, “Islamic Law Reform from the Perspective of Maqasid al Shariah,” *Samarah* 8, no. 2 (2024).

<sup>9</sup> Marzuki, *Penelitian Hukum* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2017).

<sup>10</sup> Efendi, “Pembaharuan Hukum Islam Via Keterbukaan Landasan Filosofis,” *At-Ta‘awun* 3, no. 1 (2025).

<sup>11</sup> Siddiqi, “Moral Epistemology and the Revision of Divine Law in Islam,” *Oxford Journal of Law and Religion* (2021).

unmediated application of divine texts; rather, it was produced through a complex system of epistemic mediation in which revelation, reason, and methodology were carefully integrated. Ushul al fiqh functioned as the epistemological backbone of this system, defining the sources of law, hierarchies of evidence, and acceptable modes of interpretation. This structure ensured that Islamic law possessed internal coherence, methodological accountability, and normative authority.<sup>12</sup>

At the core of classical Islamic epistemology was the recognition that divine revelation required human interpretation. The Quran and Sunnah were understood as foundational sources, yet their normative meaning could not be accessed without interpretive reasoning. This acknowledgment gave rise to a disciplined legal science that distinguished between *qat'i* and *zanni* knowledge, regulated linguistic interpretation, and established criteria for analogy and consensus. Syafrin emphasizes that this epistemological differentiation was essential to prevent arbitrary legal claims while allowing flexibility within defined methodological boundaries.<sup>13</sup> Legal certainty in Islamic law was therefore epistemic rather than institutional, grounded in shared interpretive rules rather than centralized authority.

Classical jurists developed multiple epistemological approaches within this shared framework. The *bayani* approach prioritized textual analysis and linguistic precision, ensuring fidelity to scriptural language. The *ta'lili* approach focused on causal reasoning and legal objectives embedded within the law, allowing jurists to extend rulings to new cases through analogy. Meanwhile, early forms of *istislahi* reasoning acknowledged public interest as a supplementary epistemic consideration. As'ad, Musyahid, and Sultan argue that these approaches were not competing epistemologies, but complementary modes of reasoning operating within a unified methodological order.<sup>14</sup> This integration allowed Islamic law to remain responsive without sacrificing normative discipline.

Importantly, classical Islamic epistemology did not elevate reason above revelation, nor did it reduce reason to a passive tool. Reason functioned as an epistemic mediator that translated divine guidance into actionable legal norms. Şavluk notes that Islamic legal epistemology maintained a dynamic relationship between ontology and epistemology, where metaphysical commitments shaped methods of knowing, but did not eliminate interpretive plurality.<sup>15</sup> This balance prevented both literalism and relativism, preserving the authority of law while accommodating contextual variation.

The authority of legal knowledge in classical Islam was inseparable from the epistemological integrity of its production. Juristic authority was earned through mastery of legal methodology, ethical credibility, and scholarly recognition, rather than formal appointment or political power. Syaripudin underscores that Islamic law's legitimacy derived from its epistemic rigor, not from coercive enforcement.<sup>16</sup> As a result, multiple legal opinions could coexist within the same legal tradition, reflecting epistemic humility rather than legal uncertainty.

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<sup>12</sup> Morán, "The Development of Laws and Jurisprudence in Islam," *Stato, Chiese e Pluralismo Confessionale* (2020).

<sup>13</sup> Syafrin, "Konstruk Epistemologi Islam," *Tsaqafah* 5 (2009).

<sup>14</sup> As'ad, Musyahid, and Sultan, "Teori Penemuan Hukum Islam," *Al-Qiblah* 4, no. 4 (2025).

<sup>15</sup> Şavluk, "The Relation Between Ontology and Epistemology in Islamic Legal Thought," *Rumeli İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi* (2022).

<sup>16</sup> Syaripudin, "Theology and Epistemology of Islamic Law," *International Journal of Nusantara Islam* 9, no. 2 (2021).

However, this epistemological structure also imposed limits. The emphasis on methodological continuity gradually contributed to the consolidation of madhhab authority, which, while preserving doctrinal stability, narrowed the scope of legal innovation. Over time, epistemological caution hardened into methodological conservatism. Takim observes that this transition marked a shift from epistemic openness to defensive orthodoxy, particularly in response to political instability and external challenges.<sup>17</sup> While the classical system retained its internal logic, its capacity for renewal became increasingly constrained.

This result indicates that classical Islamic epistemology was neither rigid nor inherently reform resistant. Its strength lay in its structured flexibility, where change was possible through methodologically accountable reasoning. The problem of stagnation emerged not from epistemological design, but from historical conditions that discouraged interpretive risk. Consequently, contemporary calls for reform cannot dismiss classical epistemology as obsolete; rather, they must engage its internal logic to identify points of renewal.

Normatively, this analysis suggests that any reform of Islamic legal thought must begin by reconstructing, rather than bypassing, classical epistemological principles. Reform that ignores epistemic discipline risks producing legal norms lacking legitimacy and coherence. Conversely, reform grounded in epistemological continuity can restore Islamic law's capacity to address modern challenges without severing its methodological roots. The classical epistemology of Islamic law thus remains a critical reference point for contemporary legal reform, not as a fixed model to be replicated, but as an epistemic framework to be critically reactivated.

### **Contemporary Epistemological Challenges and Fragmentation of Islamic Legal Reform**

The second result reveals that contemporary Islamic legal reform is characterized by significant epistemological fragmentation arising from the diversification of interpretive methodologies and the absence of a shared evaluative framework. While classical Islamic law operated within a relatively unified epistemic order governed by ushul al fiqh, modern reform discourse often mobilizes heterogeneous epistemologies that do not consistently adhere to common standards of legal reasoning. This fragmentation has weakened methodological accountability and complicated the assessment of legitimacy in contemporary legal interpretations.<sup>18</sup>

One of the primary challenges lies in the expansion of rational and contextual hermeneutics that seek to reorient Islamic law toward ethical substance rather than formal textual adherence. Reformist thinkers influenced by Muhammad Abduh emphasize reason, moral intuition, and social utility as central epistemic tools. Amir and Rahman argue that Abduh's rational hermeneutics aimed to liberate Islamic law from rigid literalism and to restore its ethical orientation.<sup>19</sup> However, without clearly articulated methodological constraints, rational hermeneutics risks devolving into interpretive subjectivism, where legal outcomes are justified post hoc rather than derived through accountable reasoning.

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<sup>17</sup> Takim, "Islamic Law and the Neoijtihadist Phenomenon," *Religions* (2020).

<sup>18</sup> Solihin, Haryadi, and Rohanda, "Islamic Jurisprudence in an Epistemological Perspective," *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research* 7, no. 12 (2024).

<sup>19</sup> Amir and Rahman, "Muhammad Abduh's Rational Hermeneutics," *Al-Daulah* 14, no. 1 (2025).

A parallel challenge emerges from the widespread adoption of maqasid al shariah as a dominant reform paradigm. While maqasid reasoning provides a valuable framework for aligning Islamic law with justice, welfare, and human dignity, its contemporary application often lacks epistemological discipline. Azhar demonstrates that maqasid based reform in Indonesia frequently operates without clear criteria for identifying, prioritizing, or limiting legal objectives.<sup>20</sup> As a result, maqasid risks becoming an open ended justificatory tool rather than a structured method of legal derivation. This development undermines legal certainty and weakens the normative force of Islamic law.

The epistemological landscape is further complicated by the revival of irfani and ethical epistemologies that emphasize moral consciousness, spiritual insight, and experiential knowledge. Saharuddin and Mahsyar note that irfani approaches enrich ethical reflection but raise concerns regarding verifiability and intersubjective validity.<sup>21</sup> When such approaches are elevated to primary legal epistemologies, they challenge the foundational principle that legal norms must be publicly justifiable through shared reasoning. Consequently, the integration of irfani reasoning into legal reform requires careful limitation to prevent erosion of methodological accountability.

Institutional contexts amplify these epistemological tensions. Fatwa bodies, courts, and legislative institutions often adopt divergent epistemic orientations depending on political, social, or pragmatic considerations. Firdaus and Achmad show that fatwa issuance frequently reflects a negotiated epistemology combining textual authority, social context, and institutional interest.<sup>22</sup> This pragmatic hybridity, while responsive, produces inconsistent legal standards and complicates the development of coherent reform trajectories.

The following table summarizes the core epistemological challenges in contemporary Islamic legal reform and their normative implications.

**Table 1. Epistemological Challenges and Normative Implications in Contemporary Islamic Legal Reform**

Epistemological Approach	Core Orientation	Contemporary Application	Normative Risk	Prescriptive Requirement
Textual Bayani	Linguistic fidelity to sources	Selective literalism	Rigidity and social irrelevance	Contextualized textual reasoning
Rational Hermeneutics	Ethical rationality and context	Moral prioritization	Subjectivism	Methodological constraints
Maqasid Based Reasoning	Public interest and objectives	Policy oriented reform	Instrumentalization	Clear hierarchy of objectives
Irfani Ethical Epistemology	Moral intuition	Value oriented discourse	Non verifiability	Supplementary ethical role

<sup>20</sup> Azhar, "Islamic Law Reform from the Perspective of Maqasid al Shariah," *Samarah* 8, no. 2 (2024).

<sup>21</sup> Saharuddin and Mahsyar, "Telaah Epistemologi Pendekatan Irfani," *Jurnal Riset Rumpun Agama dan Filsafat* 4, no. 1 (2025).

<sup>22</sup> Firdaus and Achmad, "Studi Epistemologi Hukum Islam dalam Konteks Fatwa MUI," *Jurnal Pusaka* 14, no. 1 (2024).

	and spirituality			
Hybrid Institutional Epistemology	Pragmatic adaptation	Fatwa and judicial practice	Inconsistency	Unified evaluative standards

The analytical value of this table lies in its demonstration that the crisis of Islamic legal reform is epistemological rather than doctrinal. The problem is not the plurality of methods, but the absence of a shared framework that regulates how these methods interact and constrain one another. Without such a framework, legal reform becomes reactive and fragmented, undermining both legitimacy and coherence.

Normatively, this result indicates that sustainable reform requires epistemological integration rather than methodological competition. Classical ushul al fiqh provides a reference model for such integration, as it accommodated multiple reasoning modes within a unified structure. Contemporary reform must therefore reconstruct an integrative epistemology that preserves methodological discipline while allowing substantive responsiveness. Efendi argues that openness in epistemological foundations must be accompanied by philosophical clarity regarding ontological and axiological commitments.<sup>23</sup>

Prescriptively, Islamic legal reform should adopt a tiered epistemological model in which textual reasoning remains foundational, maqasid functions as a guiding framework rather than an independent source, rational hermeneutics operates within defined limits, and ethical epistemologies play a supplementary role. Such reconstruction would restore accountability to legal reasoning and reestablish epistemic continuity between classical jurisprudence and modern legal needs.

### Reconstructing an Integrative Epistemology for Islamic Legal Thought Reform

The third result demonstrates that the sustainability of Islamic legal reform depends on the reconstruction of an integrative epistemology capable of reconciling classical methodological discipline with contemporary social demands. The preceding analyses reveal that the crisis of Islamic legal reform is not rooted in the absence of normative resources, but in the lack of a coherent epistemological framework that governs how those resources are employed. Consequently, reform efforts that focus solely on doctrinal modification or policy outcomes fail to address the deeper epistemic disorientation that undermines legal legitimacy and coherence.

An integrative epistemology must begin with the reaffirmation of ushul al fiqh as the structural foundation of Islamic legal reasoning. Ushul al fiqh historically functioned as a meta legal system that regulated the admissibility, hierarchy, and interaction of legal arguments. Its primary contribution was not the production of substantive norms, but the establishment of epistemic discipline. Syarif, Sultan, and Musyahid emphasize that philosophical reflection within Islamic law was historically embedded in methodological practice rather than abstract speculation.<sup>24</sup> Reconstructing Islamic legal thought therefore requires reactivating ushul al fiqh as a living epistemological framework rather than treating it as a closed historical artifact.

At the same time, reconstruction does not imply restoration in a literal sense. Classical epistemology must be critically expanded to accommodate contemporary

<sup>23</sup> Efendi, “Pembaharuan Hukum Islam Via Keterbukaan Landasan Filosofis,” *At-Ta‘awun* 3, no. 1 (2025).

<sup>24</sup> Syarif, Sultan, and Musyahid, “Pendekatan Filosofis dalam Hukum Islam,” *Al-Qiblah* 4, no. 4 (2025)

realities that were absent from earlier legal contexts. The integration of maqasid al shariah illustrates both the potential and the risk of epistemological expansion. When maqasid is employed as a guiding framework subordinated to methodological constraints, it enhances the capacity of Islamic law to pursue justice, welfare, and human dignity. However, when maqasid is elevated into an autonomous source detached from textual and methodological grounding, it risks instrumentalization. Azhar warns that such instrumentalization transforms maqasid from an epistemic compass into a rhetorical device.<sup>25</sup> An integrative epistemology therefore requires a hierarchical ordering in which maqasid informs interpretation without replacing established methods of derivation.

Rational hermeneutics represents another indispensable component of epistemological reconstruction. Contemporary legal problems often require interpretive engagement with context, social change, and ethical consequences. Amir and Rahman demonstrate that Muhammad Abduh's rational hermeneutics sought to restore the ethical vitality of Islamic law without severing its connection to revelation.<sup>26</sup> The challenge lies in institutionalizing rational reasoning within epistemic boundaries that prevent subjectivism. This requires articulating criteria for contextual relevance, proportionality, and interpretive accountability, ensuring that rational interpretation remains publicly justifiable.

Ethical and irfani epistemologies also occupy a legitimate but limited position within the reconstructed framework. Saharuddin and Mahsyar argue that irfani reasoning contributes moral sensitivity and ethical depth to legal discourse.<sup>27</sup> However, its epistemic status must remain supplementary rather than determinative. Islamic law, as a public normative system, demands intersubjective verifiability. Ethical intuition may guide legal orientation, but binding norms must remain grounded in shared reasoning processes accessible to the broader legal community.

Institutional implications constitute a critical dimension of epistemological reconstruction. Legal epistemology does not operate in abstraction, but is mediated through fatwa institutions, courts, and legislative bodies. Firdaus and Achmad show that epistemological ambiguity at the institutional level produces inconsistent legal outcomes and authority disputes.<sup>28</sup> A reconstructed epistemology must therefore be institutionalized through clear methodological guidelines that govern legal interpretation across institutions. Such guidelines do not impose uniform outcomes, but establish shared standards for evaluating legal reasoning.

Normatively, this result indicates that reform of Islamic legal thought requires epistemological humility on two fronts. Traditionalist resistance to reform often assumes that methodological continuity necessitates epistemic closure, while reformist enthusiasm sometimes equates contextual relevance with methodological abandonment. Both positions misconstrue the nature of Islamic legal epistemology. Classical jurisprudence was neither static nor arbitrary; it was adaptive within discipline. Takim's

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<sup>25</sup> Azhar, "Islamic Law Reform from the Perspective of Maqasid al Shariah," *Samarah* 8, no. 2 (2024)

<sup>26</sup> Amir and Rahman, "Muhammad Abduh's Rational Hermeneutics," *Al-Daulah* 14, no. 1 (2025).

<sup>27</sup> Saharuddin and Mahsyar, "Telaah Epistemologi Pendekatan Irfani," *Jurnal Riset Rumpun Agama dan Filsafat* 4, no. 1 (2025)

<sup>28</sup> Firdaus and Achmad, "Studi Epistemologi Hukum Islam dalam Konteks Fatwa MUI," *Jurnal Pusaka* 14, no. 1 (2024).

analysis of neo ijihadist movements underscores that renewal succeeds only when it operates within, rather than against, epistemological structure.<sup>29</sup>

Prescriptively, this study proposes a tiered integrative epistemological model. Textual reasoning remains foundational as the primary source of normativity. Ushul al fiqh provides the structural discipline governing interpretation. Maqasid al shariah functions as an orienting framework for substantive justice. Rational hermeneutics facilitates contextual engagement under methodological constraints. Ethical epistemologies contribute moral insight without determining legal outcomes. This model restores coherence to Islamic legal reform by aligning epistemic authority with methodological accountability.\

In conclusion, the reconstruction of Islamic legal epistemology is not an optional intellectual exercise, but a normative necessity for sustaining legal legitimacy in the modern era. Without epistemological integration, Islamic law risks oscillating between rigidity and arbitrariness. With integration, it can reclaim its historical capacity to serve as a principled, adaptive, and credible legal system responsive to contemporary social needs.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the core challenge of Islamic legal thought reform lies not in the insufficiency of normative sources, but in the erosion of epistemological coherence governing legal reasoning. Classical Islamic law possessed a disciplined epistemology that balanced textual authority, rational interpretation, and ethical orientation through ushul al fiqh. However, contemporary reform discourse is marked by epistemological fragmentation, where rational hermeneutics, maqasid based reasoning, and ethical approaches operate without a unified evaluative framework. This fragmentation weakens methodological accountability, undermines legal legitimacy, and produces inconsistent reform outcomes.

The findings demonstrate that sustainable reform requires epistemological reconstruction rather than doctrinal substitution. Classical epistemology should not be abandoned, but critically reactivated to accommodate modern social realities. An integrative epistemological model is therefore necessary, one that preserves textual reasoning as the foundation of normativity, situates ushul al fiqh as the structural regulator of interpretation, employs maqasid al shariah as an orienting framework for justice, and limits ethical epistemologies to a supplementary role. Such integration restores coherence while preventing both rigid literalism and unbounded subjectivism.

Based on these conclusions, this study recommends that future Islamic legal reform initiatives prioritize epistemological clarity at both scholarly and institutional levels. Legal education should emphasize methodological literacy rather than mere doctrinal transmission. Fatwa institutions and judicial bodies should adopt explicit epistemological guidelines to ensure consistency and accountability in legal reasoning. Finally, further research should explore institutional mechanisms for operationalizing integrative epistemology within state and non state legal systems, ensuring that Islamic law remains both normatively credible and socially responsive in the modern era.

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<sup>29</sup> Takim, “Islamic Law and the Neojihadist Phenomenon,” *Religions* (2020).

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