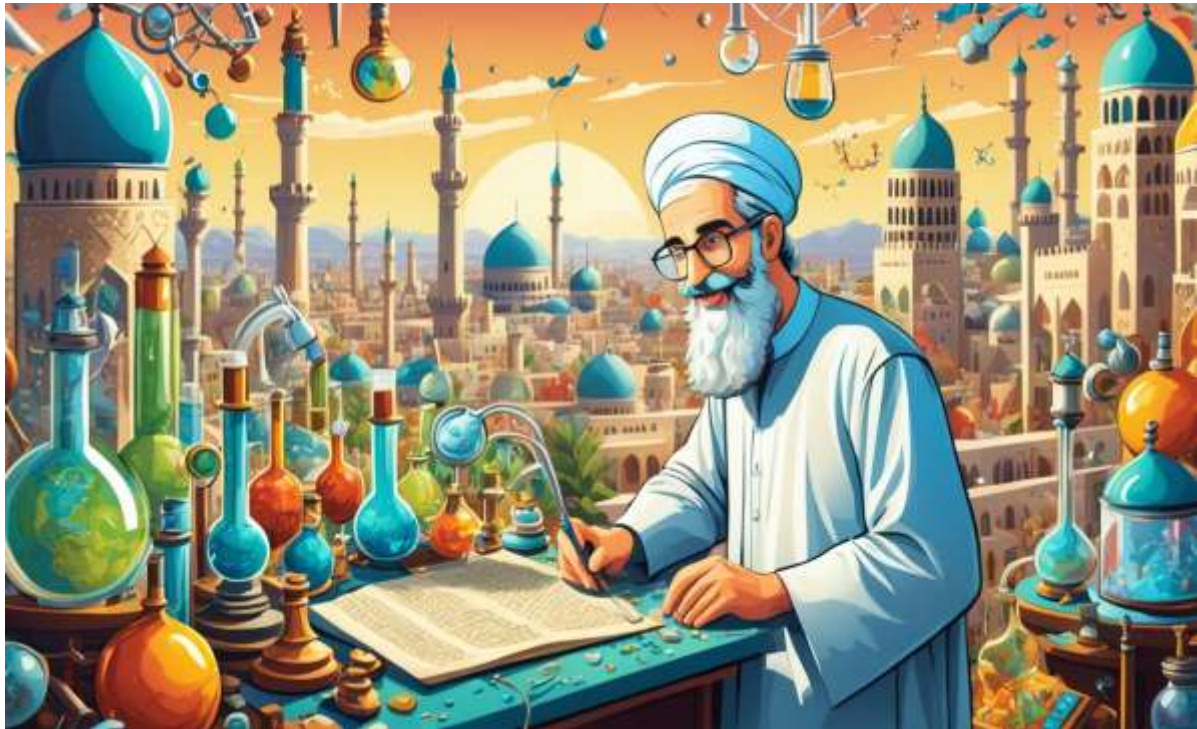




Science Understanding of Islam

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In many societies it is tried to place the mind in an efficient way that Islam and Science conflict. It is asserted that Islam is dogmatic thinking and it hinders to people from social and scientific activities. In fact, these ideas are asserted by some movements of thoughts such as rationalism, positivism in the West for a long time. They have put forward this idea by asserting that the medieval bigotry has caused this situation. The ideas of these movements have just based on the provisions of the Bible that had been distorted that day. They have asserted either that the science and religious are conflicted.

Definition of Science

Throughout history it is given many definitions of science. However, to give a complete and absolute definition in every respect has not been possible until now. One of the most prominent Islamic scholars Fakhr al –Din al-Razi (1149-1209) said that to define the science exactly is not possible. According to Razi the science is a belief in accordance with the events.

The diversity of topics and methods of science has varied throughout history. However, taking into consideration the basic elements that characterize science, the following definition can be given: ‘The Science is a sample of knowledge which is obtained by thinking in a certain way around a particular topic.

Throughout human history, understanding of science and the scientific developments have gone through many phases. It has been changes in the characteristics of science and the science developments from the old times up to today. In every period of time and in every society it has been formed an understanding of science through science developments in their internal dynamics and by the impact of external factors. To view these details should refer to a book of History of Science.

Science Understanding of Islam

Islam has given a great value to science. The first word of the first verse of Holy Quran is ‘Read’ (Al-‘Alaq , verse 1). So the first order of Allah to his Messenger has become ‘Read’. The same order is valid for all Muslims. Science can not be learned without reading. Science is very honorable for Islam. This honor regards the human being as superior to the angels. Science begins in Islam at first by knowing the names of God. With knowing these names all the created things in the world and hereafter can be both knowable and comprehensible. However, against them man should be very humble. Because people should be aware of to be a creation of a blood clot.

People could get its place in the universe only with science. It should perceive that the science gained is a gift of Lord Kerem. Knowledge of everything created by God is written in the Lawh-i Mahfuz (tablet protected) by Him. Therefore it is referred to us that this knowledge is taught by our Lord through writing them

with pen on the tablet. Some of what is written is taken place over time and is seen by the people. People tries to understand the secrets of the world and heavens called the universe with the ability and the opportunity given to him by God and thus has been informed. Having knowledge in this way has been possible merely by giving him the ability of understand and apply. So the science is a set of knowledge associated with the teaching of God to human being which human does not know before.

There are many verses in the Quran and many hadiths of Prophet (saw) about the value of science. There are also many expressions of Islamic scholars on this matter. We want to give a few examples below:

- ‘... Say, ‘Are those who knows equal to those who do not know?...’ (Al-Zumar, verse 9)
- ‘He taught Adam all the names, then He set them before the angels and said, ‘Tell Me the names of these, if what you say true.’ (Al- Baqarah, verse 31)
- ‘Such are the comparisons We make for people, but only those understand them who have knowledge.’ (Al-‘Ankabut, verse 43)
- ‘Scholars are heirs of the prophets.’ (Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi)
- ‘Tribe’s death is lesser scholar’s death.’ (Taberân, Abu-d-Darda)
- ‘Scholars are superior to the believers who worship at seventy degrees.’ (Abu Huraira)
- ‘My Son! Attend the community of Scholars’ (Hz. Luqman)
- ‘Ink of scholars would be heavier if weighted by the blood of the Muslims who has died for Islam.’ (Hasan-i Basri)
- ‘It is a characteristic of science who has a little share of it, feels happy; who has no any share of it, feels unhappy.’ (Imam Shafi)

Islamic thought gives the freedom to the human mind and to their knowledge. It does not put any obstacles in front of intelligence in investigating the universe. Islam has left all obligations to the whole issue of caliphate and to the intelligence and the knowledge of human mind within the limits of divinity.

In societies which are far from Islamic belief, the people have tried to search the reality using other systems of thoughts. But every system of thought has brought problems and contradictions in itself. These contradictions and problems always led to the appearing of another systems of thoughts. But these systems of mankind thoughts could not be saved from contradictions. Therefore they have been left after a certain time, because some contrary events have appeared.

Today many scholars in these societies compare the science and the religious according to the basis of religious belief systems other than Islam. So they can not go to a result by taking the wrong positions against each other. However, if the basis of Islamic faith is incorporated in this discussion, all the contradictions and problems will disappear.

For this reason Muslim have to produce their scientific works in the light of Islamic thought. Between 8th and 16th centuries the Muslim scientists have taught their researches and inventions to all societies in the world. Today they must show the same performance in the light of Islamic thought and ought to teach their works to the other people in the world.

Today unfortunately the people in Islamic societies are becoming the results of searches from other societies. However, all of these results might not be acceptable by Muslims. Such results which are against the Islamic belief must be rejected. Especially, some of ethical, economical behaviors of the people in other societies are not in agreement with the Islamic belief. Therefore such behaviors must be rejected and should not be permitted.

Responsibility of Muslim Scientists

Muslim scientists doing scientific works must act without compromising with Islamic thought and knowing the responsibility of caliphate mission which has been bestowed on him by God. Only in this way can be successful. This is not impossible. Muslims have proven this acting many times in the past. According to many historians, science in the Muslim civilization flourished during the Middle Ages.

We know that Islam appointed Muslims as representatives of God and made them responsible for learning and searching all the sciences. Many Muslims

agree that doing science is an act of religious merit even a collective duty of the Muslims community.

Some people may claim that the traditional interpretations of Islam are not compatible with the development of science. But this claim is not fitting the reality. Because there are many examples in opposition to this claim.

Abdus Salam, who won a Nobel Prize in physics for his electroweak theory, argue that the quest for reflecting upon and studying nature is a duty upon Muslims, stating that 750 verses of the Quran (almost one-eighth of the book) exhort believers to do so.

In 1976 Maurice Bucaille published his book 'The Bible, The Quran and Science' which argued that the Quran contains no statements contradicting established scientific facts. Bucaille argued that the Quran is in agreement with scientific facts, while the Bible is not. He states that in Islam, science and religion have always been 'twin sisters'. According to Bucaille there are monumental errors of science in the Bible and not a single error in the Quran. Bucaille's belief is that the Quran's descriptions of natural phenomena make it compatible with modern science.

Sayyid Qutb declared in his book 'Milestones' that modern Europe's industrial culture did not originate in Europe but in the Islamic universities of Andalusia and of the East and that the principle of the experimental method was an offshoot of the Islamic concept and its explanation of the physical world, its phenomena, its forces and its secrets.

Features of Muslim Scientist

- ▶ Muslim scientist bases on the thought of Islam in his life and research.
- ▶ Muslim scientist should work feeling the responsibility of the caliphate mission has bestowed on him by God.
- ▶ Scientific research is an act of worship for Muslim scientist.
- ▶ Muslim scientist is aware of that the earth and heavens are presented to him for research.

- ▶ Muslim scientist is aware of that the reality in all aspects could not be reached exactly and absolutely by the intelligence of human being.
- ▶ Muslim scientist is aware of that his knowledge obtained is not even a drop of water in the ocean with respect to God's knowledge.
- ▶ Muslim scientist takes refuge in God from useless science. He rejects to work on science only for being scientific.
- ▶ Muslim scientist does not tolerate to be without work. After accomplishing a work he turns toward a new research.

In the light of the above description, we can summarize the basic principles of Islam's understanding of science as follows:

- ▶ Islam considers both the knowledge of the world and of hereafter.
- ▶ In Islam a scholar is disapproved if he does not act with the knowledge of Islam.
- ▶ The aim of Muslim researcher is to be useful to humanity. He avoids from useless science.
- ▶ In the science understanding of Islam it is given freedom of human mind and knowledge. It does not put any obstacle in front of the mind to hinder studying of the universe.
- ▶ There is no conflict between religious and science in Islam.
- ▶ In Islamic understanding of science is impossible to reach absolute reality through the mind. Because the mind of human is limited due to the wisdom of creation, but the area of studying includes infinity.

Information Resources in Islam

Muslim scientist admits that the first source of information is Holy Quran and another important source Prophet's (saw) hadiths. The human mind should be used as a source of information on matters not included in these two sources.

In Islamic thought, if any knowledge not enlightened by revelation harms humanity rather than benefit. Therefore the information produced by human should be in accordance with the principles revealed in the Quran. Information that is contrary to the Quran, brings absolute negative in the short and long term because of the contravention of absolute structure.

Maturidy (850/944) is a famous scholar in Islam. He argued that for obtaining information the experience and sense organs have important functions. He is set off by the idea of a God who created everything. Accordingly it is not something that human mind can not perceive the existence of God. Human mind is able to find the existence and unity of God and is responsible for obtaining this information. However, information about the essence of God, because it exceeds the limits of mind, it is in need of inspiration in this regard. From this point of revelation is the way to learn.

In the West's understanding of the science the revelation and the prophethood is not considered as sources of information. As the source of information they accept the mind, the senses and the experiments. They have ruled out the revelation knowledge because they have seen the contradictions in the Bible which have been tampered with the hand of man. However, due to lack of contradictions in the Quran Muslim scholars consider the Quran as the source of information. The sentences of verses in Quran are considered as the absolute true knowledge.

In the Western scientific understanding, information tools should be based first and foremost on the experiment. But, events in nature does not occur in the concept of experience always. For example, not mixing of two water currents in the Straits of Gibraltar is an example for it. These two water currents flowing to have different properties and side by side, do not interfere with each other. It is as if a curtain had hidden among them. When you drain the same waters alongside another place it is observed the inference with one another. Also theoretical inferences about the universe are not based on any experience. They are only scientific imaginations about the universe. Stars, galaxies and black holes are not possible to experience. So, how can we accept the informations and conclusions about them as a scientific knowledge.

In Western science is granted to the information obtained by reason and analogy. It is accepted the mind is as a source to be consulted in all matters. However,

there is no mind which is free from defects and deficiencies, ignorance and not effected by lust and desires. Therefore the expression of rationalism and positivism that with mind it is possible to reach every reality is incorrect. This is not an absolute science.

Muslims must act in science according to the principles we have described above. They can get in this way the happiness in the world and the hereafter. They should not despair of the current situation. Understanding of science in Islam will one day surely superior to other scientific understanding. For this, think on the verse 139 in Sura Al-Imran: 'And do not become faint of heart, nor grieve; you will have the upper hand, if you are believers.' Allah tells the truth and deliver the right path.

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