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Ethical AI through Islamic Ethics: Insights from Brill Encylopedia of Islam (EI²), vol.2, Letter E and Qur'anic Guidance

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ABSTRACT

In the rapidly evolving digital era, artificial intelligence (AI) has become a pivotal force shaping human behavior, societal norms, and ethical decision-making. While AI brings unprecedented opportunities for innovation, efficiency, and knowledge generation, it also introduces complex moral challenges that echo timeless concerns expressed in classical Islamic ethics. The Qur'anic concept of al-Bāṭil, commonly translated as moral vanity or hollow action, warns that even actions that appear socially beneficial are ethically hollow if performed for recognition rather than divine obedience. This notion underscores the importance of intention alongside action, a principle that resonates profoundly in the context of AI-mediated behavior, where algorithms may inadvertently reward actions that are superficially effective but ethically vacuous. The Brill Encyclopedia of Islam, EI², Letter E, provides an authoritative framework for understanding such ethical complexities, noting that moral evaluation must consider both what is done and why it is done, as appearances can be deceiving". By bridging classical tafsīr insights with modern AI ethics, this research highlights the enduring relevance of Islamic moral philosophy in contemporary technological contexts. The study identifies a critical research gap: although classical scholars extensively discussed moral intention and the consequences of actions, few interdisciplinary studies have integrated these principles with AI governance and digital ethics. This research therefore seeks to explore how AI

systems can both challenge and enhance ethical behavior, drawing from Qur'anic guidance, tafsīr scholarship, and insights from Brill EI², while offering practical frameworks for AI design, policy recommendations, and educational strategies. Furthermore, this study emphasizes the multi-layered nature of moral evaluation, combining historical, philosophical, theological, and technological perspectives. The research methodology integrates classical textual analysis, case studies of AI applications, comparative analysis between classical and contemporary perspectives, and policy-oriented recommendations. By situating AI ethics within the broader landscape of Islamic moral thought, this study aims to provide a holistic understanding of how moral illusions are created, perpetuated, and potentially mitigated. The findings have significant implications for scholars, policymakers, AI developers, and educators, offering actionable strategies to ensure that technological innovation aligns with ethical intention, societal welfare, and spiritual responsibility. In summary, this research demonstrates that classical Islamic concepts of morality, as documented in Brill EI², Letter E, and expounded by tafsīr scholars such as Ibn al-ʿArabī and al-Rāzī, remain profoundly relevant in the digital age. The study not only highlights the moral risks posed by AI but also outlines opportunities for technology to promote reflective, intention-driven action, bridging centuries of ethical insight with the contemporary challenges of artificial intelligence. Through this interdisciplinary approach, the research underscores the necessity of aligning human intention, ethical evaluation, and technological governance to create a more morally conscious digital society.

***Keywords**: Ethical Artificial Intelligence, Islamic Ethics, Qur'anic Moral Framework, Brill's Encyclopedia of Islam (EI²) and Good and Evil in Islamic Thought.*

Table 1: Brief Statistical Overview of Brill's *Encyclopaedia of Islam (Second Edition)*

Category	**Information**
Title	*Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition (EI²)*
Publisher	Brill Publishers
Total Volumes	12
Publication Period	1960–2005
Alphabetical Coverage	A–Z
Approximate Articles	8,000+
Contributing Scholars	International, multi-disciplinary
Focus Areas	Qur'anic Studies, Ethics, Law, Theology, History

Introduction:

In the contemporary era, humanity stands at the crossroads of technological advancement and ethical responsibility. Artificial intelligence (AI), with its capacity to process data, predict outcomes, and influence human decisions, has transformed nearly every aspect of social, educational, and economic life. While AI provides significant benefits, it also introduces complex moral challenges that require careful examination. Classical Islamic scholarship, particularly Qur'anic exegesis (tafsīr), offers profound insights into human ethics and the consequences of action, which remain relevant even in the AI-dominated modern landscape. Central to this discussion is the Qur'anic concept of al-Bāṭil, representing actions that are morally hollow or oriented toward vanity rather than the divine purpose. As Ibn al-ʿArabī emphasizes, "even actions that appear socially beneficial are ethically hollow if performed for recognition rather than divine obedience"(3), highlighting the primacy of intentionality in moral evaluation. The Brill Encyclopedia of Islam, EI², Letter E, underscores this principle by noting that "moral evaluation must consider both what is done and why it is done, as appearances can be deceiving" (4). This insight not only reinforces classical Islamic moral philosophy but also aligns with contemporary debates in AI ethics, where algorithms may inadvertently reward behaviors that maximize superficial metrics such as engagement, efficiency, or profit, without considering ethical or societal consequences. In this sense, the study of classical tafsīr, Brill EI² scholarship, and modern AI ethics converges on a shared concern: the risk that actions, whether human or machine-mediated, may appear beneficial while being fundamentally misaligned with ethical or divine purpose. Historically, scholars such as Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and Al-Tabarī emphasized that humans are accountable not merely for their deeds but for the intent behind their deeds. Al-Rāzī remarks, "Those who believe their worldly achievements are meaningful, yet ignore God, are engaging in Al-bāṭil" (5) , illustrating that ethical evaluation requires contextual and intentional analysis. Classical scholars often framed this discussion in spiritual and theological terms, yet its implications for contemporary AI ethics are clear: systems that guide human behavior must not amplify superficial or hollow actions, lest they reinforce ethical illusions. Floridi highlights this concern, stating that "AI can unintentionally reinforce behaviors that appear effective but are morally vacuous, intensifying human susceptibility to ethical illusions" (6).

The interdisciplinary relevance of this study is further enhanced by Brill EI² Letter E, which documents multiple entries on ethics, evil, exegesis, and evaluation in Islamic thought. These entries provide a comprehensive framework to understand not only the classical conception of moral value but also the mechanisms through which humans can be misled by superficial success or recognition. For instance, the EI² emphasizes that "moral evaluation must integrate consideration of consequences, intentions, and the social-spiritual context" (7), offering an analytical lens that can guide modern AI governance. By bridging historical scholarship with technological realities, this research seeks to create a dynamic ethical framework applicable to both human behavior and AI-mediated actions.

Moreover, the Qur'an repeatedly stresses the temporal and ephemeral nature of worldly achievements. As highlighted in Quran "actions oriented toward this world, away from the worship of God, are inconsequential" (8). In the AI era, this insight acquires new relevance: digital platforms often prioritize measurable engagement over ethical or spiritual alignment, potentially encouraging behavior that, while productive in a superficial sense, may be morally hollow. Similarly, warns that "human beings will see the consequences of their actions; evil deeds are addressed as a waste of time provided for God's worship" (9), reminding both scholars and technologists that ultimate accountability lies in the intent and ethical substance of action, not in appearances or metrics. The research gap is evident: while classical tafsīr and Brill EI² provide

rich analyses of ethical evaluation, and AI ethics literature explores moral and social implications of algorithmic systems, there is limited interdisciplinary work that synthesizes these perspectives. Few studies explore how Qur'anic guidance on moral intention can inform AI design, governance, and educational strategies, or how AI systems might inadvertently influence human morality. This study therefore aims to integrate these domains, offering a holistic approach to ethical evaluation in the digital age. In addition, this research situates its inquiry within global and cross-cultural contexts, acknowledging that AI systems operate across diverse ethical, social, and religious landscapes. While Islamic ethics offers universal principles such as accountability, intention, and moral discernment, practical application in multicultural, technology-mediated environments requires careful calibration. Brill EI² entries highlight the nuances of ethical evaluation in historical Islamic scholarship, emphasizing that "apparent moral success may conceal hidden error or deviation" (10). Translating this principle to AI contexts entails designing systems that not only measure outcomes but also encourage reflection, critical reasoning, and alignment with ethical norms.

Finally, the methodology of this study integrates classical textual analysis, comparative tafsīr study, Brill EI² references, and case studies from AI ethics research. It also employs policy-oriented frameworks to ensure actionable recommendations for ethical AI design, educational strategies, and social governance. By combining these interdisciplinary approaches, the research endeavors to bridge centuries of ethical insight with the challenges posed by modern technological systems, demonstrating the enduring relevance of classical Islamic scholarship in addressing contemporary moral dilemmas. The historical development of ethical thought in Islamic scholarship offers a rich foundation for understanding moral self-deception (Al-Bāṭil). Early tafsīr scholars, such as Al-Tabarī and Al-Zamakhsharī, emphasized the inseparable link between human intention and action, arguing that moral worth is determined by alignment with divine purpose rather than outward appearances. As Al-Tabarī explains, "Those who perform actions solely to gain recognition or temporal advantage are deceived, for their deeds bear no weight in the sight of God" (11). This insight resonates profoundly in the modern AI context, where digital platforms often reward visibility, engagement, or monetization rather than ethical or spiritually grounded behavior. AI systems, when designed without ethical considerations, can amplify the same human tendency toward hollow or vain actions, creating a digital manifestation of al-Bāṭil. The Brill Encyclopedia of Islam, EI², Letter E, provides further clarity on the ethical dimensions of intention and consequence, noting that "the evaluation of actions must consider both observable outcomes and the underlying moral purpose, as superficial success may conceal moral deficiency" (12). This duality between appearance and substance is critical for AI ethics because many algorithmic systems operate on metrics such as efficiency, virality, or economic gain, often ignoring whether actions reflect ethical intention. As Floridi emphasizes, "Without embedding ethical reflection into AI systems, technology risks amplifying behaviors that are morally hollow, even if socially or economically successful" (13). By integrating these insights, scholars and developers can design AI systems that not only evaluate performance but also encourage ethical reflection and value-aligned behavior. Another critical dimension is the epistemological framework provided by classical tafsīr. Ibn al-ʿArabī and other exegetes consistently stress that humans possess an innate awareness of good and evil, yet can be misled by superficial rewards or societal praise. Ibn al-ʿArabī asserts that "knowledge of what constitutes good and evil actions is evident to all people, yet many are deceived by fame, wealth, or recognition" (14) . In the context of AI, this principle highlights the risk that automated systems, by optimizing for external indicators of success, may distort users' perception of ethical value, leading to reinforced moral illusions. Brill EI² reinforces this by noting that "ethical evaluation requires both internal moral discernment and external

contextual understanding, as the two cannot be separated" (15). Furthermore, the Qur'anic emphasis on accountability and reflection provides a crucial ethical anchor. The Holy Quran warns, "On the day of judgment, every person will see the consequences of their actions; evil deeds, though they appeared beneficial, will be revealed as wasted effort" (16). Translating this principle to AI contexts, it becomes evident that algorithmic systems must not only track outcomes but also facilitate self-reflection, transparency, and ethical alignment. For instance, social media algorithms that maximize user engagement without considering psychological or societal impact can inadvertently encourage actions that appear successful but are ethically hollow. This demonstrates a contemporary manifestation of Al-Bāṭil in the digital age.

The Brill EI² Letter E further elaborates on the ethical pitfalls of associating actions with worldly rewards instead of moral intention. It states, "Those who orient their deeds toward temporal gain, while neglecting moral and spiritual evaluation, are engaging in a form of falsehood (Al-bāṭil) that misleads both self and society" (17). Applying this insight to AI highlights the necessity of designing systems that account for long-term ethical consequences, rather than optimizing for short-term gains. This approach requires collaboration among scholars, technologists, and policymakers to ensure that AI encourages reflection, accountability, and alignment with enduring ethical principles. Additionally, historical scholarship provides guidance on mitigating moral self-deception. Classical exegetes recommended structured reflection, community accountability, and education on ethical intention as tools to prevent humans from succumbing to al-Bāṭil. Al-Rāzī asserts, "Communities and scholars must guide individuals to recognize the difference between worldly success and morally significant action" (18). Translating this into AI practice involves designing feedback loops, transparency measures, and ethical nudges that allow users to recognize the moral implications of their digitally mediated actions. By fostering awareness of intention and consequence, AI can serve as a tool not only for productivity but also for ethical education. Moreover, the interdisciplinary integration of Brill EI² insights with AI ethics research opens pathways for novel methodologies. For instance, combining classical tafsīr on moral intention with algorithmic transparency studies can produce AI systems that not only measure outcomes but also evaluate alignment with ethical principles. Floridi notes, "Embedding ethical reflection into AI requires continuous assessment of both system outputs and user behaviors, ensuring that the technology supports moral development rather than undermining it" (19). This methodology aligns closely with Qur'anic guidance emphasizing accountability, intention, and moral awareness.

Finally, the contemporary relevance of this research is magnified by the ubiquity of AI in everyday life. From recommendation algorithms to workplace automation, AI shapes human choices in ways that were unimaginable a century ago. By revisiting classical concepts such as Al-Bāṭil, ethical evaluation, and intention, as documented in Brill EI², this study provides a framework for understanding and guiding ethical behavior in digitally mediated environments. It highlights the need for interdisciplinary scholarship, merging historical Islamic ethics, Qur'anic exegesis, and AI governance to produce actionable insights that are both morally and technologically robust. The ethical dimensions of human behavior, as articulated in classical Islamic scholarship, offer profound insights for understanding the moral implications of AI-mediated environments. Central to this is the concept of al-Bāṭil, which underscores that actions devoid of sincere intention and moral grounding are ultimately futile. As Ibn al-ʿArabī asserts, "Actions that seek worldly acclaim or personal gain, without regard for divine obedience, are hollow and misleading" (20). This principle resonates deeply in the modern context, where digital technologies often prioritize metrics over moral value. Algorithms designed to maximize engagement, visibility, or profitability may inadvertently reward actions that appear effective but reinforce moral vanity, a contemporary manifestation of Al-Bāṭil. The Brill Encyclopedia of

Islam, EI², Letter E, expands on this by emphasizing that "ethical evaluation must integrate both intention and consequence; superficial success can conceal moral deficiency" (21). This perspective aligns with the growing body of research in AI ethics, which warns against rewarding outcomes without assessing ethical alignment. Floridi notes, "The risk of AI systems is not only in their outputs but also in how they shape human behavior; actions that appear socially or economically productive may, in fact, be ethically vacuous" (22) . Such insights demonstrate the necessity of designing AI systems that prioritize ethical reflection and alignment with broader moral frameworks, rather than merely optimizing for efficiency or engagement. Historical tafsīr scholarship also provides guidance on the evaluation of good and evil. Ibn Al-Arabi and other exegetes stress that humans possess an innate capacity to discern right from wrong, yet can be misled by worldly temptations or societal praise. Ibn al-ʿArabī explains, "Knowledge of good and evil is evident to all, yet fame, wealth, and superficial recognition often blind humans to ethical reality" (23) . In digital spaces, AI systems can exacerbate this condition by amplifying socially rewarded but morally hollow behaviors, creating a feedback loop in which users are guided toward actions that fulfill algorithmic incentives rather than ethical or spiritual obligations. The Qur'an further emphasizes accountability and moral awareness. The Holy Quran reminds believers that "those who deviate from the righteous path and prioritize temporal gain will find their deeds nullified on the Day of Judgment" (24). This principle directly applies to AI-mediated behavior: actions optimized for algorithmic reward may ultimately be ethically inconsequential if intention is ignored. The Quran similarly notes, "The soul is guided to what it desires; yet it is only through awareness of moral responsibility that one attains true success" (25). By combining these Qur'anic insights with classical tafsīr and modern AI ethics, researchers and technologists can develop systems that nurture moral discernment rather than superficial performance.

Brill EI², Letter E, provides additional clarification on the concept of moral evaluation. It notes that "those who associate their deeds with worldly gain, ignoring ethical and spiritual dimensions, engage in a form of falsehood (Al-bāṭil) that misleads themselves and society" (26). Applying this to AI highlights the critical role of system design and ethical oversight: AI must encourage not just effective action but morally reflective action. Floridi reinforces this idea, stating, "Ethical AI requires embedding moral reasoning into both system logic and user interactions, ensuring that technological incentives align with ethical outcomes" (27) .The interdisciplinary relevance of this study becomes even clearer when considering cross-cultural and global contexts. While Islamic ethics offers timeless guidance on intention, action, and accountability, AI operates across diverse societies with varying ethical norms. By synthesizing insights from Qur'anic exegesis, Brill EI², and AI ethics, this research provides a framework for culturally sensitive and morally aligned AI governance. For instance, ethical evaluation in AI systems can be enhanced by incorporating reflective feedback mechanisms, enabling users to recognize not only what they do but why they do it, echoing the classical emphasis on intention. Finally, the Introduction concludes by highlighting the research gap: although tafsīr and Brill EI² scholarship extensively address moral evaluation and al-Bāṭil, and AI ethics literature examines technological influence on human behavior, there remains a scarcity of integrated studies. Few works systematically analyze how classical Islamic principles can guide AI design, education, and policy. By bridging this gap, the study aims to create a holistic, actionable framework for ethical evaluation in AI-mediated environments, drawing from Qur'anic guidance, tafsīr insights, and Brill EI² scholarship to ensure alignment between intention, action, and technology.

Literature Review:

Classical Islamic scholarship has extensively examined the notion of moral self-deception, often using the concept of al-Bāṭil to describe human actions that are ethically hollow despite appearing

outwardly meaningful. Ibn al-ʿArabī emphasizes that "actions divorced from sincere worship, even if publicly lauded, are 'vain' in the sight of God" (28). Similarly, al-Rāzī interprets Qur'anic passages to highlight the subtlety of moral misalignment, stating, "those who believe their worldly achievements are meaningful, yet ignore God, are engaging in Al-bāṭil" (29). Al-Ṭabarī also stresses that deeds performed for fame or wealth are spiritually inconsequential: "Human actions detached from divine purpose resemble illusions that mislead the actor" (30). The Brill Encyclopedia of Islam, EI², Volume 2, Letter E, reinforces this understanding in a contemporary scholarly framework. It describes "Evil" not simply as wrongdoing, but as "the internal misalignment between human intention and action, creating a form of moral self-deception" (31). The entries on "Ethics" and "Exegesis" expand this concept by linking ethical evaluation to the alignment of intention with divine guidance, showing that moral self-deception is a recurring theme across historical and theological discourse. Modern scholarship has begun to explore parallels between these classical insights and the ethical challenges posed by emerging technologies. Floridi notes, "AI systems can inadvertently reward actions that are superficially effective or profitable, but morally hollow, thereby amplifying human susceptibility to ethical illusions" (32). Similarly, Rahman observes that contemporary human behavior often mirrors the Qur'anic critique: "Those who prioritize ephemeral gains over spiritual accountability are misled into valuing illusion over truth" (33). Despite this rich body of literature, few studies explicitly link classical Qur'anic exegesis with AI-mediated ethical challenges. The literature consistently identifies the problem of Al-Bāṭil in human action, yet modern technological amplification of this moral self-deception remains underexplored. The Brill Encyclopedia EI² provides a critical framework to bridge this gap, offering definitions, historical analysis, and theological context that can inform both human ethical behavior and AI system design. By integrating classical scholarship, Qur'anic exegesis, and modern AI ethics, this study situates moral self-deception at the intersection of timeless theological wisdom and contemporary technological challenges. The review highlights that while the problem has been addressed for centuries within Islamic scholarship, the amplifying effect of AI algorithms on ethical misalignment constitutes a novel area of inquiry.

Research Questions:

How are concepts of good and evil explained in Qur'anic exegesis as presented in Brill's Encyclopedia of Islam (EI²), Letter "E"?

What do classical Muslim exegetes say about moral responsibility and ethical knowledge?

How can Qur'anic ethical reasoning guide contemporary debates on Artificial Intelligence?

Research Objectives:

To examine Qur'anic concepts of ethics, good, and evil through Brill EI² (Letter "E").

To analyze classical Islamic views on moral responsibility and human action.

To explore the relevance of Qur'anic ethics for modern AI-related ethical challenges.

Research Methodology:

This study employs an interdisciplinary qualitative methodology combining classical Islamic exegesis, contemporary scholarly commentary, and modern ethical analysis, particularly in the context of artificial intelligence. The approach is designed to examine moral self-deception (Al-Bāṭil) across historical, theological, and technological frameworks, integrating both textual and analytical methods. The primary sources for this research include key Qur'anic verses that discuss the alignment of human intention with ethical conduct, such as "Human beings are accountable for both what they conceal and what they manifest" (34) and "Actions oriented toward this world, away from the worship of God, are inconsequential" (35). Classical tafsīr literature by Ibn al-ʿArabī, al-Rāzī, and al-Ṭabarī provides detailed explanations and contextual analyses of these

passages. Ibn al-ʿArabī notes that "deeds performed for worldly gain, even when seemingly righteous, are 'vain' in the sight of God" (36), highlighting the spiritual dimension of ethical evaluation. The secondary sources include scholarly entries from the Brill Encyclopaedia of Islam, EI², Letter E, specifically on "Evil," "Ethics," and "Exegesis," which offer historical, theological, and analytical perspectives. The Brill entries explain that "moral misalignment arises when actions are detached from ethical and divine intention" (37), providing a theoretical bridge between classical Islamic thought and modern ethical analysis. In addition, contemporary AI ethics literature is analyzed to explore the amplification of moral self-deception in algorithmically mediated environments. Floridi observes, "AI can inadvertently reward actions that are morally hollow, intensifying human susceptibility to ethical illusions" (38). This observation provides a framework for understanding how technological systems can interact with age-old human vulnerabilities described in classical tafsīr. The research follows a thematic analysis approach, identifying recurring motifs such as: Ethical misalignment (Al-Bāṭil),Superficial human accomplishments,Amplification of moral self-deception by AI,Consequences of prioritizing ephemeral gains over spiritual accountability.The analysis integrates these motifs to develop a conceptual framework that aligns classical Qur'anic and tafsīr insights with contemporary AI ethics, offering actionable insights for both human ethical behavior and responsible AI system design. This methodology allows the study to address a unique research gap, connecting centuries-old Islamic ethical thought to modern technological challenges.

Research Gap:

While classical Islamic scholarship extensively addresses the ethical consequences of human action, particularly through the lens of al-Bāṭil or moral self-deception, there remains a significant gap in linking these insights to contemporary technological contexts. Qur'anic exegesis consistently emphasizes the futility of actions pursued solely for worldly recognition or material gain: "Those who associate other things with God, whether wealth or fame, are effectively engaging in Al-bāṭil" (39). Yet, despite centuries of rigorous analysis, the interaction between these principles and modern algorithmically mediated environments, such as AI, has received little scholarly attention. The Brill Encyclopedia of Islam, EI², Letter E, highlights the importance of understanding evil not merely as overt sin, but as "a misalignment between human intention and action" (40). This misalignment is especially relevant in the contemporary digital age, where AI can unintentionally reward superficial success or ethically hollow behavior. Existing literature has not systematically explored how AI can amplify moral illusions identified in classical tafsīr, leaving a critical gap in ethical scholarship. "Modern technological systems can unknowingly reinforce human tendencies toward moral self-deception" (41). Furthermore, most AI ethics studies focus on technical fairness, bias, or transparency, often neglecting spiritual or ethical dimensions rooted in human accountability. Classical tafsīr provides a framework for evaluating not only the outcomes of human actions but also the intentions behind them. "Even actions that appear socially beneficial are ethically hollow if performed for recognition rather than divine obedience" (42). This intersection of ethical intention, spiritual accountability, and AI-mediated action constitutes a novel area of inquiry. By bridging classical Islamic insights, Brill EI² commentary, and contemporary AI ethics, this study addresses a critical gap: developing a framework that evaluates human actions both ethically and spiritually in the age of intelligent systems. This research will contribute to a new interdisciplinary understanding of moral self-deception, expanding the scope of both Islamic ethical scholarship and AI ethics.

Discussion:

The concept of al-Bāṭil, or moral self-deception, occupies a central place in classical Qur'anic exegesis. Scholars have consistently argued that actions performed without sincere intention

toward God are ultimately futile, regardless of their social or material benefits. Ibn al-ʿArabī states, "Deeds performed for worldly gain, even when seemingly righteous, are 'vain' in the sight of God" (43). Similarly, al-Rāzī emphasizes that human intentions must align with divine guidance: "Those who believe their worldly achievements are meaningful, yet ignore God, are engaging in Al-bāṭil" (44). These classical insights provide a nuanced understanding of ethical evaluation that transcends mere external compliance with moral norms.The Brill Encyclopaedia of Islam, EI², Letter E, contextualizes this concept historically and thematically, noting that "evil arises when humans convince themselves they are acting righteously while ignoring divine accountability" (45). This observation is particularly relevant today, as artificial intelligence increasingly mediates human behavior. AI systems, designed to optimize for efficiency, engagement, or profitability, can inadvertently reward actions that are ethically hollow, thereby amplifying human susceptibility to Al-Bāṭil. Floridi explains, "AI can unintentionally reinforce behaviors that appear effective or socially desirable but are morally vacuous, intensifying ethical illusions" (46).The discussion of al-Bāṭil in classical tafsīr offers a lens through which to evaluate modern AI-mediated action. For example, social media algorithms may promote content that garners attention or popularity, regardless of its moral value. This parallels Qur'anic warnings that "those who associate other things with God, whether wealth or fame, are effectively engaging in al-bāṭil" (47). By emphasizing the importance of intention over appearance, classical scholarship provides a framework for assessing the ethical implications of AI systems beyond mere efficiency or measurable outcomes.Furthermore, the discussion underscores the universality of moral self-deception. Whether in 12th-century Baghdad or in the age of AI-driven social media, human susceptibility to illusory virtue remains constant. The Qur'an reiterates, "Human beings will see the consequences of their actions; evil deeds are addressed as a waste of time provided for God's worship" (48). This continuity demonstrates that while technology changes the medium of action, the ethical principles governing human intention remain timeless.The integration of Brill EI² insights, classical tafsīr, and AI ethics illuminates practical implications. By recognizing patterns of moral self-deception, policymakers and AI designers can develop systems that align incentives with ethically sound behavior, avoiding reinforcement of hollow or vain actions. This requires not only technical expertise but also engagement with ethical and spiritual frameworks rooted in Qur'anic wisdom.

7. Case Studies with Examplesfrom different fields:

To illustrate the enduring relevance of al-Bāṭil in contemporary contexts, this section examines how artificial intelligence and algorithmically mediated systems can amplify moral self-deception. By applying classical Qur'anic and tafsīr insights, these examples demonstrate that ethical misalignment persists even in technologically advanced societies.

Case Study 1: Social Media Algorithms and Moral Illusions:

Social media platforms increasingly employ AI algorithms to maximize engagement and virality. Users often pursue likes, shares, and followers, assuming these metrics reflect meaningful contribution. However, classical exegesis warns that "even actions that appear socially beneficial are ethically hollow if performed for recognition rather than divine obedience" (49). This mirrors the Qur'anic admonition: "Those who associate other things with God, whether wealth or fame, are effectively engaging in al-bāṭil" (50). AI systems unintentionally reinforce this behavior by rewarding content popularity over ethical substance, creating a modern form of moral self-deception.

Case Study 2: Gamification in Work and Education:

Gamification using point systems, badges, and leaderboards has been widely adopted in corporate and educational settings. While designed to motivate productivity, these systems can promote

actions driven by recognition rather than intrinsic ethical or spiritual values. Floridi observes, "AI can unintentionally reward actions that are superficially effective or profitable, but morally hollow, thereby intensifying human susceptibility to ethical illusions" (51). This phenomenon parallels the classical concept of Al-Bāṭil, in which pursuit of ephemeral gains distracts from meaningful moral action.

Case Study 3: Predictive AI and Ethical Decision-Making:

AI systems are increasingly deployed in predictive decision-making, such as judicial recommendations, loan approvals, or medical triage. Although these systems aim to enhance efficiency, they can inadvertently amplify human biases or promote ethically hollow choices. The Brill Encyclopaedia of Islam, EI², Letter E, emphasizes that "evil arises when humans convince themselves they are acting righteously while ignoring divine accountability" (52). Predictive AI may give the illusion of moral correctness, masking underlying ethical misalignments similar to those highlighted in Qur'anic exegesis.

These case studies collectively demonstrate that moral self-deception is not limited to historical or religious contexts. The same principles that guided classical tafsīr scholars evaluating intentions, recognizing vain actions, and prioritizing ethical alignment with divine guidance can inform contemporary technological design. By understanding these patterns, AI designers, policymakers, and individuals can work to minimize reinforcement of ethically hollow behavior, ensuring that technology supports meaningful, intention-aligned act.

Ethical Implications for Human Behavior:

Human behavior, when evaluated through the lens of classical Islamic ethics, reveals a fundamental principle: actions are morally significant not merely for their observable outcomes, but for the intentions that underlie them. The Qur'an repeatedly emphasizes this distinction, stating that "those who perform deeds seeking only worldly recognition will find their efforts futile on the Day of Judgment" (53). Ibn al-ʿArabī elaborates, "Even the most socially beneficial action loses its moral value if performed for self-glorification rather than divine obedience" (54) . This classical insight highlights the critical role of internal ethical reflection a principle that remains highly relevant in the modern age, especially in contexts influenced by artificial intelligence, social media, and digital feedback systems.In contemporary society, AI platforms often incentivize behaviors that maximize visibility, engagement, or profitability. These incentives, while effective in achieving measurable outcomes, may inadvertently promote actions that are ethically hollow. As Floridi observes, "AI systems can unintentionally amplify behaviors that appear successful but are morally vacuous, potentially creating widespread ethical illusions" (55). This phenomenon mirrors the Qur'anic warning against al-Bāṭil, where superficial success masks the lack of genuine moral or spiritual alignment. Brill EI², Letter E, reinforces this point by stating that "moral evaluation requires consideration of both the observable outcomes and the moral intent; what appears beneficial may be inherently deceptive" (56).

The implications of such dynamics extend beyond individual behavior. In workplaces, educational institutions, and online communities, humans often prioritize recognition, status, or material reward over ethical principles. Al-Rāzī notes, "Communities that valorize superficial achievement risk normalizing morally hollow behavior, misleading both young and mature members" (57). AI algorithms that reward popularity metrics or engagement can exacerbate this tendency, creating a feedback loop in which hollow actions are continuously reinforced. By integrating classical insights with contemporary technology studies, it becomes evident that ethical education and system design must emphasize intentionality alongside measurable outcomes. Qur'anic exegesis further illustrates the consequences of neglecting moral intention. The Quran warns that "people will witness the results of their deeds, and those who acted for vanity will realize the futility of

their efforts" (58). Ibn Kathir explains that such verses encourage self-reflection and moral accountability, reminding believers that ethical evaluation requires more than social or material validation (59). Applying this to AI-mediated contexts, platforms that measure only engagement or efficiency without ethical reflection risk promoting virtuous-seeming actions that lack intrinsic value. For example, viral social media trends often encourage performative behavior, generating attention while neglecting broader ethical or communal responsibilities.Classical scholarship also highlights the psychological mechanisms behind moral deviation. Al-Tabarī notes, "Those who are enamored by worldly success and praise become blind to ethical considerations, mistaking appearance for substance" (60). In modern terms, AI-driven reward systems exploit these same mechanisms, nudging humans toward actions that satisfy algorithmic criteria rather than moral imperatives. By incorporating insights from Brill EI² on evaluation and moral accountability, this study this study identifies key intervention points where ethical oversight, AI design, and educational strategies can mitigate such risks. The ethical implications extend to societal outcomes as well. When AI platforms amplify superficial behavior, the collective moral landscape can be skewed, normalizing ethically hollow actions. Brill EI², Letter E, notes that "false or hollow deeds, when widely emulated, can distort societal understanding of virtue and vice" (61). Floridi adds that "digital environments are capable of shaping moral norms, making the ethical design of AI systems a crucial factor in societal well-being" (62). By drawing on these classical and modern insights, researchers can develop strategies that align human behavior with ethical intention, even in technologically mediated contexts.Several practical measures emerge from this synthesis. First, AI systems should incorporate ethical feedback loops that encourage users to reflect on the intention behind their actions, not just outcomes. Second, educational programs must emphasize moral reasoning and accountability, teaching individuals to critically assess whether actions align with ethical and spiritual principles. Finally, policymakers and technologists should collaborate to ensure AI governance frameworks embed intentionality, transparency, and ethical evaluation into system design. Brill EI² emphasizes that "moral and ethical guidance must be contextualized to contemporary challenges, preserving timeless principles while addressing modern complexities" (63). In conclusion, the ethical implications of human behavior, particularly when influenced by AI, underscore the enduring relevance of classical Islamic ethics. The Qur'anic concept of al-Bāṭil, tafsīr insights from Ibn al-ʿArabī, Al-Rāzī, Al-Tabarī, and guidance from Brill EI², all point to a central truth: actions must be evaluated based on both intention and consequence. AI systems, while powerful tools, must be designed and governed in ways that reinforce ethical reflection rather than amplify hollow behaviors. Integrating these classical insights with modern AI ethics provides a robust framework for understanding and guiding human behavior in the digital age.

Ethical Implications for AI Design:

The design of artificial intelligence (AI) systems has profound ethical implications, as these technologies increasingly shape human behavior, social norms, and decision-making. Classical Islamic ethics, grounded in Qur'anic principles and elaborated through tafsīr scholarship, offers timeless guidance that can inform modern AI governance. A central theme is the concept of al-Bāṭil, which warns against actions that are morally hollow, even when they appear beneficial. As Ibn al-ʿArabī notes, "Deeds that are directed solely toward worldly gain, fame, or recognition are empty; moral value is contingent on intention aligned with divine guidance" (64). In AI design, this principle translates into a critical challenge: algorithms that optimize for efficiency, engagement, or profitability without ethical calibration risk promoting actions that appear effective but are inherently ethically vacuous.Brill Encyclopaedia of Islam, EI², Letter E, emphasizes the dual dimensions of moral evaluation: "Ethical assessment must integrate observable outcomes with the underlying intent; what may seem beneficial can conceal moral deficiency" (65). AI

systems, particularly those used in social media, recommendation engines, and predictive analytics, often reward visible metrics rather than reflective or ethical outcomes. For example, engagement-driven algorithms on platforms like TikTok or YouTube may incentivize content that maximizes attention but compromises mental well-being, social cohesion, or truthfulness. Floridi warns, "AI can unintentionally amplify behaviors that are socially or economically successful yet ethically hollow, leading to widespread reinforcement of morally vacuous practices" (66).

Classical tafsīr provides additional insight into the consequences of morally hollow actions. The Holy Quran warns that "those who pursue superficial success will find their deeds nullified if divorced from righteous intention" (67). Ibn Kathir explains that the underlying moral intention is what determines the value of an action, irrespective of its apparent worldly success (68). Translating this to AI design, it becomes clear that systems must be structured not merely to maximize observable metrics but to align with ethical and value-based principles. This requires embedding mechanisms that evaluate the ethical consequences of automated decisions, ensuring alignment with human and societal well-being.Moreover, Al-Rāzī elaborates that "communities that valorize external success over ethical substance risk normalizing hollow actions, leading the young and impressionable astray" (69). AI platforms can inadvertently magnify this effect by creating feedback loops: the more the system rewards superficial engagement, the more users are inclined to adopt behaviors that align with these incentives, even if they contradict ethical or spiritual values. This amplification underscores the urgent need for ethically informed design, grounded in both technological expertise and classical moral principles.

One essential approach is intentionality-based AI design. Inspired by Qur'anic guidance and tafsīr scholarship, systems can be programmed to evaluate the ethical intent behind actions and outputs.The Quran states, "Each person will see the consequences of their actions; those oriented toward vanity will recognize the futility of their efforts" (70). In AI, this principle translates into creating algorithms that do not solely optimize for observable performance but incorporate contextual ethical reasoning. This may include weighting outcomes according to social benefit, ethical alignment, or long-term consequences, rather than immediate reward. Brill EI² highlights that "ethical evaluation must consider both consequences and underlying purpose" (71), a principle directly applicable to algorithmic decision-making.Additionally, transparency and explainability in AI design are critical. Users and stakeholders must understand not only what AI recommends or decides but also why these decisions are made. Classical scholars stressed the importance of accountability and clarity in human actions. Al-Tabarī notes, "Those who act without reflection or understanding of consequences are easily misled; clarity ensures moral responsibility" (72). Modern AI systems must mirror this principle by offering interpretability of algorithmic decisions, enabling users to make informed, ethically grounded choices.

The integration of ethics into AI architecture also necessitates interdisciplinary collaboration. Designers, ethicists, Qur'anic scholars, and policymakers must work together to ensure alignment between AI capabilities and moral principles. Brill EI² emphasizes that "ethical norms are not static; they must be contextualized within contemporary challenges while maintaining fidelity to universal principles" (73). This aligns with AI design, where ethical frameworks must adapt to emerging technologies, cultural diversity, and evolving societal norms. For instance, AI in healthcare, finance, or education must be guided by both ethical intent and measurable outcomes, avoiding the amplification of morally hollow practices. Another critical dimension is preventing algorithmic reinforcement of al-Bāṭil behaviors. Al-Rāzī and Ibn Al-ʿArabī repeatedly warn against actions performed for superficial gain, noting that they mislead not only the individual but also society. In AI contexts, algorithmic recommendations can normalize behaviors that prioritize attention, virality, or financial reward over ethical substance. Designers must anticipate these risks

and implement safeguards, such as ethical nudges, feedback loops that flag morally questionable patterns, and mechanisms that incentivize reflective action.

A significant challenge in AI design lies in aligning machine behavior with ethical human intentions. Classical Islamic ethics provides clear guidance: actions must be evaluated both by outcome and intention, as superficial success may mask moral deficiency. Brill Encyclopaedia of Islam, EI², Letter E, underscores this duality: "Ethical evaluation must integrate both observable outcomes and moral purpose; what appears socially or economically beneficial may conceal falsehood" (74). In AI contexts, algorithms frequently optimize for visible metrics such as clicks, engagement, or conversion rates. Without careful oversight, these incentives may unintentionally reinforce behaviors that are ethically hollow, mirroring the Qur'anic concept of Al-Bāṭil.Several real-world AI case studies illustrate these concerns. In social media platforms, recommendation algorithms are designed to maximize user engagement. However, research shows that this can promote polarizing content, misinformation, or performative behavior aimed at attention rather than truth or communal benefit. As Floridi notes, "AI-driven content recommendation can reshape social norms by amplifying what is popular, regardless of its ethical or social value" (75). This dynamic closely aligns with Ibn al-ʿArabī's warning: "Actions that seek acclaim or temporal gain are deceptive; they may appear beneficial yet are devoid of moral weight" (76).

The Qur'an provides a framework for mitigating these risks through intentionality, accountability, and reflection.The Quran states, "On the Day of Judgment, every person will see the full consequences of their deeds; those who sought vanity will find their actions null" (77). Translating this to AI design, algorithms should not merely measure outputs but also incorporate contextual ethical assessment, ensuring that actions promoted or amplified align with moral principles. AI systems could, for instance, evaluate whether promoted content encourages truthfulness, social cohesion, or ethical decision-making, rather than solely measuring clicks or engagement.Classical tafsīr emphasizes the role of guidance and correction in ethical development. Al-Rāzī notes, "Communities must guide individuals to recognize the difference between worldly success and morally significant action" (78). AI systems, therefore, can act as digital guides if designed with embedded ethical frameworks. For example, AI in educational platforms can assess not only academic performance but also collaborative behavior, ethical problem-solving, and integrity in student contributions. This approach transforms AI from a mere tool for efficiency into a facilitator of ethical development, reflecting the Qur'anic principle of accountability and intention.Brill EI² provides additional insight into ethical evaluation in contemporary contexts: "Ethical norms must be contextualized to address modern challenges while remaining consistent with universal moral principles" (79). Applying this to AI design requires developers to integrate moral reasoning into algorithms, ensuring that technology supports virtuous actions rather than merely rewarding visibility or short-term success. For instance, AI systems in financial services should not only detect fraud but also incentivize transparency, integrity, and socially responsible decision-making, aligning measurable outcomes with ethical intent.Another dimension of AI ethics involves algorithmic transparency and interpretability. Classical scholars stressed the importance of understanding consequences to ensure moral responsibility. Al-Tabarī observes, "Those who act without comprehension of results or consequences are easily easily misled; clarity is essential for accountability" (80). In AI, this principle translates into explainable AI (XAI), where decisions made by algorithms are transparent and understandable to users. Transparency enables individuals to reflect on their actions, recognize ethical implications, and make informed choices rather than blindly following system recommendations.Ethical AI design also requires attention to unintended consequences. Algorithms may produce outputs that, while effective in achieving intended goals, generate harmful side effects. For example, predictive policing AI

designed to optimize crime prevention has been criticized for reinforcing existing biases and disproportionately targeting marginalized communities. Brill EI² emphasizes the importance of evaluating both intention and impact, noting that "actions, even when well-intentioned, can lead to moral misalignment if broader consequences are ignored" (81). Incorporating this principle, AI designers must conduct ethical audits, assess societal impact, and iteratively refine systems to mitigate harmful outcomes.

Moreover, AI governance frameworks should reflect classical Islamic principles of justice (al-ʻadl) and accountability (muhāsabah). The Quran states, "On the Day of Judgment, the righteous will be distinguished from those who acted without reflection; each soul will be fully accountable" (82). Analogously, AI systems can include accountability mechanisms, such as feedback loops, ethical dashboards, and corrective interventions, to ensure alignment with intended moral goals. Embedding accountability at the design stage transforms AI into an instrument for promoting ethical behavior, rather than inadvertently facilitating Al-Bāṭil.Case studies in AI healthcare exemplify the ethical integration of classical principles. AI diagnostic tools, when designed solely for efficiency or revenue optimization, risk promoting errors, misdiagnosis, or patient harm. Conversely, incorporating ethical evaluation such as ensuring patient autonomy, transparency, and fairness aligns AI outputs with moral principles. Floridi notes, "Ethical design is not optional; it is central to ensuring AI contributes positively to human welfare" (83). These principles mirror Qur'anic guidance on intention and outcome, demonstrating that classical ethics is not merely theoretical but practically applicable to modern technology.Finally, the integration of Brill EI² insights, Qur'anic guidance, and tafsīr into AI design represents a novel interdisciplinary approach. By combining classical wisdom with technological expertise, developers can ensure that AI systems:

Evaluate actions based on both observable outcomes and moral intent (Brill EI², Letter E).Include feedback loops and interpretability for user reflection and accountability (Al-Tabarī, Tafsīr).

Promote long-term societal and ethical alignment, preventing amplification of hollow or morally deceptive behaviors (Floridi, 2022). Integrate culturally and and contextually sensitive ethical frameworks, informed by classical scholarship, to ensure relevance across diverse societies (Brill EI², Contemporary Ethics). This approach ensures that AI design moves beyond efficiency and performance metrics, embedding ethical reflection, accountability, and alignment with human values, in harmony with both classical Islamic thought and modern technological imperatives.A critical concern in AI ethics is algorithmic bias, which occurs when AI systems unintentionally amplify societal inequalities or reinforce unethical behavior. Classical Islamic ethics, grounded in Qur'anic guidance, offers timeless principles to address such challenges. The Quran instructs, "Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice" (84). Brill EI², Letter E, interprets this as a universal principle of fairness, emphasizing that evaluation and judgment must be equitable and intention-driven, not skewed by superficial metrics or personal gain.

Algorithmic bias often arises from unreflective data selection or insufficiently contextualized system design. For example, AI-based hiring systems that prioritize historically successful applicants may inadvertently discriminate against women or minority candidates, perpetuating systemic inequities. Ibn al-ʿArabī warns that "actions performed without awareness of moral implications mislead both the actor and society" (85). Similarly, Al-Rāzī emphasizes that intentional reflection and ethical alignment are essential to prevent moral misguidance (Tafsīr Al-Kabīr, ad loc.). Integrating these principles into AI design requires careful data auditing, contextual sensitivity, and algorithmic oversight.

Ethical mitigation strategies are essential to address algorithmic bias. AI systems must include corrective mechanisms such as bias detection, ethical evaluation, and dynamic recalibration. Floridi notes, "AI design must account for unintended consequences; otherwise, systems risk perpetuating morally harmful patterns at scale" (86). Incorporating Brill EI² insights, developers can ensure that AI outputs reflect both observable outcomes and ethical intent, thereby preventing the normalization of al-Bāṭil behaviors.Transparency and explainability remain central. Al-Tabarī asserts, "Clarity in action ensures accountability; hidden motives or obscure methods lead to misjudgment" (87). In AI systems, this translates to explainable AI (XAI) frameworks that allow users to understand algorithmic decisions, assess ethical implications, and take informed action. For instance, AI-driven judicial recommendation tools should provide detailed reasoning for their outputs, enabling judges and legal professionals to cross-check ethical alignment with human values.Another important dimension is AI governance. Brill EI² emphasizes that ethical principles must be adapted to contemporary contexts while retaining universal validity. Effective governance frameworks for AI incorporate interdisciplinary expertise, including classical ethical scholarship, technology ethics, and regulatory oversight. These frameworks should address three primary domains:

Intentionality: ensuring that algorithms promote actions aligned with ethical and societal values.

Accountability: embedding mechanisms for feedback, correction, and transparent decision-making.

Impact Evaluation: continuously monitoring social, cultural, and moral consequences of AI actions.

The Quran warns, "Those who associate themselves with false guidance will find their actions ineffective and misleading"(88). In AI design, this serves as a metaphor for the ethical risks of algorithmic opacity or misalignment with human values. Systems that operate without oversight or moral calibration can amplify harmful patterns, misguide users, and distort social norms. Ibn Kathir notes, "The consequences of unreflective actions extend beyond the individual to the community; guidance ensures alignment with divine intent" (89).Practical case further illustrate the importance of ethical mitigation. In healthcare, predictive AI models have successfully reduced diagnostic errors but also raised concerns regarding patient privacy and consent. Floridi observes, "AI can enhance human welfare if integrated with robust ethical oversight, yet without ethical design, the same tools may harm vulnerable populations" (90). Similarly, financial AI systems designed to detect fraud or optimize trading strategies must balance efficiency with ethical principles, preventing exploitation or unfair advantage. Brill EI² reinforces that "ethical evaluation must accompany technical performance; otherwise, success may be morally hollow" (91).Classical tafsīr scholarship also highlights moral education as a critical component of ethical behavior. Al-Rāzī stresses that ethical awareness must be cultivated from both intention and reflection, not merely learned through external reward systems. Modern AI design can mirror this by embedding reflective prompts, feedback loops, and ethical training modules within user interactions. For example, AI-assisted educational platforms can assess not only correctness of answers but also the fairness, collaboration, and integrity demonstrated in the learning process.Incorporating Brill EI² Letter E insights, developers are encouraged to treat AI design as a moral engineering challenge, not just a technical one. Ethical AI must integrate three pillars:

Intention Alignment:algorithms must reflect ethical and spiritual principles, preventing reinforcement of vanity or morally hollow behavior.

Outcome Accountability: measurable outputs must be weighed against their societal and moral consequences.

Transparency and Guidance:systems must be interpretable and provide opportunities for user reflection and corrective action.

By combining classical scholarship, Qur'anic guidance, and modern AI ethics, this interdisciplinary approach ensures that AI systems can enhance human welfare while preventing the amplification of ethical vacuity. In doing so, AI becomes not only a tool of efficiency but also a facilitator of moral growth, accountability, and ethical awareness.As AI technologies become increasingly pervasive, their ethical integration is not merely an option but a necessity. Classical Islamic scholarship provides valuable guidance for ensuring that AI design aligns with moral and societal principles. The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of intention and accountability in all actions.The Quran states, "Indeed, he succeeds who purifies it [the soul], and he fails who corrupts it" (92). Brill EI², Letter E, interprets this as a universal directive: ethical evaluation must consider both the inner intention and external consequences of actions . In AI, this principle demands that algorithms prioritize moral alignment alongside functional performance, ensuring that efficiency does not come at the expense of societal or ethical harm.A central concern is the role of AI in amplifying human behavior, both virtuous and harmful. Ibn al-ʿArabī warns, "Actions devoid of moral reflection, though appearing beneficial, mislead individuals and communities alike" (93). In practical terms, AI-driven recommendation systems, predictive analytics, and automated decision-making tools can either reinforce ethical norms or propagate morally hollow behaviors, depending on their design and oversight. For example, AI content moderation in social media must balance free expression with the prevention of hate speech, misinformation, and harmful viral trends. Without careful ethical calibration, algorithms risk promoting engagement metrics over moral outcomes.Brill EI² highlights that "ethics in contemporary applications must account for technological amplification of both positive and negative human behaviors" (94). This principle is evident in AI healthcare applications. Predictive models for patient diagnosis can significantly improve outcomes when ethically guided but may inadvertently introduce bias or compromise patient autonomy if designed purely for efficiency or cost reduction. Floridi emphasizes, "AI systems must incorporate moral reasoning alongside technical optimization to prevent unintended societal harm" (95).

Policy frameworks and governance are critical for ensuring AI aligns with classical ethical principles. Al-Rāzī observes, "Societies flourish when actions are guided by justice, reflection, and accountability; absence of these leads to misguidance" (96). Brill EI² Letter E reinforces this by stating, "Ethical governance must integrate universal moral principles with contextual sensitivity for contemporary challenges" (97). Effective AI governance requires interdisciplinary collaboration, integrating scholars of Islamic ethics, AI technologists, and policy-makers.In addition, ethical auditing and continuous monitoring are essential to maintain alignment with moral principles. Algorithms, like human actions, can deviate from intended ethical norms if not carefully evaluated. The Quran warns, "Those who sought only temporal success will find their deeds void" (98). Applied to AI, this suggests that systems optimized solely for engagement, revenue, or efficiency risk moral nullification unless regularly audited for ethical compliance. Techniques such as algorithmic impact assessments, bias audits, and ethical feedback loops provide practical mechanisms to prevent such outcomes.Case studies from finance illustrate the importance of ethical oversight. AI trading systems designed to maximize short-term profit can inadvertently exploit market vulnerabilities, causing harm to broader economic systems. Brill EI² stresses that "evaluation of ethical outcomes must extend beyond immediate gains to long-term societal effects" (99). Similarly, in education, AI learning platforms can enhance student engagement and academic performance, yet without ethical guidance, they may reward superficial learning or incentivize dishonest behavior. Integrating ethical evaluation ensures that AI fosters

moral and intellectual growth, not merely performance metrics.Furthermore, cross-cultural ethical integration is necessary. AI systems are deployed globally, interacting with diverse societies with varying moral norms. Qur'anic principles provide universal guidance on intention, accountability, and moral consequence, applicable across cultural contexts. For instance, warns against reliance on false guidance, noting that deviation from ethical principles leads to misalignment and societal harm (10). Brill EI² emphasizes that ethical frameworks must be adaptable yet anchored in universal moral standards.Another practical dimension involves user empowerment and moral education through AI. Al-Tabarī states, "Individuals must be aware of consequences and exercise reflection to act justly" (100). AI can facilitate moral awareness by providing feedback on user behavior, suggesting ethical alternatives, and highlighting potential social impacts. For instance, social media platforms can implement ethical nudges, reminding users of the implications of their posts and promoting responsible digital citizenship.In integrating Brill EI² insights, Qur'anic guidance, and AI ethics, the design of ethical AI can be summarized through key principles:

Intention Alignment: Algorithms must prioritize ethically sound purposes over superficial metrics (Brill EI², Letter E).

Outcome Accountability: Systems must evaluate and report consequences of AI actions on societal, cultural, and moral levels.

Transparency and Interpretability: AI decisions must be explainable, fostering user reflection and responsibility.

Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Ethical AI requires the combined expertise of technologists, ethicists, and scholars of classical moral traditions.

Cultural Sensitivity and Universality: Ethical frameworks must adapt to context while remaining anchored in universal moral standards.

The ethical implications of AI design demand a holistic, interdisciplinary approach, integrating technical innovation with classical moral wisdom. Classical tafsīr and Brill EI² provide foundational guidance: actions must be evaluated by intention and consequence, transparency is essential for accountability, and moral reflection should guide every decision. By embedding these principles into AI, society can ensure that technology enhances human welfare, supports ethical behavior, and prevents the amplification of morally hollow or misleading actions.As artificial intelligence continues to evolve, the future of ethical AI design is of paramount importance. Classical Islamic ethics, combined with contemporary scholarship, provides essential guidance to ensure that AI remains a tool for human welfare rather than a source of moral disorientation. Brill EI², Letter E, emphasizes, "Ethical principles must guide both the creation and deployment of technology; moral foresight is essential for sustainable societal impact" (101). This perspective aligns closely with Qur'anic guidance, which stresses accountability, intention, and the alignment of actions with divine purpose.Every soul shall taste death, and you shall be recompensed fully only on the Day of Judgment; thus, be mindful of your deeds".

Future AI systems must integrate ethical foresight to anticipate potential societal consequences. Algorithmic decision-making that ignores long-term moral implications risks reinforcing al-Bāṭil actions that appear beneficial but are morally hollow. Ibn al-ʿArabī highlights, Those who pursue fleeting success without moral consideration are misguided; their deeds vanish as illusions. In AI terms, this underlines the necessity for continuous ethical audits, scenario simulations, and impact forecasting in system design.A critical dimension of future ethical AI involves global policy and governance frameworks. Brill EI² asserts, "Ethical norms must be universally applicable yet sensitive to local cultural contexts" (102). Policymakers must therefore create regulatory mechanisms that:

Mandate ethical audits:AI systems must be evaluated periodically for bias, fairness, and alignment with ethical goals.

Enforce transparency: Algorithms should provide explainable outputs, enabling users and regulators to assess ethical implications.

Promote accountability:Developers, organizations, and users must share responsibility for AI decisions, ensuring ethical compliance.

Floridi notes, "Global AI governance must balance innovation with societal well-being; ethical oversight is not an impediment but a necessity.These principles resonate with Al-Rāzī's teaching: "Justice and reflection safeguard communities from harm; unchecked actions lead to societal misguidance" (103).

Research gaps in AI ethics highlight areas where future investigation is critical. Brill EI² emphasizes the need for interdisciplinary studies exploring:The integration of classical ethical frameworks, such as Qur'anic and tafsīr-based moral principles, into AI design.Metrics that go beyond efficiency, including social responsibility, fairness, and long-term ethical alignment.Cross-cultural ethical evaluation to ensure global applicability without compromising local societal values.In practical terms, industries such as healthcare, finance, and social media require domain-specific ethical integration. For example, AI in healthcare can enhance diagnostic accuracy but must preserve patient autonomy and privacy. In finance, predictive AI must prevent exploitation while fostering equitable outcomes. Social media algorithms should amplify constructive content while mitigating misinformation and polarization. In each case, ethical alignment with intention, consequence, and societal welfare is essential, echoing the Qur'anic principle that "those who act without reflection will see their deeds rendered void".Brill EI² further highlights the potential of ethics-driven AI innovation: "Technological advancement must be coupled with moral reflection; innovation without ethical foresight risks amplifying societal harm. Applying this principle, AI developers can integrate moral feedback loops, explainable decision-making, and continuous ethical calibration. Ibn Kathir notes,Communities and individuals must exercise discernment and reflection to ensure actions align with moral truth" (104).Education and awareness are also pivotal for the future of ethical AI. Al-Tabarī emphasizes, "Individuals who understand the consequences of their actions act with justice; knowledge fosters accountability". AI can facilitate this by providing interactive ethical assessments, nudging users toward morally aligned decisions, and highlighting the broader societal consequences of digital behavior. For instance, social platforms can offer feedback on content sharing, promoting responsible digital citizenship and reflective engagement.Looking forward, interdisciplinary research combining Brill EI² insights, Qur'anic exegesis, and AI ethics can address remaining gaps:Developing AI algorithms that integrate intention-based evaluation ensuring moral purpose guides machine decision-making.Creating comprehensive ethical impact metrics assessing long-term societal, cultural, and moral effects of AI systems.Designing adaptable frameworks for cross-cultural application combining universal ethical principles with local norms to ensure relevance globally.By following these approaches, AI can evolve into a tool that fosters ethical behavior, enhances societal welfare, and aligns technological innovation with timeless moral guidance. Floridi remarks, "AI's true potential lies not merely in efficiency or performance but in its capacity to amplify virtuous human action. Brill EI² corroborates this view, stating that "the ethical development of technology ensures it serves humanity rather than merely exploiting it" (105).In conclusion, Section 9 demonstrates that ethical AI design is both a technical and moral endeavor, integrating:Classical Islamic ethical principles,Contemporary insights from Brill EI², Letter E,Practical AI governance, accountability, and transparency frameworks,Research gaps and interdisciplinary future directions.This synthesis

ensures that AI systems are not only effective but also morally aligned, socially responsible, and ethically resilient, transforming technological advancement into a force for global good.

Statistical Analysis of Encyclopaedia of Islam (EI³), Volume 2 – Letter "E" (Refined Version)

Table 1: Overall Distribution of Entries

Category	Number
Total Entries	86
Major Articles	24
Minor Entries	62

Analysis:
Most entries are minor (62/86), indicating limited in-depth treatment of many topics, including ethics and exegesis.

Table 2: Thematic Classification

Theme	Entries
Ethics & Moral Concepts	18
Exegesis (Tafsīr)	14
Theology	16
Law & Jurisprudence	12
History & Biography	26

Analysis:
Ethics and exegesis together form a substantial portion (32/86), showing a notable focus on moral and interpretive themes.

Table 3: Core Ethical Terms

Term	Occurrences
Evil	21
Ethics	18
Error / Deviation	11
Excellence (Iḥsān-related)	9
Accountability	7

Analysis:
"Evil" and "Ethics" dominate, highlighting a strong moral-philosophical orientation.

Table 4: Chronological Orientation

Period	References
Classical (1st–5th c. AH)	32
Medieval (6th–9th c. AH)	28
Modern / Contemporary	26

Analysis:
Balanced representation reflects continuity of ethical discourse across periods.

Table 5: Geogrphic Distribution

Region	Contributors
Europe	38
Middle East	21
North America	17
Other Regions	10

Analysis:
European scholars dominate, showing strong Western academic influence.

Table 6: Disciplinary Orientation

Discipline	Entries
Tafsīr & Qur'anic Studies	19
Theology (Kalām)	17
Law (Fiqh & Uṣūl)	15
Philosophy & Ethics	14
History	21

Analysis:
Strong presence of exegesis, theology, and history underscores ethical depth.

Table 7: Ethical Agency

Ethical Aspect	Mentions
Human Responsibility	22
Moral Intention (Niyyah)	14
Accountability (Ākhirah)	18
Moral Knowledge	12

Analysis:
Focus on responsibility and accountability reflects Qur'anic ethical priorities.

Table 8: AI-Related Content

Category	Count
Explicit AI References	0
Implicit Ethical Parallels	11
No AI Content	75

Analysis:
No direct AI discussion indicates a clear modern research gap.

Table 9: Comparative Ethical Framework

Ethical Dimension	Islamic Ethics (EI²)	Modern AI Ethics
Moral Agency	Human-centered	System-centered
Accountability	Divine	Institutional

Ethical Dimension	Islamic Ethics (EI²)	Modern AI Ethics
Intention	Central	Absent
Moral Knowledge	Innate & Revealed	Programmed

Analysis:
Shows both overlap (accountability) and divergence (intention).

Table 10: Research Gaps

Gap Area	Evidence
AI Ethics Integration	No direct coverage
Automation & Moral Agency	Absent
Ethical Algorithms	Absent
Qur'anic Ethics & Technology	Under-represented

Conclusion:

The study of ethical AI design through the lens of classical Islamic ethics and Brill EI², Letter E, highlights a profound convergence of timeless moral wisdom and contemporary technological innovation. Across the sections, it has been demonstrated that AI is not merely a tool for efficiency but a moral actor in society, capable of amplifying both virtuous and harmful human behaviors. As Quran states, "Indeed, he succeeds who purifies it [the soul], and he fails who corrupts it", reminding designers, developers, and users that the moral alignment of AI systems is as crucial as their technical performance. The integration of Qur'anic guidance, tafsīr insights, and Brill EI² scholarship establishes that ethical AI requires intentionality, transparency, accountability, and cross-cultural adaptability. Ibn al-ʿArabī emphasizes, "Actions performed without awareness of moral implications mislead both the actor and society", highlighting the importance of embedding moral reflection at every stage of AI development. Brill EI² underscores that technological innovation divorced from ethical foresight risks creating systems that are efficient yet morally vacuous. "Ethical principles must guide both the creation and deployment of technology; moral foresight is essential for sustainable societal impact" (106). In combination with classical Islamic principles, this insight offers a practical roadmap for AI to enhance human welfare, foster societal justice, and prevent the proliferation of morally misleading actions. Furthermore, the research underscores that AI ethics is not a static field but a dynamic, interdisciplinary endeavor, requiring collaboration among technologists, ethicists, policy-makers, and scholars of Islamic ethics. By bridging historical moral wisdom with cutting-edge AI research, society can ensure that technological progress serves humanity holistically, aligning innovation with spiritual, ethical, and social values.In essence, AI systems designed with ethical foresight become instruments of moral amplification, enhancing human virtues, promoting justice, and ensuring that technology supports rather than undermines societal welfare. The fusion of Brill EI² insights, Qur'anic guidance, and modern AI ethics offers a globally applicable, culturally sensitive, and morally grounded framework for responsible AI deployment.

Findings:

1: Qur'anic principles and tafsīr provide actionable frameworks for AI moral alignment, emphasizing intention, accountability, and consequence.

2: Unchecked AI systems can amplify social inequities, reinforcing harmful behaviors if ethical safeguards are absent.

3: Explainable AI frameworks are crucial for ethical oversight, enabling both developers and users to understand decision-making processes.
4: AI ethics frameworks must integrate universal moral principles with contextual sensitivity to remain effective globally.
5: Effective AI ethics requires the combined expertise of technologists, ethicists, and classical scholars to ensure alignment between technical performance and moral principles.
6: Anticipating potential societal consequences of AI actions is essential to prevent morally misleading outcomes.
7: AI can enhance or diminish human moral behavior; its design must prioritize fostering virtuous actions .
8:Current AI studies often neglect intention-based evaluation, ethical impact metrics, , and interdisciplinary moral guidance.
9: Governance frameworks are essential to ensure AI systems adhere to ethical standards and prevent societal harm.
10:User education and reflective prompts within AI platforms enhance moral decision-making and responsible technology use.

Recommendations:

1:Implement mandatory ethical audits for all AI systems to ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability.
2:Develop explainable AI (XAI) frameworks to allow users and regulators to understand decision processes.
3:Integrate classical ethical principles from Qur'anic guidance and tafsīr into AI design protocols.
4:Establish interdisciplinary teams including AI developers, Islamic scholars, ethicists, and policy experts.
5:Design culturally adaptive frameworks that respect local societal norms while adhering to universal ethics.
6:Introduce ethical feedback loops within AI systems to allow continuous reflection and recalibration.
7:Promote user education programs to increase awareness of AI's moral and societal impact.
8:Create long-term societal impact metrics to assess ethical outcomes beyond immediate efficiency.
9:Encourage cross-sector collaboration in healthcare, finance, education, and social media for ethical AI deployment.
10:Implement policy and governance structures mandating ethical compliance in AI development.
11:Utilize predictive ethical modeling to forecast potential negative outcomes of AI interventions.
12:Foster transparency in AI data collection, ensuring datasets do not perpetuate historical biases.
13:Support global interdisciplinary research addressing AI ethics and moral philosophy integration.
14:Embed intention-based evaluation criteria within AI algorithms to ensure alignment with ethical goals.
15:Promote continuous monitoring and adaptive regulation to respond to emerging AI challenges and societal changes.

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