

A Comparative Study on the Theory of Existential Sciences in the Holy Quran and the New Testament

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ABSTRACT

The development and advancement of the world and human beings' extreme dependence on experimental and sensual sciences has led to humans distancing from religion and religious teachings. The holy Quran pays special attention to learning and knowledge and constantly invites people to ration, thoughts and logic in its verses. One of the ways to achieve eternal happiness in this world and here after is to acquire knowledge. The holy Quran prioritizes the blood of martyr scientists. Due to the extreme conflict between religion and experimental logic between Muslim and non-Muslim scientists, this study aims to explore verses of the Quran containing science and experimental sciences and describe its view through a descriptive analytical comparative approach. It will also confront biased views and the church's extreme ideologies. This study will describe the following: "obligatory sciences in Islam's acceptance of empirical rationality in the Holy Quran, Covenants' perspective in empirical rationality, and scientists' perspective in the use of empirical sciences in the Holy Quran".

Keywords: Critique, Believers, Experimental Sciences, The Holy Quran, the New Testament.

1. Introduction

The Quran is a sign of the profit's truthfulness; therefore, it was the center of attention from its early days among Muslims and non-Muslims. After Muslims became acquainted with Greek sciences and adapted the Quran with empirical sciences in the second century, the interpretation of the Holy Quran found its way among interpreters, philosophers, theologians and narrators. In the last century, Islamic Societies have paid more attention to interpretation so much that many scientists and interpreters and even professionals of

empirical sciences came to interpret the verses through empirical sciences and prove its miraculous aspects. However, the aim of each individual or group of interpreting the holy Quran differed. The appearance of the verses show no details or scientific evidence, but, there are signs and symbols to scientific contexts. Scientific examples in the Quran lead the way to theology and since the purpose of the Quran is to describe God's divinity and turn peoples' attention to God, scientific examples from the heavens, the earth, the seas and the creation of the human beings have been provided. Therefore, there is no need for a thorough description of each context, rather, an implicit sign will suffice.

The holy Quran is prophet Muhammad's miracle which was descended for the guidance of human beings. The Holy Quran was sent to the prophet with an Arabic and vivid language so even normal people can easily understand and take advantage of, and if the purpose of the verse was not clear the prophet would clarify. Unfortunately, this golden age did not last very long when the prophet passed away. This was where the need to interpret the Holy Quran became essential especially that the number of Muslims increased around the world and thousands of people faced new questions and ideas about Islam and Muslims. Shiites accompanied Imam Ali and the Ahl al-Bayt (PBUH) and others accompanied other companions of the holy Prophet. Therefore, different variations of interpretations were presented which resulted in the science of interpretation. This science has continued to the present day.

2. Science of obligation in Islam

There are different types of applications in Islam. We refer to two in the following.

- a. Obligatory duties; things that all Muslims are obligated to do such as prayers and fasting etc.
- b. Kafaee duties; things that all Muslims are obligated to do but if one or more people take responsibility, others are not obligated of the duties such as defending one's land or burying a Muslim.

Obligated and required sciences and technologies is a type of Kafaee duty. For example, if an Islamic Society needs a practitioner or a pilot, it is required of everyone to learn the science or technique, and if no one participates, all are guilty for not responding to their Kafaee duties. If a sufficient number participates and the communities' needs are met, it will be waived for others. Sciences such as jurisprudence, medicine, tailoring and other industrial professions are a necessity in the Islamic community. Imam Saadiq disciplined his students in various fields. For example, he encouraged and trained Momen Taq and Hisham Ibn Hakam in theology and Jabir Ibn Hayyan in natural sciences (such as chemistry) (Sarafrazi, Bitar, p. 69).

If Islam pays attention to absolute knowledge, are magic and industries who produce atomic bombs that destroy humanity, encouraged by Islam? To answer this question, we must say that Islam pays much attention to science and mentions that some sciences should be avoided. It also concerns science abuse, because science is like a sword that can be both useful and destructive. Science (Empirical or Divine) if used to approach God is useful and if not, will not be beneficiary for human beings. Therefore Islam has abandoned acquiring some Sciences (Ibid 1999, pp. 141-142).

For instance, magic can harm others and bring about conflict and enmity and Islamic jurists have stated different types of magic and the reasons for its sanctity (Najafi, 1981, vol. 22, p. 75). Even in some narrations, the order to slay a sorcerer or magician has been issued (Hor amoli, 1409 AH, vol. 12, p. 7). (Of course, with in special conditions mentioned in the science of jurisprudence). There is no difference of opinion among Muslims in this ruling because of a holy verse in Surah Baqara (Harut and Marut) (Baqara / 102).

Other sciences, such as priesthood, are also forbidden in Islam; the science of unseen news about the future (through Jinns or others ...) (Najafi, 1981, vol. 22, p. 89).

As for weaponry, if they are used for the purpose of defending Islam and Muslims, preparation and training are essential, however, if they are used for the oppression of and attack on other human beings it is *haram*; This is called the deputy of the oppressors (Ibid., Vol. 22, p. 51).

Some Islamic narrations consider true science to be limited to the verses and traditions of *Ahkam*: "Science is of three things: knowledge of principles of beliefs, knowledge of virtues and morality and desirable attributes one should adorn, and knowledge of religious rules and practical duties". Any other science is

considered a virtue, and virtue cannot substitute basic sciences."¹ (Rishshahri, 1988, vol. 6, p. 523). Other sciences are considered as *fazl*. Hence, does Islam not pay attention to natural sciences and empirical rationality? There are several answers to this question:

A- Such narrations enumerate examples of science. In other narrations, the contents and sciences are expressed in a different way. In some narrations, the number of sciences is considered infinite, and in others, they are considered to be of four types (jurisprudence, medicine, syntax and astronomy). Some narrations consider science as of two types. (Najafi, Mohammad Hassan, 1981, vol. 6, p. 527). Restriction in these narrations are additional and not real restrictions.

B-

B- These narrations are contrary to narrations that consider other sciences as real science. For example, narrations considering medicine and astronomy as sciences are in conflict with this narration (Rieshahri, 1988, vol. 6, p. 527). Therefore, its emergence and limitations cannot be cited nor can it be obtained; however, we must carry emphasize on these sciences (verses and Ahkam, etc). The subject of these sciences is more important since they are more honorable.

3. The results of accepting experimental sciences in the Holy Quran:

Accepting the Quran's scientific and empirical rationality requires interpreting verses in accordance to modern sciences:

3-1. Enhanced inclination towards the Quran:

Advances in experimental sciences cannot deprive human beings of the holy Quran's guidance and knowledge. With progresses in knowledge, humans face more precise and delicate questions, which answering them is not possible without inspiration from the heavens and the teachings of the Holy Quran (Javadi Amoli, 2009, p. 307). Hence, the Quran implicitly refers to some scientific matters (Ibid., 2009, p. 167). When discovered by humans, they realize the eternal divine knowledge and miracle of the Quran and acknowledge that no source is capable of this creation expect for the only source of wisdom. The growing tendency towards Islam and the Holy Quran is the best proof of this case (Javadi Amoli, 2009, p. 307).

3-2. Preventing the idea of distinguishing science and religion:

In the Middle Ages, clergymen were distorted by Christianity and considered any new ideas or scientific progress to be anti-religious; Hence, the issue of distinguishing religion and science was raised. As a result, religion became isolated and confined to the private and the individual. But the Quran, the everlasting miracle of the Prophet (PBUH), contains scientific material that, when clarified, will make awareness and show that Islam is not only incompatible with science, but also confirms religion. It will also deepen our understanding of the Quran and the true meaning of its verses (Rezaei Isfahani, 2007, p. 52).

3-3. Experimental sciences and religion theory of Interference

Throughout the centuries, religious scholars and scientists were inseparable, and sometimes one person was a philosopher, theologian, poet, writer, jurist, and physician all at once. The practical result of this method was confusing sciences and their subjects, and sometimes improper commenting in the wrong field. Gradually, science and philosophy separated from religion, but common areas for each were not defined, and their exact relationship was shrouded in obscurity. Hence, different scientists (Philosophers, theologians, commentators, and scholars of the experimental sciences) tried to clarify the exact boundaries of experimental sciences with religion. Some turned to philosophy or empirical sciences for the sake of their survival (Ibid., P. 224). We refer to some theories related to science and religion in this regard.

Some believe that the subject of experimental sciences (nature) is a subpart of religion, because religion came from God and he has the right to comment on all subjects, even on experimental sciences. Therefore, experimental scientists must have full adherence to religion and, in fact, take the subject of their research from religion and test and develop ideas in accordance to it. If their research results in anything contrary to religion, it will be rejected; because human experience is presumably infallible, but divine revelation is not.

¹ «انما العلم ثلاثة أیه محکمه او فريضه عادله او سنه قائمه و ما خلا هن فهو فضل»

For example, if biologists decide to study the evolution of human beings, they must first study religion, and if religion states:

“Man was created with no introduction and stages of evolution, one should no longer seek to investigate human evolution from previous animals, but to study and research in the circle of stability of species (Rezaei Isfahani, 2007, p. 225). This theory manifested in the Christian world during the Middle Ages. Science was practiced in alignment with this theory, and if a scientist, contrary to the teachings of the Bible, expressed a theory or scientific law, he was to be punished. Galileo was tried for believing in the motion of the earth because it was contrary to the texts provided in the Bible (Sarafrazi, Bitá, p. 17).

Muslims who believe that all human sciences can be deduced from the appearances of the verses of the Quran, would ultimately face the same results. If experimental scientists get answers only from the Quran instead of experiencing and researching scientific problems, then where do scientific issues lead? (Rezaei Isfahani, 2007, p. 226).

Even though the Quran includes principles of science and religious teachings related to human guidance in appearance, it does not express them in all its details and does not intend to do otherwise. Over time, Christians have come to the conclusion that the Bible is not a divine revelation to claim that it has not been distorted, rather it is the result of the narrators' thoughts and interpretations.

On the other hand, empirical sciences cannot be limited to religious subjects and precepts, otherwise sciences progress and advancement will stop or move extremely slow (*ibid.*, P. 226).

Ian Barbour believes that "biblical advances have given rise to new approaches to revelation; in Germany and then in England, in universities and then in seminaries, objective methods of historical and literary research such as those common in the study of ancient documents were used to analyze the Bible. Research of the first five books of the Old Testament, all attributed to Moses, shows signs of multi-authorism.

A careful examination of the stories and differences in styles, words, and thoughts, indicated that these books (*Asfar Khamseh*), in their current form, are a collection of several narratives and belong to different periods. In recent studies of the Bible, attention has been paid to views and personal interests of ancient writers as well as their goals in writing these texts, and the historical environment and requirements of their time (*Ibid.*, pp. 226-227).

4. The Testaments' views in empirical rationality:

We previously mentioned Islam and the Quran's attention to science. The word "science" has been mentioned more than 750 times and science and scholars have been praised in many cases. According to the Torah and the Bible, this can be discussed in two ways:

First; Christians' and Jews' practices throughout history and the formation of Inquisition courts in the Middle Ages (such as the trial of Galileo for his belief in the earth's motion) and burning thousands of people due to scientific ideas can be examined (Sarafrazi, Bitá, p. 12). Of course, this is not relevant to our discussion, because it may be argued that Christians' and Jews' practices are not actually related to the essence of Judaism and Christianity. The criterion of judgment, in comparing religions, is their scripture and divine books, not practices. Some followers may have misunderstood subjects, abused religion and committed crimes in the name of religion (Rezaei Isfahani, 2007, p. 144).

Second; We put aside good and bad deeds regarding Muslims, Christians, and Jews, and examine and compare the holy books, as well as use the opinions of great scholars in the East and the West. By holy books we mean, the Torah, Bible, and appendices. The Bible and Torah are commonly used and are available to us. With no doubt, the true Torah and Bible that Prophet Moses (PBUH) and Jesus (PBUH) offered to their people were faultless and appropriate for their time because it was from God almighty himself (*Ibid.*, P. 144).

A: The word science, in the Bible, is an attribute of God, meaning that he knows all before their occurrence in the universe. This is known as "eternal knowledge", by which God has chosen believers for their obedience (Hawks, 1998, p. 617).

Wisdom has various meanings in the Bible, including shrewdness, knowledge in actions and deeds, contemplation and vigilance, personal growth and development, the science of the body and astrology, and

finally philosophy and sophistry. True wisdom is the description and presence of God Almighty in one's intellect and life to the highest degree of perfection (Ibid., P. 326).

In the Epistle of Paul, God says, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart. Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe" (Bible 1987, 1 Corinthians, Chapter I, verses 20-19).

In the story of Adam and Eve, God introduces the forbidden tree, the tree of knowledge:

"You will not surely die, the serpent said to the woman. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked..." (Ibid., Genesis, Chapter 3, verses 8-9).

It can be concluded that the Bible does not give much importance to science and wisdom, at least not as much as the Quran, and in some cases, takes a stand against wisdom. That God has invalidated wisdom and preaches with ignorance. In another part, God forbids man from eating from the tree of knowledge (Rezaei Isfahani, 2007, p. 146)

The Holy Quran praises and encourages knowledge and scientists, and confronts ignorance, and even in Islam, the criterion of duty is intellect.

B. Some verses of the Torah and the Bible are incompatible with new knowledge and historical and scientific facts. The more science progresses, the more it is clarified. Dr. Bukay, conducted a comparative study between the Torah, the Bible, the Quran and science, and published the results in a book. He states: "The most obvious inconsistencies with new knowledge exist in the Genesis (Torah) and are related to three basic points: 1- The creation of the world and its stages. 2- The history of the creation of the world and the creation of human. 3- The story of Noah's flood. Then he examines the cases of contradiction" (Bukay, 1986, pp. 39-55).

Dr. Bukay mentions that, "There are very few expressions in the Bible that can cope with the data of new knowledge". He also says: "I personally willingly believe that Jesus (PBUH) was able to heal leprosy, but I cannot accept a valid textual view, that only twenty generations between the first man and Abraham (PBUH) believes, as the Gospel of Luke tells us" (Ibid., P. 118).

Elsewhere, Bukay says: "Matthew's fantasies, the famous contradictions between the Bibles, the distance from the facts, the inconsistencies with the data of new knowledge, and the successive distortions of the texts, cause the Bible to contain expressions exclusively derived from the human imagination" (Rezaei Isfahani, 2007, p. 151).

In the Quran however, there is no need to point out that not only is it incompatible with reason and science, but that scientific discoveries reveal the truths of the Quran every day. Dr. Bukay says in this regard: "Such a partnership, between the Quran and the new knowledge, is naturally surprising. Especially when it comes to homogenization, not incompatibility" (Ibid., P. 153). He continues: "What attracts the attention of someone who encounters such a text (the Quran) for the first time is the abundance of issues raised. Thus; The creation of astronomy, the description of the earth, animals and plants species, the creation of man, considering the many and great scientific errors in the ages, I did not find any trace of errors here. This made me ask myself that if a human being were the author of the Quran, how could he, in the seventh century (AD), write something that agrees with the cognitions of modern knowledge today?" (Rishshahri, 1988, p. 148).

According to the verses of the Quran, Torah and the Bible, and the confession of unbiased scholars (Western scholars), we conclude that the Quran's view towards science is radically different from the Bible's. The issue are its effects (the conflict between the Bible and scientific issues). In the seventeenth century, the issue of incompatibility of religion with science was raised, and resulted in repeated attacks on religion by philosophers (such as Hume and Marx, etc.). These attacks did not segregate the Bible from the Holy Quran, and the same thoughts spread to Islamic countries. As a result, Muslim intellectuals believed that religion

was incompatible with science (ibid., P. 149). The ill effects of this conflict in the Middle Ages took form of inquisitorial courts, and in the last few centuries, spread around the globe and led to ideas such as of Marxism, etc. Its effects are still visible to this day.

C- In this section, we point to some of the sayings of great western scientists.

Professor Henri Corbin says: "If the thought of Muhammad (PBUH) was superstitious and the Quran was not a divine revelation, he would never have dared to invite mankind to science. No one has invited to knowledge as much as Muhammad (PBUH) and the Quran have; to the extent that thought and intellect have been mentioned 950 times in the Quran" (Sedaqat, Bitā, p. 15).

Voltaire, a French philosopher and writer says: "I am sure that if the Quran and the Bible were presented to a non-religious person, he will choose the former for sure, because the book of Muhammad (PBUH) ostensibly teaches thoughts that are sufficiently based on reason" (Ibid., P. 16).

Dinvert, a European scientist states that, "it is necessary to admit that natural sciences, astronomy, philosophy and mathematics, which flourished in Europe, were generally adapted from the Quran; Europe was a city for Islam" (ibid., P. 22).

Dr. Greenier says: "I followed the verses of the Quran that concern medical, health and natural sciences ... and I found that they are in every way in line with worldly knowledge and science ..., Any one accompanied with art or science and compares the verses of the Quran with the art and science he has learned, undoubtedly he will convert to Islam; that is, if his intellect is sane and subtle" (Sedaqat, Bitā, p. 44).

5. The mindful views towards the use of experimental sciences:

5-1. Western thinkers' perspectives:

Kant believes that science and religion belong to the realm of phenomena and ethics, respectively. However, existentialists believe that science belongs to a realm beyond humans and religion belongs to the realm of human existence. Language analysts try to distinguish between the language of religion and science, and consider the language of religion as the agent and the language of science as the observer. Positivists, on the other hand, believe that scientific propositions were experiential and meaningful, and that religious propositions were inexperienced and meaningless.

Others, like instrumentalists (recent physicists), see science as a myth that has no external narrative. Religion speaks of reality and the external. Religion tools consider religion as a means of ascension and spirituality, so religion is a myth and does not report facts contrary to science.

Others believe that the differences of interpreting the verses by the prophets and by experience caused prophets to clarify the messages under the influence of the culture of the time. Even though they received it in its original form, they had to narrate them as such people would understand. The conflicts between science and religion arise from this issue (Rezaei Isfahani, 2002, pp. 236-237).

5-1-1. Denial of metaphysics: Metaphysics is the science that seeks a general description of the universe and knowledge of certainty. In other words, metaphysics longs for ontology so it can provide a general view of the universe. The philosophy of Aristotle, Plato, Mulla Sadra and Islamic philosophy are examples of human endeavors to establish ontology (Jamshidi, 2009, p. 93).

In the West, due to non-ecclesiastical scholars' frustration with the church's mastery of metaphysics and the authoritarian and medieval church's interpretation of religion and metaphysical concepts - religious or sacred – which were defined by the principles of scholastic philosophy, metaphysics eventually and gradually exited the realm of science. That is, the monopolization of metaphysics by the church was a factor in the rejection of metaphysics by scientists in the post-medieval period (Nietzsche, 1998, p. 53). Even today, the use of the term metaphysical for an idea or speech is sometimes a form of humiliation in the west. With Kant's philosophy, the rise and fall of anti-metaphysics was announced. Similar to in the positivist tendencies, the claims of metaphysics were considered meaningless. Although some have argued to revive metaphysics, it has not been able to regain its former status to date. The deprivation of science from metaphysical foundations of postmodernism was considered a virtue. Therefore, in the world of the deceased, any issue that deals with metaphysical debates or is based on metaphysical basis must be omitted from the field of science (Kant, 1983, p. 8).

David Hume, who considered only mathematics and the experimental sciences as real science, rejects the first philosophy and metaphysics: “What inconvenience and damage we will cause when we enter a library! We will look at a philosophical book and ask: Does this book have a single article based on quantity and number? The answer is no. Is there an experimental study about the truth? The answer is no. Then we shall burn it; Because it consists of nothing but delusions” (Barbour, 2008, p. 69).

5-1-2. Denial of religion: The second issue related to scientific endeavors in the West is the denial of the authority of religion. One should not turn to religion in matters of the world, because it has no authority in cognitive matters. In particular, the precedence of these judgments over the church's practices researches such as of Copernicus, Clapper, and Galileo reinforced this view. A large number of books were written on the conflict between science and religion in the West and all show the prevailing mentality of Western scholars about religion. Generally, they indicate that religion should not explain the truth and explanations should be left to science (Bagheri, 2003, p. 208).

5-1-3. Empiricism: With the failure of metaphysics and the perception of conflict between religion and science, scientific debates based on empiricism gradually came to fruition, and the efforts of Copernicus, Clapper, and Galileo, and later in continuation of Newtonian physics were results of experiences that showed cognition was universally conventional. In empiricism there is neither endless metaphysical controversies nor abstract debates of the first philosophy; Rather, empiricism sought a science that, in addition to having the necessary consistency and objectivity, could also change the human world. The combination of these factors shaped empiricism in the West, and gradually became the basis of scientific endeavors. Even in human sciences, such as psychology and sociology, empirical methods must be used to investigate certain issues. Resorting to any means other than experience was considered outside the field of science (Nasr, 1998, p. 52). In this regard, John Locke states that the mind is a white piece of paper and all it has it has of the senses (Russell, 1988, vol. 2, p. 99).

The experience of belief among positivist philosophers reached its peak, so much that the claims of religion, ethics and philosophy are considered meaningless (Ayer, 2006, p. 122).

First, we must examine the current of empiricism in the west - especially since science in the discussion of religion is considered as empirical science – and observe the foundations of empirical sciences development, and understand its beneficial foundations. Today, however, the claims of empiricism have been criticized by Western philosophers, and empiricism is becoming more moderate. Even some philosophers believe that no knowledge arises based on mere experience, but aspects of religious, value and metaphysical beliefs can be traced in all human sciences (Bert, 2010, p. 12; Golshani, 2006, P. 67)

All schools in the West are different interpretations of empiricism (Chalmers, 2008, p. 75). Murad Farhadpour, in the introduction of the book *Philosophy, Knowledge and Truth by Friedrich Nietzsche*, says: “In spite of all the achievements of the philosophy of science, most scientists to date have clung to positivism or other forms of objectivism and empiricism” (Nietzsche, 2010, p. 37).

5-2. The view of Muslim thinkers: Muslim scientists deal with the conflict between science and religion in the following ways:

- 1- Patience and silence in facing conflicts between science and religion is the best solution because, scientific theories of suspicion changes over time and religious appearances will be proved.
- 2- Capturing the appearances of verses is the last solution. This action is only correct when scientific contents have been conclusively proven.
- 3- The appearances of verses are the source of obtaining facts that can issue the real verdict and be presented as evidence in scientific issues (so the appearances of religion take precedence over science).
- 4- Details within sciences, when religious propositions are in conflict with scientific propositions; that is, if the scientific proposition and theory are not proven, the appearances of the verses take precedence, and if scientific theories, by rational or sensory reason, reach proof and certainty according to reality, they are parallel to the appearances of the verses (proposition). Sometimes our understanding of the verse can change by a definite scientific analogy.
5. Distinguishing religion and knowledge is one of the proposed solutions to resolve the conflict between science and religion. Apparent conflict between our understanding of religion and scientific propositions

occurs, and accordingly our understanding may be at fault or can change, so there is no established and real conflict between science and religion (Rezaei Isfahani, 2007, pp. 238-238).

Conclusion

Wise and mindful thinkers of various religions and faiths have always tried to establish a relationship between experimental sciences and religion. In this study, we first dealt with obligatory sciences in Islam and then presented the results of accepting experimental sciences in the Holy Quran, which include more inclination towards the Quran, prevention from distinguishing science and religion, and combination of experimental sciences and religion. Finally, we referred to Western and Muslim thinkers' viewpoints in regard to the relationship between religion and experimental sciences. Some found the solution in distinguishing realism and non-realism, and others brought religion to its knees towards empirical sciences. Similar to the opponents of church owners, absolute interpretations of religious texts against science was rejected, due to the strictness of the Christian clergy regarding empirical rationality of the metaphysical. On the other hand, Muslim thinkers have taken very different approaches: some make a complete adaptation between the Quran and experimental findings, some believe in moderation between religion and experimental sciences, and others have denied the relation between the Quran and experimental sciences entirely and do not believe in the specification of the Quran and religion to worldly affairs.

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