

Integration of Correspondence and Coherence Theories: A Philosophical Approach to the Concept of Truth in Islam

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ABSTRACT

Truth is a fundamental concept in philosophy and theology that has deep relevance in the Islamic tradition. This article examines the relevance of correspondence and coherence theories to the understanding of truth in Islam. Correspondence theory defines truth as the correspondence between propositions and external reality. In Islam, this approach is seen in revelation that is in harmony with natural reality as affirmed in many verses of the Qur'an. On the other hand, coherence theory emphasizes logical consistency in belief systems. Islam integrates revelation, reason, and sharia law to build a harmonious and rational belief. Truth in Islam is not only ontological, referring to the absolute reality of God, but also epistemological, encompassing the way humans understand and apply truth. The correspondence approach affirms the relationship of revelation to nature, while coherence ensures logical harmony within the belief system. The combination of the two creates a comprehensive framework, integrating spirituality, intellect and morality. The article concludes that the dialog between philosophical concepts and Islam enriches the understanding of the nature of truth, making it theologically and practically relevant in everyday life.

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1. Introduction

Truth is one of the fundamental concepts widely discussed across various disciplines, including philosophy and theology. The understanding of truth has evolved throughout history, with various approaches proposed by thinkers to explain its essence. In the realm of philosophy, theories of truth are central because they address the foundations of human knowledge and the ways in which we understand the world (Thagard, 2007). These theories have undergone significant evolution, and among the most influential are the correspondence theory and coherence theory.

The correspondence theory posits that truth is the alignment between a statement or proposition and external reality (Audrian, 2022). In other words, something is considered true if it corresponds to the facts in the real world. This theory has its roots in the thinking of classical philosophers such as Aristotle, who believed that truth is about stating what "is" as "is" and what "is not" as "is not." Aristotle emphasized the importance of the relationship between language and reality, where a true proposition reflects reality as it is (Putnam, 1979). This theory was further developed by empiricist philosophers who argued that knowledge must be based on observation and direct experience of the world. This approach highlights the importance of empirical evidence to ensure the validity of a statement.

On the other hand, the coherence theory asserts that truth is the logical consistency between propositions within a system of thought. A statement is considered true if it is harmonious and does not contradict other propositions within a particular belief system or theory. Unlike the correspondence theory, which focuses on the relationship between propositions and external reality, the coherence theory emphasizes internal integration within a framework of thought. This theory is more commonly adopted by idealist philosophers like Hegel, who stressed the importance of logical relationships and unity within a structure of thinking. According to this approach, truth depends not only on alignment with the external world but also on harmony and consistency within human understanding.

Moreover, the coherence theory holds significant relevance in the context of complex systems, such as science, where internal consistency between interconnected theories becomes an indicator of validity. In modern philosophy, this theory is used to evaluate the truth of abstract concepts that are difficult to verify through direct observation. Thus, the coherence theory complements the correspondence theory in providing a broader understanding of what truth is.

In Islam, truth is not only understood as a philosophical concept but also holds profound theological and spiritual dimensions. Truth in Islam is closely tied to the concepts of faith, revelation, and the use of reason. In the Qur'an, truth is often associated with Allah, referred to as "Al-Haqq," meaning "The Truth" or "The Absolute Reality." Allah's revelation in the Qur'an is considered the source of absolute truth that guides humans in understanding reality and living a righteous life in this world. In other words, in the Islamic view, truth is not merely intellectual but also touches on the spiritual and moral aspects of humanity.

Truth in Islam has two main aspects: ontological truth and epistemological truth. Ontological truth refers to the true reality created by Allah, while epistemological truth pertains to the way humans understand and know that reality. In this regard, Islam emphasizes the correspondence between revelation and the natural world, as highlighted in many verses of the Qur'an that encourage humans to reflect on the signs of Allah's greatness in the universe. For example, the Qur'an often invites humans to contemplate Allah's creations as evidence of the truth of His revelation. This indicates that Islam does not separate religion from science; rather, it sees both as complementary in understanding truth.

On the other hand, Islam also acknowledges the importance of coherence in understanding truth. The Islamic belief system is built upon the harmonious relationship between revelation, reason, and social reality. Theological and legal thought in Islam must be consistent with the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith, and not contradict the rational principles accepted within the Islamic tradition. For instance, in the field of jurisprudence, scholars use *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) to ensure that the resulting laws remain consistent with the core values of Islam and relevant to the social context. Thus, coherence becomes a key principle in ensuring that Islamic teachings are applied consistently and meaningfully in various situations.

In the Islamic scholarly tradition, philosophy and theology often go hand in hand in the search for truth. For example, Muslim philosophers like Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Al-Ghazali combined rational and revelatory approaches to understand truth. They viewed reason and revelation as two complementary tools in the pursuit of truth. Ibn Sina, for instance, argued that philosophical truth should not contradict revealed truth because both originate from the same source—Allah. This view demonstrates that Islam not only emphasizes the importance of faith but also acknowledges the role of reason in understanding truth.

Furthermore, truth in Islam also encompasses an ethical dimension. In the Qur'an, truth is not only understood as something intellectual but must also be manifested in actions. For example, humans are commanded to speak truthfully and act justly as expressions of truth. Thus, in Islam, truth is not only the foundation of knowledge but also serves as a guide for moral and meaningful living.

This paper aims to explore the relevance of the correspondence and coherence theories in philosophy with the concept of truth in Islam. Both offer different perspectives on truth but can contribute to a deeper understanding of the nature of truth within the Islamic tradition. In this context, the correspondence theory can help explain how Islamic revelation aligns with objective reality, while the coherence theory can be used to understand how the Islamic belief system forms a consistent and harmonious structure of thought.

In conclusion, truth is a complex and multifaceted concept that cannot be fully explained by a single approach. In philosophy, the correspondence and coherence theories offer complementary perspectives on truth. Meanwhile, in the Islamic tradition, truth is not only understood as intellectual but also has profound theological, spiritual, and ethical dimensions. By combining philosophical approaches with Islamic teachings, we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of truth. This demonstrates that dialogue between different scholarly traditions can provide valuable insights into answering fundamental questions about the nature of truth.

2. Theory of Correspondence in Philosophy

The correspondence theory is a classical theory that discusses the concept of truth by emphasizing the alignment between a statement or proposition and external reality (Venkatraman, 1989). The core of this theory is that a statement is considered true if it reflects the facts or reality that exist outside of human thought. This idea has its roots in Aristotle's thinking, who clearly stated, "To say what is not, or what is not, is wrong, while to say what is, is, or what is not, is not, is true." This thought provides the foundation for the correspondence approach to truth, which focuses on the alignment between language and reality.

In the development of modern philosophical tradition, this theory gained significant support from empirical philosophers, who believed that human knowledge must rely on observation and direct experience of the real world. Empiricists argue that the truth of a proposition can be tested through objectively observable evidence. For example, a simple statement like "the sun rises in the east" can be verified as true because it aligns with a phenomenon that can be observed by anyone. This shows that the correspondence theory offers a systematic approach to understanding the relationship between propositions and objective reality.

One of the advantages of the correspondence theory is its simplicity in explaining the concept of truth. By linking propositions to external facts, this theory provides a clear method for evaluating the validity of a statement. However, the application of this theory also faces challenges, especially in the context of more complex or abstract realities. Not all propositions can be easily verified through direct observation, such as those in theoretical sciences or metaphysics, where the reality referred to may be conceptual or not directly observable.

Nevertheless, the correspondence theory remains relevant in many fields, particularly those that rely on empirical data to establish truth. In science, for example, this theory forms the basis for testing hypotheses through experiments designed to observe the alignment between theoretical predictions and actual results. Thus, the correspondence theory serves not only as a philosophical framework but also as a practical tool in the pursuit of scientific truth.

The correspondence theory asserts that truth is the direct relationship between propositions and external reality. This idea, rooted in Aristotle and reinforced by modern empirical philosophy, offers a clear and practical approach to understanding truth. Although it faces limitations in dealing with abstract realities, this theory remains an important foundation in various intellectual endeavors to explain the world around us.

3. Theory of Coherence in Philosophy

The coherence theory defines truth as internal consistency within a system of beliefs or propositions. A proposition is considered true if it is consistent with other propositions within that system. This approach is rational and deductive, often

adopted by idealist philosophers like Hegel and Spinoza, who emphasized that truth lies in logical alignment within the human mind. Thus, the coherence theory presents the view that truth does not necessarily depend on external reality but on the logical relationships between elements of thought.

The coherence theory differs fundamentally from the correspondence theory in terms of focus and emphasis. While the correspondence theory highlights the alignment between propositions and external reality, the coherence theory emphasizes the importance of logical relationships and consistency between statements within a belief system. A system is considered true if all its parts support one another and there are no contradictions within it. This approach is particularly useful in the context of abstract thinking or concepts that are difficult to verify empirically, such as in mathematics or metaphysics.

Additionally, the coherence theory is often used to evaluate beliefs or theories that are interrelated. For example, in science, hypotheses that form a theory are considered true if they support one another and create a consistent framework. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of complex systems of thought, where each element must align with the overall structure.

However, the coherence theory also has limitations. One of the main criticisms of this theory is that a system that is fully internally consistent does not necessarily align with external reality. For instance, a theory that is coherent on paper may not have any connection to the real world. Therefore, this theory is often combined with others, such as the correspondence theory, to provide a more balanced approach to understanding truth.

The coherence theory offers a different approach to defining truth by emphasizing logical consistency and internal relationships within a system of thought. Although it has limitations, this approach remains relevant in certain contexts, particularly in fields that require logical and systematic analysis of abstract concepts.

4. Result and Discussion

Truth in Islamic Perspective

In Islam, the concept of truth has deep theological and philosophical dimensions. The term "al-Haqq," often translated as "truth" or "absolute reality," is one of the names of Allah in Islam, indicating that truth is an integral part of God's nature. The Qur'an itself is often referred to as the source of absolute truth, derived from divine revelation.

Truth in Islam can be understood in two main dimensions: first, as ontological truth, which refers to the reality of God and His creation; second, as epistemological truth, which relates to human knowledge of that reality. In the context of epistemology, truth in Islam is derived from revelation (the Qur'an and Hadith), reason, and human experience.

As mentioned in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 147: "The truth is from your Lord. So

do not be of those who doubt.”

This verse confirms that the truth is a revelation that comes from God, which cannot be doubted or denied.

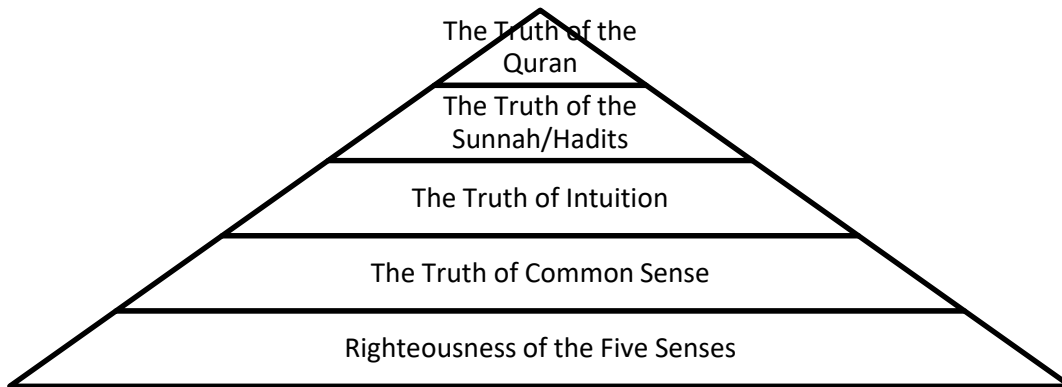


Figure 1: Hierarchy of Truth in Islam

كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ (5) لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ (6) ثُمَّ لَتَرَوْهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ (7) ثُمَّ لَتَسْأَلَنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ (8)
 Never (do not do that)! Had you known for certain, (you would not have done so) (5), You will surely see (the hell of) Jahim (6), Then, you will surely see it with ainulyakin (7), Then, you will surely be asked on that day about the pleasures (of the world) (8).

In the Islamic tradition, especially in the context of Sufism or Islamic philosophy, there are important concepts called Ilmu Yaqin, Ainul Yaqin, and Haqq Yaqin. They describe the level of belief of a servant in achieving truth and a deeper understanding of God and reality (Wijaya, 2020). These three concepts are also relevant to epistemology in Islamic Philosophy, which is concerned with how humans achieve ultimate knowledge and truth. Here is a further explanation of these three levels of belief, as well as their relevance to Islamic Philosophy.

Faith Through Knowledge

Science of Yaqin is a belief that is acquired through convincing knowledge or information. At this level, one is certain about the truth of something because it has been given a valid explanation through reason and intellectual knowledge. In Islamic philosophy, this is in line with rational or deductive knowledge derived from intellectual reasoning. Although a person has not experienced or witnessed the truth directly, reliable knowledge has made him certain.

Example in Islamic Philosophy: Ibn Sina (Avicenna) explained that man can know the existence of God through the logic of cause and effect. By using the logic that the universe could not have come into existence without the first cause, which is God, one can attain the Knowledge of Yaqin about the existence of God.

Related verse: In the Qur'an, Allah says: “Verily, if you had known with sure

knowledge (ilm yaqin), you would indeed have seen the hell of Jahim.” (QS. At-Takatsur: 5-6)

Ainul Yaqin (Faith Through Sight)

Ainul Yaqin is belief gained through direct experience or witnessing something for real. In Islamic philosophy, this relates to empirical knowledge, which is knowledge gained through sensory experience. Someone who is in the presence of tangible evidence will have a stronger belief than just through intellectual knowledge.

An example in Islamic Philosophy: Al-Ghazali in his search for truth, after going through skepticism towards rational knowledge, attained Ainul Yaqin through a deeper mystical experience of divine truth. Related verse: The Qur'an also mentions this level of belief when it says: “Then you will indeed see it with your own eyes (ainul yaqin).” (QS. At-Takatsur: 7)

Haqq Yaqin (Absolute Faith)

Haqq Yaqin is the highest level of belief, where one attains absolute certainty through profound direct experience. This belief is not based on mere knowledge or sight, but on an ultimate and thorough experience. In Islamic philosophy, this is known as intuitive knowledge, where the truth is experienced directly by a person.

Examples in Islamic Philosophy: Ibn Arabi, a Sufi philosopher, explains that through mystical experience, a Sufi can achieve a direct understanding of the nature of God. Haqq Yaqin is the stage where one not only sees, but also experiences the divine reality directly.

Related verse: The Qur'an mentions Haqq Yaqin in the context of ultimate belief: “Verily, this is indeed a haqiqi belief (haqq yaqin).” (QS. Al-Haqqah: 51)

The concepts of Ilmu Yaqin, Ainul Yaqin, and Haqq Yaqin are not only a spiritual foundation, but also have deep meaning in Islamic Philosophy, especially in epistemology. They describe the stages of knowledge development, starting from rational knowledge (Ilmu Yaqin), empirical experience (Ainul Yaqin), to ultimate experience (Haqq Yaqin). The spiritual goal in Islam is to achieve the most perfect belief about Allah through deep inner experience.

Relevance of Correspondence and Coherence Theory in Islamic Truth

The correspondence theory has strong relevance to the concept of truth in Islam, particularly in terms of alignment between revelation and reality. In Islam, Allah's revelation is considered absolute truth, in harmony with the reality of existence and the laws of nature. This alignment can be seen in the verses of the Qur'an, which frequently invite humans to contemplate the universe as signs

(ayat) of God's existence and truth.

For example, the command to "read" the world and creation in Surah Al-Alaq can be seen as a form of correspondence between revelation and reality. Verses that describe natural phenomena, such as the alternation of day and night or the creation of humans, serve as evidence of the correspondence between the knowledge found in revelation and objective reality.

The coherence theory also finds its relevance in the Islamic understanding of truth. In the Islamic tradition, the system of theology and Islamic law is built upon the coherent relationship between revelation, logic, and human reason. Truth in Islam must be consistent and harmonious among the sources of knowledge, whether it be revelation or reason. For instance, the principles of Shariah must align with the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah and be in harmony with rational principles accepted in Islamic tradition.

Islamic philosophers such as Al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd attempted to integrate rationality and revelation in their views of truth, thus producing a coherent theological system. In Al-Ghazali's perspective, for example, truth can be achieved through a combination of revelation and reason, where no contradiction should exist between the two.

5. Conclusion

The relevance of the correspondence and coherence theories to the concept of truth in Islam highlights the dynamic relationship between philosophical concepts and Islamic teachings. In the Islamic perspective, truth is not only understood as alignment with external reality (as emphasized by the correspondence theory) but must also reflect logical and theological consistency within the Islamic belief system, as explained by the coherence theory. This approach demonstrates the integration of rational thought and divine revelation. The correspondence theory in Islam emphasizes the importance of alignment between revelation and the reality of nature. This can be seen in many verses of the Qur'an, which invite humans to contemplate the signs of Allah in the universe as evidence of the truth of His revelation. This approach underscores the correspondence between divine messages and the empirical facts that can be observed. Meanwhile, the coherence theory emphasizes the importance of harmony among the elements within the Islamic belief system. Revelation, reason, and Sharia law must be consistent with one another to create a complete understanding. This harmony ensures that Islamic beliefs are not only theologically relevant but also rational and applicable in daily life. By combining these two approaches, Islam offers a comprehensive framework for understanding truth, making it relevant both in spiritual and intellectual contexts.

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