



RECONSTRUCTING ARABIC LANGUAGE EDUCATION FOR THE REVIVAL OF ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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ABSTRACT

Arabic has historically served not only as the language of the Qur'an and Islamic sciences but also as a civilizational medium sustaining intellectual and cultural cohesion across the Muslim world. In the digital era, however, Arabic language education faces persistent challenges: grammar-centric curricula, limited relevance to learners' contexts, and insufficient integration of technology with Islamic values. This conceptual study—grounded in Islamic educational philosophy and critical literature synthesis (2022–2025)—reconstructs Arabic pedagogy through a civilizational lens and proposes the Madrasah of Civilization model. The framework integrates three interdependent dimensions: turāth-based and communicative Arabic proficiency, adab-centered ethical formation, and technology-enhanced global literacy. Findings argue for bridging traditional instruction with digital innovation and moral-spiritual formation via blended learning, value-rich digital platforms, and curriculum redesign that embeds the ontological and epistemological roles of Arabic in Islam. Operational indicators include teacher capacity building in value-based digital pedagogy, cross-institutional collaboration, and assessments that capture linguistic, ethical, and collaborative outcomes. Ultimately, Arabic education should evolve from a discrete subject into a strategic platform for cultivating ethically grounded, globally competent Muslim learners capable of contributing to the renewal of Islamic civilization.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Historical and Philosophical Background

The Arabic language has long stood at the heart of Islamic civilization. For more than fourteen centuries, it served as the lingua franca of a transcontinental community unified by faith, knowledge, and ethical ideals. As the language of the Qur'an, Arabic occupies a sacred status unmatched by any other language in the Muslim world. It functioned not only as the medium of divine revelation but also as the vehicle for transmitting theology (*kalām*), jurisprudence (*fiqh*), philosophy (*falsafah*), and the sciences across centuries of Islamic scholarship (Damayanti, 2025; Shaukat et al., 2024). From Andalusia to Baghdad, Cairo to Timbuktu, Arabic connected diverse Muslim societies within a shared intellectual and spiritual framework that shaped the essence of *ḥaḍārah al-Islāmiyyah* (Islamic civilization).

This civilizational centrality is both historical and ontological. The Qur'an itself declares, "Indeed, We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an so that you may understand" (Q.S. Yūṣuf: 2), affirming that Arabic is inseparable from divine knowledge and the process of human understanding. During the Golden Age of Islam, Arabic flourished as the language of science, diplomacy, literature, and governance. Institutions such as Bayt al-Ḥikmah in Baghdad nurtured scholars who engaged in multidisciplinary inquiry through Arabic as a language of reasoning and civilization (Al-Naemi, 2024). Consequently, Arabic evolved into a civilizational code—a medium for both spiritual revelation and human advancement.

1.2 Contemporary Challenges in Arabic Language Education

Despite its illustrious legacy, modern Arabic language education faces stagnation and disconnection from learners' realities. Within many Islamic educational institutions, teaching remains dominated by grammar-translation methods, excessive memorization, and limited communicative practice. Students may memorize declension patterns or verb conjugations (*taṣrif*), yet struggle to apply them in meaningful interactions or comprehend contemporary texts (Almelhes & Alsaïari, 2024; Haris, 2022). These limitations are apparent not only in non-Arabic contexts such as Indonesia and Malaysia but also within Arab countries themselves, where classical pedagogy often fails to inspire fluency or higher-order thinking.

Several structural factors contribute to this crisis. At the curricular level, Arabic programs tend to prioritize textual mastery over functional literacy. At the institutional level, teacher training remains outdated, with minimal exposure to contemporary pedagogical theories and digital innovation. At the philosophical level, Arabic is frequently taught as an isolated subject, detached from its broader spiritual and civilizational implications. The result is a generation of learners who are technically trained yet spiritually and socially disconnected from Arabic's unifying mission in Islamic civilization (Mellal, 2025; Poljarevic, 2024).

The emergence of the digital era has further intensified this gap. Technological progress has redefined how knowledge is created, distributed, and internalized. The rise of digital platforms, artificial intelligence (AI), and mobile-assisted learning reshapes global education toward interactive, learner-centered modes (Moradi, 2025; Ritonga et al., 2025). However, Arabic language instruction frequently lags behind these developments, hindered either by conservative resistance or limited infrastructure and teacher digital literacy.

In addition, the digital environment introduces a double-edged challenge. On one hand, it offers opportunities for Arabic revitalization through gamification, multimedia integration, and online collaborative learning. On the other hand, it risks detaching Arabic instruction from its moral-spiritual foundations by exposing learners to secularized, algorithm-driven, and decontextualized learning spaces (Huang et al., 2024). Thus, the challenge is not merely technological adoption but ethical integration—aligning digital tools with Islamic pedagogical values to ensure learning remains spiritually anchored and culturally relevant.

Empirical evidence from several Islamic universities demonstrates both the urgency and potential of this transformation. For instance, initiatives at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) and Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Jakarta have begun integrating Qur'an-based content into Learning Management Systems (LMS) to support hybrid Arabic learning (Maghfurin et al., 2025; Ritonga et al., 2024). These cases reveal that technology can reinforce rather than weaken Islamic values when guided by intentional, value-based pedagogy.

1.3 The Need for Reconstruction and Research Gap

Within this dynamic context, reconstructing Arabic language education emerges as a civilizational necessity—an epistemic reorientation that transcends mere curriculum reform. Reconstruction (*i'ādah binā'*) here implies transforming foundational assumptions about the purposes, methods, and outcomes of Arabic learning. It calls for a paradigm in which Arabic education is not confined to grammar drills but becomes a medium for cultivating adab (ethical refinement), civilizational awareness, and digital literacy rooted in Islamic metaphysics.

Previous studies have examined various dimensions of Arabic pedagogy—ranging from linguistic approaches and communicative models to the integration of digital technology. For example, Al-Assaf et al. (2022) explored flipped classroom strategies, while Ritonga et al. (2025) focused on digital storytelling for twenty-first-century skills. Meanwhile, Huang et al. (2024) and Isser et al. (2024) introduced value-based education frameworks emphasizing ethical and spiritual learning. However, these studies often treat Islamic value integration and digital pedagogy as separate domains. Very few attempts have sought to merge them into a unified philosophical and practical framework that situates Arabic education within the broader mission of Islamic civilizational renewal.

This conceptual gap underscores the novelty of the present study. It proposes the “Madrasah of Civilization” model—a comprehensive framework that integrates three dimensions:

- a. Arabic linguistic and turāth proficiency (linking classical and communicative competence);
- b. Islamic ethical formation (adab integration); and
- c. Digital and global literacy.

Through this triadic integration, Arabic language education is repositioned not only as a subject of study but as a transformative platform for nurturing ethically grounded and

globally competent Muslim learners capable of contributing to the revival of Islamic civilization in the digital age.

1.4 Purpose and Contribution of the Study

Grounded in Islamic educational philosophy and critical hermeneutics, this conceptual study aims to formulate a theoretical and applicative reconstruction of Arabic language education aligned with the objectives of *tajdīd* (renewal) and *iḥyā'* (revival). The article examines how Arabic—viewed ontologically as the language of revelation, epistemologically as the medium of Islamic knowledge, and axiologically as the transmitter of values—can be revitalized to respond to contemporary educational challenges.

Unlike empirical studies relying on field data, this research synthesizes theoretical discourses, classical sources, and contemporary digital practices to construct a coherent civilizational framework. The philosophical lens of *ta'dīb* (value-oriented education) and *ru'yah Islamiyyah* (Islamic worldview) underpins the analysis, ensuring that language, ethics, and technology are harmonized rather than compartmentalized.

The study thus contributes to three domains of scholarly discourse:

- a. Theoretical – by offering an integrative civilizational framework for Arabic pedagogy;
- b. Pedagogical – by proposing adab-based and technology-supported learning designs applicable in Islamic institutions; and
- c. Civilizational – by repositioning Arabic as a strategic instrument for ethical and intellectual renewal in the Muslim world.

Ultimately, this reconstruction envisions Arabic education as a dynamic interface between *turāth* (heritage) and *tajdīd* (renewal), between the preservation of tradition and the harnessing of digital innovation. The goal is to transform Arabic from a subject of memorization into a living, value-laden platform for nurturing a generation capable of articulating Islamic civilization anew in the digital age.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative conceptual design grounded in Islamic educational philosophy and critical hermeneutics. The conceptual design was selected because the objective is not to measure variables empirically but to reconstruct theoretical and philosophical foundations for Arabic language education in the context of Islamic civilizational renewal. As defined by hermeneutic inquiry, this design allows researchers to interpret, critique, and synthesize meanings from classical (*turāth*) and contemporary sources to generate a coherent educational model (Bhatti & Basri, 2025; Huang et al., 2024).

The study focuses on answering a central question: How can Arabic language education be reimagined as a catalyst for reviving Islamic civilization in the digital age? To address this, the research process integrates textual interpretation, comparative literature synthesis, and philosophical reflection on language, values, and technology within the Islamic worldview.

2.2 Data Sources

The data used in this conceptual study were entirely secondary and drawn from four major categories:

- a. Classical Islamic scholarship (*turāth*), including the works of foundational Muslim thinkers such as al-Ghazālī, Ibn Khaldūn, and Ibn Sīnā, who developed key ideas on *ta'dīb*, *adab*, and civilizational knowledge. These texts provided the metaphysical and ethical foundations for Arabic as a civilizational language.
- b. Contemporary peer-reviewed journals (2022–2025) focusing on Arabic pedagogy, digital education, Islamic philosophy, and value-based learning. This time frame was deliberately chosen because it reflects the post-pandemic educational shift toward digitalization and hybrid learning in Islamic institutions (Maghfurin et al., 2025; Moradi, 2025; Ritonga et al., 2024).
- c. Educational policy and curriculum documents, such as UNESCO's Education 2030 agenda and national strategic plans for Arabic language programs in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Gulf states. These sources contextualize the reconstruction within global education frameworks and local Islamic policy priorities.
- d. Digital pedagogy models and case studies, including mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), Learning Management Systems (LMS), simulation-based instruction, and blended learning designs that integrate Arabic with Islamic ethics and digital literacy (Hussein, 2025; Ritonga et al., 2025).

Each of these sources was analyzed for philosophical coherence, relevance to Arabic education, and potential to support civilizational reconstruction.

2.3 Analytical Procedure

To ensure methodological clarity and theoretical transparency, the study followed a three-stage analytical procedure:

- a. Identification of Core Themes. The researchers first identified recurring themes from both *turāth* and modern literature, including the ontological status of Arabic, epistemological integration of knowledge, and axiological orientation toward *adab* and digital ethics.
- b. Thematic Synthesis and Hermeneutic Interpretation. Using critical hermeneutics, each theme was examined across historical and contemporary sources. Comparative synthesis enabled the articulation of philosophical continuities between classical Islamic pedagogy and digital transformation trends in modern Arabic education (Mellal, 2025; Moradi, 2025).
- c. Conceptual Reconstruction. Insights from the previous steps were organized into an integrative framework named "Madrasah of Civilization." This framework synthesizes three interrelated dimensions—(1) *turāth*-based and communicative Arabic proficiency, (2) *adab*-centered ethical formation, and (3) technology-enhanced global literacy. Together, these dimensions constitute a value-driven reconstruction of Arabic education suitable for twenty-first-century Islamic learning environments.

2.4 Validity and Reflexivity

Although this study is conceptual rather than empirical, theoretical validity was maintained through triangulation of sources and reflective consistency. Triangulation was achieved by comparing classical Islamic theories with modern pedagogical frameworks from reputable journals and international policy documents. This process ensured that conceptual interpretations were not limited to theological exegesis but aligned with current educational realities (Isser et al., 2024; Nulty et al., 2025).

Reflexivity was also integral to the process. The researchers continuously evaluated their interpretive stance within the Islamic epistemological framework, ensuring that conclusions remained faithful to Qur'anic principles of knowledge (*'ilm*), wisdom (*ḥikmah*), and justice (*'adālah*). This reflexive awareness prevented the conflation of Western technocratic paradigms with the spiritual aims of Islamic education.

2.5 Outcome of the Analytical Process

The outcome of this methodological process is the formulation of the Madrasah of Civilization model, a conceptual synthesis linking linguistic mastery, moral consciousness, and technological innovation. The model provides a blueprint for reconstructing Arabic language education that is both spiritually grounded and globally responsive. It demonstrates how adab-based pedagogy and digital literacy can co-exist within an integrative civilizational vision, supporting learners to embody both *'ālim* (knowledgeable) and *muḥsin* (virtuous) identities in the digital era.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 The Philosophical Foundations of Arabic Education

The reconstruction of Arabic language education is anchored in three interrelated philosophical pillars: ontology, epistemology, and axiology. These dimensions not only provide a theoretical framework for Arabic pedagogy but also shape the moral, intellectual, and civilizational orientation of learners within the Islamic worldview.

Ontologically, Arabic is more than a medium of communication; it is the divine language chosen for revelation. The Qur'an states, "Indeed, We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an so that you may understand" (Q.S. Yūsof: 2), which affirms that Arabic carries metaphysical significance beyond its linguistic form. It functions as the vessel of *ma'nā ilāhī* (divine meaning) and the primary means by which human beings access revelation, thereby linking the act of reading (*qirā'ah*) with the act of knowing (*ma'rifah*). In this light, Arabic education is not merely linguistic training but a spiritual journey that aligns human understanding with divine order (Al-Naemi, 2024; Damayanti, 2025).

Epistemologically, the mastery of Arabic is central to accessing the Islamic intellectual tradition. The disciplines of *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, *fiqh*, and *'ilm al-kalām* are all built upon the precision of linguistic comprehension. Classical scholars, including al-Ghazālī, Ibn Taymiyyah, and al-Suyūṭī, asserted that understanding Sharī'ah requires a deep understanding of Arabic because the structure of divine law is encoded within its linguistic system (Safiai et al., 2024). Therefore, Arabic pedagogy must move beyond rote learning of grammar toward cultivating

semantic reasoning, textual interpretation, and rhetorical sensitivity. This epistemic stance positions Arabic not as a subject but as a method of knowing—a linguistic path to truth.

Axiologically, Arabic embodies and transmits Islamic moral values such as *ḥikmah* (wisdom), *ʿadālah* (justice), and *raḥmah* (compassion). The morphology of Arabic itself reflects an ethical order: the root cluster *ʿ-l-m* generates *ʿālim*, *maʿlūm*, *taʿlīm*—a continuum linking knowledge, teaching, and ethical action (Sidek et al., 2023). Hence, Arabic learning must cultivate *malakāt akhlāqīyyah*—moral dispositions that unite intellect and character. This reinforces that *taʿlīm* (instruction) without *taʿdīb* (moral discipline) leads to cognitive development without ethical consciousness, contradicting the holistic spirit of Islamic education.

3.2 Strategic Gaps in Current Arabic Curricula

Despite its sacred and civilizational role, contemporary Arabic pedagogy often suffers from reductionism. In many universities and pesantren, the approach remains grammar-centric, dominated by memorization of *naḥw* and *ṣarf* rules, while communication, interpretation, and creativity receive limited attention. Students may excel in parsing classical sentences but struggle to comprehend journalistic or academic texts, reflecting an imbalance between linguistic accuracy and communicative competence (Almelhes & Alsaiani, 2024).

This issue extends to teacher practices. Teacher-centered instruction, textbook dependency, and insufficient digital adaptation hinder students' engagement with authentic Arabic usage (Al-Assaf et al., 2022). Moreover, many curricula treat Arabic as a religious obligation rather than an intellectual instrument of civilization. Cultural content—Arabic literature, philosophy, and contemporary Arab thought—is often marginalized, resulting in decontextualized learning (Bohnacker et al., 2025).

The digital divide exacerbates these problems. Although various Learning Management Systems (LMS) and mobile applications have been developed for Arabic learning, their use in Islamic higher education remains sporadic and uncoordinated (Maghfurin et al., 2025; Ritonga et al., 2025). Educators often lack digital pedagogy skills or hesitate to integrate technology due to concerns about secular influence. This has created a paradox: while Islamic civilization historically embraced intellectual innovation, its modern educational practices sometimes resist technological renewal.

Consequently, the current generation of learners is linguistically trained but civilizationally disconnected—technically able to recite Arabic words but unable to embody their ethical and intellectual meanings in daily life.

3.3 Civilizational Framework for Reconstruction

Responding to these gaps, the study formulates the Madrasah of Civilization framework, which repositions Arabic language education as a bridge between heritage (*turāth*), moral formation, and digital literacy. This model views Arabic not only as a linguistic skill but as a dynamic process of cultivating *ʿaql* (intellect), *qalb* (heart), and *ʿamal* (ethical action).

- a. Arabic Language – Communicative and Turāth-Based Proficiency: Learners must master both classical and modern registers of Arabic to bridge scriptural understanding and contemporary relevance. Integrating Qurʿanic semantics with

current discourse fosters dual competence: the ability to access classical texts and to engage modern communication. For instance, IUM’s Blended Arabic Program combines Qur’anic analysis with online debates on global ethical issues, demonstrating that classical insight and digital communication can coalesce into a single pedagogical continuum (Ritonga et al., 2024).

- b. Islamic Ethics – Adab Integration: Ethics is the axis of knowledge. Following al-Ghazālī’s doctrine of *ta’dīb*, effective Arabic instruction must emphasize moral awareness in both teaching and learning processes (Nulty et al., 2025). Teachers embody the moral compass of language, guiding students not only toward *ḥusn al-bayān* (eloquence) but also *ḥusn al-khuluq* (virtue). This is particularly urgent in digital learning contexts, where anonymity can erode civility. Hybrid classes at UIN Jakarta that embed Qur’anic ethics in online writing reflections show how adab can regulate digital behavior and cultivate *akhlāq al-ta’allum*—the ethics of learning itself.
- c. Global Literacy – Technology and Critical Thinking: In the digital era, knowledge is mediated through technology. The Madrasah of Civilization model situates technological competence within the moral boundaries of Islam, emphasizing technological *iḥsān*—using innovation for good (Chat et al., 2025; Liu, 2025). Tools such as AI-based Arabic chatbots or virtual reality storytelling platforms can expand linguistic immersion when guided by ethical frameworks. This dimension transforms Arabic learning into an exercise in digital adab, producing learners who are not only fluent but also digitally responsible Muslims.

Together, these components elevate Arabic learning from linguistic training into civilizational education, nurturing students who can think ethically, communicate effectively, and engage globally while remaining rooted in Islamic values.

Table 3.1. The Madrasah of Civilization Conceptual Framework

Dimension	Core Focus	Pedagogical Application	Expected Outcome
Arabic Language	Integration of <i>turāth</i> -based and communicative competence	Hybrid instruction combining Qur’anic semantics, classical texts, and modern discourse	Linguistic accuracy and communicative fluency
Islamic Ethics (Adab)	Moral and spiritual formation through <i>ta’dīb</i>	Ethical reflection and value-based assignments in digital Arabic classes	Internalization of <i>adab</i> and ethical communication

Digital & Global Literacy	21st-century skills integrated with Islamic worldview	Use of LMS, AI tools, and collaborative projects guided by ethical principles	Critical thinking, collaboration, and responsible digital conduct
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(Source: Authors' synthesis, 2025)

3.4 Operational Application of the Model

To operationalize the Madrasah of Civilization, educational institutions can apply four strategic dimensions: curriculum, teacher development, community engagement, and assessment reform.

- a. Curriculum Integration: Courses on Arabic grammar, Qur'anic exegesis, literature, and communication can be merged into cross-disciplinary modules emphasizing ethical reasoning and global literacy. For example, students might analyze Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt on interpersonal ethics and then design digital campaigns in Arabic promoting respectful online discourse—linking linguistic skill with moral activism.
- b. Teacher Professional Development: Educators must be trained in both digital literacy and Islamic pedagogy (Alfiras, 2024). Workshops on AI-assisted teaching, blended learning, and digital ethics can empower Arabic instructors to utilize technology without compromising spiritual integrity. A “digital *mu'allim*” becomes a mentor who models *adab al-ta'lim* through both content and conduct.
- c. Community and Collaborative Projects: Students can produce Arabic digital content—podcasts, blogs, or short documentaries—on themes of Islamic civilization, sustainability, and social harmony. Such projects foster creative communication, civic engagement, and the integration of *ilm* with *'amal*.
- d. Assessment and Reflective Practice: Assessment systems should extend beyond grammar accuracy to include criteria such as creativity, collaboration, ethical behavior, and cultural awareness. The ideal outcome is a graduate who reflects the *maqāṣid al-tarbiyah al-Islāmiyyah*: linguistic competence fused with moral excellence.

Empirical examples reinforce these pathways. Research at Ma'had Al-Zaytun, for instance, found that integrating blended Arabic instruction with digital Qur'anic resources significantly improved learners' motivation and comprehension. Technology, when guided by *adab*, becomes a means of spiritual reinforcement rather than distraction.

3.5 Philosophical and Pedagogical Implications

The reconstructed model carries multilayered implications for the philosophy and practice of Islamic education.

- a. Philosophical Implication: It reaffirms Arabic as the axis of epistemology in Islam—a bridge between divine revelation and human rationality. By internalizing Qur'anic language, learners reorient their worldview toward *tawḥīd* (unity of truth). This transforms the study of Arabic into a spiritual discipline and a civilizational act of remembrance (*dhikr al-'ilm*).

- b. Pedagogical Implication: The model urges educators to balance *ta'lim* (instruction) with *tarbiyah* (nurturing) and *ta'dīb* (ethical formation). Arabic pedagogy should encourage critical inquiry (*tafakkur*), creative communication (*ibdā'*), and moral reflection (*muḥāsabah*). In this sense, the Arabic classroom becomes a microcosm of the madrasah as a civilization—where intellect, character, and faith intersect.
- c. Civilizational Implication: Arabic is repositioned as a tool for the revival of the ummah's moral and intellectual capital. It becomes the medium for articulating ethical responses to contemporary global issues such as artificial intelligence, environmental sustainability, and digital ethics (Islam et al., 2025; Poljarevic, 2024). Arabic thus serves as both a symbolic and practical language of renewal, connecting Muslims to their heritage while empowering them to shape modernity with integrity.

In essence, Arabic education—when reconstructed through the Madrasah of Civilization model—represents a living synthesis of faith, ethics, and technology. It reawakens the civilizational spirit of Islam in a time when language, culture, and morality face unprecedented fragmentation. By anchoring innovation in revelation and guiding technology with *adab*, the future of Arabic education can once again become a beacon for the unity of knowledge and the flourishing of Islamic civilization.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that reconstructing Arabic language education in the digital age is not merely a pedagogical reform but a civilizational imperative. Arabic must once again assume its historical and ontological role as both the medium of revelation and the foundation of knowledge in Islam. Through the philosophical lenses of *ta'dīb* and *ru'yah Islamiyyah*, the study synthesizes classical Islamic pedagogy with contemporary digital innovation into a unified model—the Madrasah of Civilization. This model demonstrates that Arabic education, when grounded in ethical values and supported by technology, can cultivate learners who are linguistically proficient, spiritually grounded, and globally literate.

To translate this conceptual framework into practice, several implementation indicators are proposed. First, curricular integration, where Arabic instruction aligns linguistic skills with moral reasoning and digital literacy, ensuring that technology reinforces *adab* rather than undermining it. Second, teacher capacity building, emphasizing professional development in value-based digital pedagogy to equip educators with both technological competence and ethical discernment. Third, institutional collaboration and innovation, fostering cross-disciplinary partnerships among universities, *pesantren*, and educational technologists to develop Islamic digital platforms and culturally embedded content. These indicators provide an operational roadmap for transforming Arabic programs from grammar-centered instruction into holistic, civilization-oriented education.

Ultimately, the reconstruction of Arabic education represents a strategic movement toward the revival of Islamic civilization (*iḥyā' al-ḥaḍārah al-Islāmiyyah*) in the twenty-first century. By integrating language, values, and technology, Arabic learning becomes an act of intellectual worship and cultural renewal—preparing a generation capable of articulating Islam's ethical message in a global, digitalized world. This study thus reaffirms that Arabic is

not only the language of the Qur'an but also the language of civilization, a timeless bridge connecting revelation, reason, and reform.

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