

# Constructing an Islamic-Based Medical Worldview

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## Abstract

While many muslim majority countries have launched initiatives such as Islamic input in medical curriculum, *Ibadah-Friendly Hospitals* and *Shariah-Compliant Hospitals* to embed Islamic values in healthcare, modern medicine continues to be dominated by secular worldview. This paper argues that the integration of Islamic principles into medicine has largely been superficial because it is not founded upon an Islamic worldview (*tasawwur*). The result is worldview fragmentation, what may be called *conceptual chaos* between Islamic creeds and medical practice. This study constructs an Islamic-based medical worldview through qualitative research and document analysis. The framework reconstructs the foundations of medicine around seven key elements, that is Islamic creed (tauhidic), role (*khilafah*), knowledge, worship, ethics, God presence (*Ihsan*), and purpose. This study propose *tasawwur* as the foundation layer above existing hospital initiatives, forming a three-tier model that integrates worldview, regulation, and operation. This paper concludes that genuine Islamization of medicine must begin with worldview reconstruction rather than ethical or operational addition.

## 1. Introduction

Despite impressive advancements in medical technology and service delivery, modern medicine remains shaped by a western-secular worldview (Lemoine, 2013). This worldview derived from enlightenment rationalism and materialism. Within this paradigm, health is defined through biological mechanisms, while metaphysical and spiritual realities are deemed non-scientific. Muslim practitioners educated in such systems often find themselves negotiating between two incompatible paradigms, the biomedical and the Islamic creed. The foundation of medical practice is still derived from western-secular worldview despite many Islamic campaigns or slogans used to justify otherwise.

Malaysia has introduced several initiatives to integrate Islamic principles into healthcare practice, such as the inclusion of Islamic input in medical curricula, the *Ibadah-Friendly Hospital* model, and the *Shariah-Compliant Hospital* framework (Shariff & Rahman, 2016). These initiatives represent significant steps toward embedding Islamic ethics in medical settings. However, their implementation largely remains at the procedural and managerial levels, emphasizing ritual facilitation, staff training, and policy compliance with *shariah* principles. What remains unaddressed is the epistemological and worldview reconstruction of medicine itself. As a result, the fundamental assumptions underpinning modern medicine and its understanding of the human being, knowledge, and the nature of healing continue to reflect a predominantly secular orientation

Islamic principles thus appear only as add-ons, attached to a pre-existing western-secular framework. This additive rather than reconstructive integration produces worldview chaos. An Islamic symbols and terminologies are applied to a fundamentally secular system. To resolve this, the Islamic-based medical worldview framework is proposed that restores medicine to its tauhidic roots, harmonizing revelation (*wahy*) and reason (*'aql*).

## 2. Literature Review

In this section, the modern medical worldview is examined alongside the Islamic perspective. A worldview serves as the foundational lens through which a civilization perceives reality; from this perception arise its ethical principles, moral norms, and systems of value. The discussion will therefore focus on the Islamic worldview (*tasawwur Islam*) and demonstrate how it differs fundamentally from modern paradigms. These contrasting foundations result in distinct interpretations of key concepts such as development, progress, and the purpose of human life.

### 2.1 Worldview of Modern Medicine

According to Smart (1983), a worldview encompasses the beliefs, feelings, and mental constructs within an individual that function as the driving force behind social and moral continuity and change. In essence, a worldview comprises all elements within human consciousness that operate as a motivating or regulating mechanism guiding one's life across its various dimensions.

The scientific sphere has been profoundly influenced by two dominant worldviews; the Newtonian and the Darwinian (Pellegrino, 2006). Both worldviews continue to act as the philosophical foundations of the modern science. Newtonian worldview conceives the universe as a vast mechanical system, while the Darwinian worldview envisions the biological realm as a continuum of evolving entities. Together, such scientific worldviews are characterized by their underlying assumptions and philosophical commitments regarding the nature of reality and the appropriate methods for investigating it.

Modern medicine emerged as a product of the scientific revolution, grounded in the principles of observation, experimentation, and rational inquiry (Scott, et al. 2009). This revolution brought shift in a worldview and also an ontological transformation in how reality was understood. Nature and by extension, the human body came to be viewed as a mechanistic system governed by physical causality rather than divine or teleological purpose.

According to Shogar (2019), two of the most influential figures in medical philosophy are Rene Descartes (d. 1650) and Immanuel Kant (d. 1804). Descartes extended the mechanistic method of the physical sciences to the study of human beings, particularly in medicine, thereby reducing the human body to a mechanical entity that operates systematically according to causal laws. Kant, on the other hand, advanced a metaphysical framework of moral philosophy that emphasized human autonomy and freedom, extending ethical considerations into medical practice and research. Consequently, this model is often referred to as the Cartesian–Kantian framework, reflecting the combined influence of both thinkers on the worldview, epistemological and ethical foundations of modern medical philosophy.

Cartesian reductionism conceptualizes the human body as a mechanical system, functioning according to specific physical laws, and views medical practitioners as technicians whose role is to repair this biological machine. This reductionist perspective has become the dominant framework in contemporary medical science, often referred to as the clinical medical paradigm (Scott, et al. 2009). A defining characteristic of this model is its exclusion of the metaphysical dimensions of human existence such as the spirit (*ruh*) and soul (*nafs*) focusing instead solely on the physical body, which is treated as a machine operating within empirically measurable systems. In contrast, the Islamic worldview perceives the human being as an integrated entity composed of body (*jasad*), soul, and spirit, all functioning harmoniously under divine guidance (Rathor & Shah, 2019)

### 2.2 Islamic Worldview (Tasawur Islam)

In the Islamic worldview, the central or core concept which permeates all aspects of life is *tauhid* or the unity of God (Din, 1992). The essence of Islam lies in absolute submission to God, the only Creator, Sustainer, and Judge of all reality. Islamic worldview means the total framework of belief, knowledge, and values derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah that shapes how a Muslim perceives existence (*wujud*), life, purpose, and destiny (Hassan, 1993; Hanapi, 2012). According to Al-Attas (2005), the Islamic worldview is not merely a set of beliefs, but a vision of reality and truth that emerges from revelation, and it defines the position of God, man, and the universe (Din, 1992). A Muslim is one who aligns every aspect of life with divine guidance, acknowledging God as both the ultimate source and the final purpose of all existence. Such submission constitutes a perpetual act of worship and devotion.

Islam, as a divine system of life envisions an ideal society whose foundation is rooted in God-consciousness (*taqwa*) and spirituality. It calls for a continuous process of moral renewal and preservation of values through the institution of *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*, the enjoining of what is right and the forbidding of what is wrong at both the individual and collective levels (Salleh, 2003). When this moral responsibility is neglected, society undergoes gradual erosion of its core values. The Qur'an says;

*"You are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong and believing in God" (Ali 'Imran, 3:110).*

This understanding is emphasized by Qutb (1995), Islamic worldview is a dynamic ideology that guides social, political and personal life.

Within the Islamic worldview, humans simultaneously fulfill two interrelated roles; *khalifah* (stewardship) on earth and 'abd (servant) of God (Hanapi, 2017 & Salleh, 2003). The role of *khalifah* signifies that the natural world, the universe and all its resources has been entrusted to humankind for responsible use and stewardship. Table 1 illustrated the the role of human in the foundation of Islamic worldview. Conversely, the role of 'abd affirms that humans possess no autonomous authority or absolute right beyond the will of God. These two roles are inherently complementary and must be lived concurrently, neglecting either dimension prevents a person from fulfilling the true purpose of their existence. Since medicine is an essential aspect of human life, it is imperative that its practice and development follow the principles and directions ordained by Allah SWT.

**Table 1** Elements of human dimensions in Islamic worldview

Num.	Foundational Islamic Worldview
1	God as Creator
2	Man as Servant & <i>Khalifah</i>
3	Universe as Creation

### 2.3 Islam and Medicine

During the height of the Islamic golden age, when the Muslim world led global progress in science and philosophy, renowned figures such as Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Ibn Rushd (Averroes) made enduring intellectual contributions that bridged philosophy and medical science (Shogar, 2019). Unfortunately, with the rise of Western dominance in modern medicine, this unifying and holistic approach characteristic of the Islamic tradition was abandoned. The emergence of the secular scientific paradigm in the West ushered in an era that separated medicine from its spiritual and metaphysical foundations.

Islam does not oppose scientific inquiry. The Qur'an explicitly encourages observation, reflection, and investigation of the natural world. The key distinction lies in the understanding of worldview and epistemology. Islam integrates empirical inquiry with revelation, whereas the modern worldview isolates knowledge from divine guidance. Consequently, the Islamic worldview envisions science as a means to fulfill human stewardship under God, rather than as a tool for material domination (Bakar, 1999).

Expanding from this perspective, medical practice is not a mechanical enterprise but a moral and spiritual trust (*amanah*) that reflects humanity's dual role as servant and *khalifah* of God. The medical practitioner task is not only to restore physiological function but also to nurture the soul and preserve moral equilibrium in both the individual and society.

The Holy Qur'an employs the term "disease" (*maradh*) more than ten times, referring to both physical ailments and moral or spiritual illnesses. However, the majority of these references concern moral sickness, particularly the "disease of the heart." From the Islamic perspective, a truly healthy and meaningful life requires freedom not only from bodily disease but, more importantly, from the moral and spiritual corruption that weakens one's faith and character.

As a result, a sound Islamic-based medical worldview is indispensable for cultivating effective moral values that guide individuals toward holistic health and righteous living. In this regard, the principles of Islamic medical philosophy are inseparable from the Islamic worldview. The goal is to promote health by addressing the metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical dimensions underlying medical research and practice. Unlike Cartesian reductionism, which separates science from metaphysics, the Islamic conception integrates empirical inquiry with revelation, recognizing both as complementary sources of knowledge bestowed by God. Hence, medicine in Islam becomes an act of worship (*ibadah*), and healing an expression of divine mercy (*rahmah*).

### 2.4 Integration of Islamic Input in Modern Medicine

The emerging global order will no longer be defined by Western dominance but by the resurgence of multiple civilizations, particularly those of Islam, India, and China. In this multipolar world, Western norms will cease to function as universal standards; instead, each civilization will reclaim its intellectual, moral, and cultural heritage, formulating original paradigms of progress, justice, and human flourishing. Within this context, Islamic civilization holds a distinguished legacy in bridging philosophy and medical science, offering a holistic and integrative approach that unites reason, revelation, and ethics in the pursuit of knowledge and well-being.

Malaysia is among the pioneer in integrating modern medicine with Islamic values. For instance, the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) has implemented a holistic personal and professional development framework known as the Islamic Input in Medical Program (IIMP) (Yahaya, 2018). This program

running in parallel to the conventional medical curriculum. The program is designed to produce a new generation of physicians who not only demonstrate clinical competence and professional excellence but also embody the ethical conduct (*akhlaq*) and moral integrity expected of exemplary Muslims. Another prominent Islamic University in Malaysia; Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), integrate Islamic input with modern medical education. Its primary objective is to produce physicians who practice medicine in harmony with Islamic, moral, and ethical values. Courses such as *halaqah* studies and fundamental Islamic knowledge (FIK) such as history of medicine in Islam, science and medicine in the Qur'an and Sunnah, *akhlak* and *tasawwuf*, Islamic Jurisprudence and medical ethics, and *fiqh* issues are incorporated throughout the pre-clinical and clinical phases of study (Jamilah, 2014). Additionally, students are encouraged to memorize and internalize selected Qur'anic verses across the program, fostering the application of Qur'anic principles in both daily conduct and clinical practice.

Another prominent steps in integrating Islam in medical practice is the introduction of the *Ibadah-Friendly Hospital* (IFH). According to Hammad, et al. (2018), this concept has been widely recognized as an effective means of translating Islamic values into daily medical practice. Its implementation model is adaptable and can be applied in diverse contexts, including both *muslim*-majority and *non-muslim* countries. The Ministry of Health Malaysia (MOH) officially adopted the IFH initiative in 2014, marking a significant milestone in its institutional recognition. This endorsement signified the MOH's commitment to formalizing IFH as an official national program within the healthcare system. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, the *Majelis Upaya Kesehatan Islam Seluruh Indonesia* (MUKISI), in collaboration with the Indonesian Council of Ulema (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia*, MUI), advanced this effort further by establishing the *Shariah Hospital Accreditation Program* under MUKISI in 2016 (Hammad, et al, 2018).

Another approach to embedding Islamic values in medical practice is through the standardization of medical quality systems in accordance with Shariah principles. In Malaysia, *SIRIM Berhad*, a body appointed by the department of standards Malaysia, serves as the national agency responsible for developing, distributing, and certifying standards. As the country's representative for the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), SIRIM, in collaboration with various government agencies and higher education institutions, developed the *Shariah-based Quality Management System* (MS1900:2014). This standard provides general guidelines for implementing a *Shariah-compliant* quality management framework. This MS 1900:2014 framework ensuring that organizational practices align with Islamic ethical and moral values. Many hospitals in Malaysia has been awarded as *shariah* compliance hospital once it fulfill all the requirements.

Despite these advancements, questions remain concerning the foundational worldview of medicine. Contemporary medical philosophy continues to rest upon a positivist and materialist framework, in which the conception of knowledge privileges empirical observation while dismissing revelation as a legitimate source of truth. This paper argues that for these institutional initiatives to achieve genuine Islamization, they must rest upon an Islamic medical worldview.

### 3. Methodology

The data collection method employed in this study is library research. More specifically, the data sources are categorized into three main groups. The first group consists of primary sources, namely the Qur'an dan hadith. In Islam, the Qur'an and hadith serve as the ultimate sources of guidance for all branches of knowledge and the foundation in every aspect of life. Therefore, it is natural that muslims are called to govern all dimensions of human existence in accordance with these divine principles. The second group includes works related *tasawur* Islam, while the third group comprises writings on Islamic-based medical worldview. As the data were collected from various sources, the study employs the content analysis method to systematically examine and interpret the materials.

### 4. Findings: Islamic-Based Medical Worldview

This study focuses on the Islamic worldview in medicine, begins with the formation of Islamic worldview. It is a comprehensive way of life grounded in the Qur'an and hadith, which serves as the foundation for constructing an Islamic scientific paradigm. Accordingly, the research examines literature that articulates the core principles and philosophical foundations of Islam, emphasizing distinctive perspectives within the medical field.

#### 4.1 Elements of Islamic-Based Medical Worldview

The elements refer to the core components that constitute the Islamic-based medical worldview . These elements serve as the fundamental building blocks, much like the essential materials or bricks used in constructing a solid structure, upon which the entire framework of *tasawwur* is established. There are seven interdependent elements that highlight the Islamic-based medical worldview.

According to Hanapi (2012), the core elements of *tasawwur* in Islamic-based development as derived from the Qur'an is *al-Tawhid* (the Oneness of Allah), *al-'Ubudiyah* (servitude or devotion to Allah), *khilafah fi al-ard* (vicegerency on earth), *mawarid al-tabi'i* (natural resources), *al-azminah* which encompasses the dimensions of

the spiritual realm, the worldly life, and the hereafter (*'alam al-ruh, 'alam al-dunya, wa 'alam al-akhirah*) and finally, *mardatillah* (the ultimate attainment of Allah's pleasure).

The study by Wan Mokhtar (2016) identifies several elements of the Islamic worldview derived from the hadith, namely: *al-Rabbaniyyah* (divinity or God-centeredness), *al-insaniyyah* (humanity), *al-jam' bayn al-thabat wa al-murunah* (the balance between constancy and flexibility), *al-wasatiyyah* (moderation), and *al-syumuliyyah* (comprehensiveness). The integration of these elements with those proposed by Hanapi (2012 & 2017) forms the core principles of development grounded in the Qur'an and Hadith. Together, these principles serve as a guiding framework in forming islamic-based medical worldview.

Al-Ghazali (2005) places *tauhid* (the Oneness of God) as the most fundamental element in Islamic-based development. Without *tauhid*, such development would be empty and devoid of spiritual essence. Accordingly, Tauhid serves as the central foundation upon which the Islamic-based medical worldview is built. This perspective is further supported by Din (1992), Al-Attas (2005), and Bakar (1998), all of whom emphasize *tauhid* as the core epistemological and ontological principle in the Islamic worldview.

Another essential element is the ethics and character (*akhlak*), which serves as a key determinant in achieving true Islamic-based worldview. The importance of *akhlak* is firmly rooted in both the Qur'an and the Hadith, as illustrated in the following verses and prophetic traditions:

*"Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example [to follow]." (al-Ahzab, 33:21)*

*"Indeed, I was sent only to perfect noble character." (Narrated by Ahmad, Hadith no. 8952)*

These teachings underscore that moral excellence is not merely a complementary aspect of faith but rather its defining essence, shaping both individual conduct and societal well-being.

Element of role define human beings as servants and *khalifah* of Allah. This element underscores the importance of understanding the divine purpose of human existence as ordained by Allah SWT, as stated in the Qur'an;

*"And I did not create jinn and mankind except to worship Me." (al-Dhariyat, 51:56).*

According to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (2010), the purpose of Allah's creation of humankind, jinn, and all other beings on earth is to worship Him. Allah did not create creation without commands and prohibitions, but rather to fulfill His divine purpose. Furthermore, Allah SWT designates human beings as *khalifah* of the earth, responsible for managing its resources and ensuring the well-being of creation. As *khalifah*, humans are entrusted with maintaining justice, prosperity, and harmony in the world while fulfilling their role as devoted servants of Allah. Islamic life is purposeful and has some end goals. Current development metrics miss an all-important Islamic reality expressed in the Qur'an.

Another key elements is *'ilm* (knowledge). Knowledge within the *tasawwur* of medical framework encompasses two primary components. The first component is *fard 'ayn* (compulsory) knowledge, which provides the essential foundation for understanding one's faith as a Muslim. The second component is *fard kifayah* knowledge, which represents the integration of revealed knowledge (*naqli*) and rational knowledge (*'aqli*). (Salleh, 2013). According to Al-Attas (2005) and Bakar (1992), this integration must remain within the framework of *tauhid* (Divine Unity) to prevent the *confusion of knowledge* that arises when revelation and reason are separated. The knowledge element, therefore, plays a crucial role in enabling human beings to attain holistic well-being, encompassing the development of civilization, spiritual strength, and ultimate success in the Hereafter (al-falah al-ukhrawi). Table 2 summarizes all the 7 elements and highlight the implications of these elements in medicine.

**Table 1** 7 Elements of Islamic-based medical worldview

Element	Conceptual Meaning	Implications in Medicine
Tauhid (Unity of God)	The ultimate reality and source of life; unifies science and spirituality.	Healing is divine trust; medical knowledge is a form of worship.
Role ( <i>Khilafah</i> )	Human beings as stewards ( <i>khalifah</i> ) responsible for preserving life and justice.	Physicians act as trustees, accountable to God and society.
Knowledge ( <i>Ilm</i> )	Integration of revealed and acquired knowledge.	Curricula must combine biomedical inquiry with spiritual epistemology.

Element	Conceptual Meaning	Implications in Medicine
<i>Ibadah</i> (Worship)	Conscious submission to Allah in all actions.	Clinical service and research become acts of worship when intention is correct.
Akhlak (Ethics)	Moral excellence and compassion.	Medical ethics guided by Qur'anic principles and prophetic example.
<i>Ihsan</i> (God Presence)	Performing actions with sincerity and beauty.	Spiritual intelligence cultivated in patient interaction and empathy.
Purpose (Maqasid)	Preservation of life, faith, intellect, progeny, and wealth.	Health defined as holistic well-being in alignment with <i>Maqasid al-Shari'ah</i> .

## 4.2 Conceptual Framework of Islamic-Based Medical Worldview

The current medical system in many muslim societies continues to rest upon a positivist and materialist foundation (Shagor, 2019). When Islamic concepts are inserted into this secular framework, they often function merely as ethical ornaments or symbolic additions, rather than as structural principles that shape the worldview of medicine. Consequently, Muslim medical institutions frequently exhibit a form of "tasawur chaos" an inner conflict in which practitioners compartmentalize faith and science. This produces cognitive discord, as the spiritual purpose of healing becomes detached from professional identity. Therefore, genuine integration requires a reconstructing medicine at the level of worldview rather than at the level of procedure.

In the Islamic-based medical worldview, the *Maqasid* framework provides a theological and ethical orientation that aligns clinical practice with divine purpose. *Maqasid* represent the aims of *Shariah*. *Maqasid* is to secure human welfare (*maslahah*) and prevent harm (*mafsadah*). Classical scholars such as al-Ghazali, al-Shatibi, and Ibn Ashur articulated that these objectives revolve around the preservation of five essential values (*al-daruriyyat al-khams*) namely religion (*din*), life (*nafs*), intellect (*'aql*), progeny (*nasl*), and wealth (*mal*) (Qadir, 2017). Therefore, it is not merely a technical or empirical discipline but a moral enterprise designed to protect and enhance these five essentials.

This study focuses on developing an Islamic-based medical worldview that departs from the Western secular paradigm. The proposed conceptual framework comprises seven interdependent elements that collectively reconstruct medical knowledge and practice within the holistic structure of the Islamic worldview.

## 5. Conclusion

The Islamic-based medical worldview redefines health and healing through the principle of *tauḥid*, integrating body, mind, and soul within a unified spiritual framework. Unlike the secular biomedical model that isolates physiology from spirituality, the Islamic paradigm perceives health as a dynamic balance between the physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of life.

This worldview derives its foundations from revelation, complemented by reason and empirical observation. It views medical knowledge as purposeful and ethically charged. The Islamic-based medical worldview aligns with *maqasid al-shari'ah* to preserve life, dignity, and justice. Thus, medical practice becomes an act of *'ibadah*, infused with compassionate role as *khalifah*, *ihsan*, and *akhlaq*. Within this worldview, the medical practitioner is both healer and moral agent. The concept of healing itself is seen as *shifa'* from Allah. Ultimately, the Islamic medical worldview aspires to restore harmony between science and faith.

Future research should focus on the application and operationalization of this worldview within modern healthcare institutions. This includes developing curriculum, ethical guidelines, and clinical frameworks that embody *tauḥidic* principles. These domains need to be studied empirically to assess their impact on patient outcomes, physician well-being, and professional integrity. Interdisciplinary studies linking Islamic epistemology, medical education, and bioethics could further clarify how Islamic-based medical worldview nurtures holistic care and moral resilience amid global healthcare challenges.

In an age of rapid technological advancement and moral uncertainty, the Islamic-based medical worldview offers a moral compass and ontological anchor. It rehumanizes medicine by returning its purpose to the service of God and humanity, balancing scientific progress with faith, ethics, and compassion. Thus, it positioning itself as a transformative framework for contemporary medical thought and practice

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## Conflict of Interest

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## Author Contribution

Mohamad Zaki Ibrahim contributed significantly to this article through the writing and content analysis of secondary data, as well as the development of the Islamic-based medical worldview framework. Meanwhile, Mohd. Shukri Hanapi provided contributions in the detailed about concept of Islamic worldview and the final review of the entire article.

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