

Science and The Quran as Two Sides of a Truth

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Summary

While the basic method of science and philosophy was deductive in the Middle Ages, induction method started to be used in Europe with the age of enlightenment. Due to this method change, important developments have been seen in science and they continue to be seen. In the Middle Ages, the severe pressure exerted by the Church on the scientists caused religion to be removed from the scientific world during the enlightenment age. This historical experience of Europe also affected the Islamic world. The foundations of the differences in Quran and science are also based on this conflict. In our article, it is emphasized that this conflict is wrong and that the Quran and science are two sides of a truth.

Keywords: Science, philosophy of science, religion-science conflict, Qur'an and science, enlightenment

Introduction

In the early ages all sciences were gathered under the roof of philosophy. Therefore, in this period, basic sciences such as metaphysics, logic, physics and mathematics were all under the scheme of philosophy. In that period, deduction, which was the main method of classic logic, was used in science. This method treats existence as a whole and applied the rules of the whole to the specific (Topçu, 2006).

This understanding of science, which continued throughout the Middle Ages, was heavily criticized by enlightened philosophers, who were regarded as the pre-cursors of modern

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science (Yerinde/Savaş,2018,18). According to the Enlightenment philosophers, in sciences, one cannot achieve true information/knowledge through deduction. According to them, the main method to be applied was induction (Öner, 1986, 104). Accordingly, the induction method (Lachelier, 1949, 3-4; Kazvini , 1301, 51) required the direction of reasoning to flow from the specific to the whole, in other words, in order to arrive at a sound conclusion about the whole, it was to examine the smallest pieces in the universe (Hançerlioğlu, 1979, 397) .

In the period of enlightenment, the sciences that were initially under the roof of philosophy began to separate one by one, and each science became a separate discipline. Physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, law and sociology, which had hitherto adopted the deductive method of classical philosophy gradually all reverted to the use the induction method (Russell, 30).

After the reversion, important developments were seen, and each science began to make great strides in solving the secrets of the universe in its field. New discoveries and technological inventions were consecutively and almost simultaneously made in mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, medicine and astronomy. With this new method, mankind got the opportunity to discover an immense treasure of knowledge. Man was thus, trying to discover this treasure with his new understanding of knowledge.

Due to the progress achieved in modern Western science with this new understanding and new method, the old understanding of science based on classical logic was abandoned (Öner, 1986, 165). The scientific view of classical philosophy was dismissed as a scholastic mentality and was eventually abandoned. This understanding also had an effect in the Islamic world, and schools offering Western-style education were opened alongside classical madrasas in Islamic countries.

Religion-Science Conflict

One of the most important reasons for the change in the scientific way of understanding in the West is the conflict of scientists with the scholastic understanding. The main reason for this conflict was that the discoveries reached by the Western scientist with a new understanding of

science did not comply with the classical knowledge of the church. The Church Organization, which had a great influence on the state and society of that period, prosecuted those Scientists who put forward anti-Christian views in the Inquisition Courts, and were punished, sometimes with death. Despite severe punishments, at the end of science-religion conflict, the scientists prevailed, and the church had to retreat to a narrow space.

The new understanding of science was based solely on experimentation and observation as the source of knowledge and did not accept authority (revelation) and intuition. Accordingly, conclusions about the material aspect of being were reached using reason and rationalism (Rodis-Lewis, 1983); only through concrete methods such as experiment and observation were conclusions reached. According to both ideologies, the subject of science was limited to the material realm, and metaphysical subjects were not counted as science. Religious issues and issues related to the meaning of existence were accepted as being outside the new understanding of science, as they were not material.

One of the requirements of the rationalism was the achievement of scientific conclusion about a thing/phenomenon through reason. On the other hand, experimentalism requires achieving scientific conclusion about a thing/phenomenon through experiments and observation (Ural, 1994, 1). Again, in contrast, there is also the idea of intuitionism, which argues that science has a place in intuition. At this point, post-modernist philosophers of science criticized the ideas above in various ways, arguing that they excluded non-material aspect of things and thus, they developed alternative thoughts (Demir, 1992). For this reason, it once again became clear that experimentalism, rationalism or any other kind of thought should not be treated as being sacred, and that scientific thought is constantly making new developments.

The conflict of religion and science in Europe deeply affected the Islamic world. Since the 18th century, important differences of opinion emerged between scientists with Western understanding and scholars with classical Islamic understanding. The use of the induction method of the western scientists, whereas the Islamic scholars who were educated in the madrasahs, based on the deduction, formed the focus of this difference of opinion. Some people who accepted themselves as representatives of enlightenment in the Islamic world, as in European countries, saw Islamic scholars as people stuck with scholastic thought.

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Immediately after the collapse The Ottoman Empire, the Republic of Turkey was formed, and the state closed down the existing Islamic-styled madrassas and introduced Western-styled educational institutions. With this radical change, madrasahs that have been responsible for education for many centuries were suddenly excluded and pushed aside. This led to the emergence of a serious gap especially as regards religious education. Serious disruption occurred in relation to the kind of knowledge originally taught by the madrassahs, the kind that was not seen in European educational institutions. One of these sciences was logic. The kind of logic being taught in European institutions then focused more on methodological issues and induction reasoning. Other issues of logic, the principles of reason, concepts, propositions, ways of reasoning, and logical errors were not addressed.

Integrity in Sciences

One of the major differences between the classic science thought and the modern Western science thought is to see the universe and science from a holistic perspective. Classical Islamic thought takes existence and sciences with a holistic approach since it uses deductive reasoning. In contrast to modern Western thought, which aims to examine every part of the entity in detail.

Since the old understanding of science based on classical logic could not examine the universe in detail, there were no scientific developments in the Middle Ages. Since the Renaissance, there has been a significant improvement in modern sciences such as physics, chemistry, and biology with the detailed examination of a thing/phenomenon using the induction method (Locksmith, 2013). Thus, unlike the classic thought, the modern Western thought could not evaluate a thing/phenomenon as a whole.

Whether it is science or social sciences, it is observed that more accurate results are achieved when taken from a holistic perspective. Because all sciences are the expression of a holistic knowledge intertwined in different disciplines. Since there is a connection between a cell and the solar system and other systems, it is imperative to approach the sciences with a holistic perspective.

It is necessary to use deductive, inductive and sampling methods together to examine a thing/phenomenon from a holistic perspective. Induction, which is the basic method of science today, is to investigate and research with our senses and some technological tools. It is considered as the main method of achieving correct results in scientific research, as it is the direct perception of concrete objects. When dazzling progress was made in science through this method, induction was declared to be the only scientific method. Particularly amongst positivist and materialist thoughts who used experimentation and observation as their main method, and totally ignored other methods.

Holistic Relationship Between Science and the Quran

Creation, existence and human being; these are the three main topics of science and philosophy. The Quran and the human being are the two types of speech of Allah. In other words, the Quran is the speech of Allah in verbal form, and the human being is the speech of Allah in the language of knowledge. These two types of speech, which are of the same origin, actually complement and interpret each other (Taslaman, 20). In other words, in order to understand the Qur'an, we have to understand science well, the language of being. Similarly, in order to understand existence correctly, it is necessary to understand the Qur'an well. thus, it is not possible to understand sciences correctly without the Quran, and it is not possible to understand the Quran correctly without sciences.

After discovering that subatomic particles can appear as energy and matter in Quantum physics, there was a serious shock in positivists' and materialists' ideas. The idea that metaphysical issues could also have a place in science was born. The role of philosophy as a guiding science was remembered again. It was understood that science could be done without experiencing this conflict with religion. The monopolistic understanding of science by the positivist and materialist thoughts came to an end. A new thought of science emerged that was more tolerant of religion.

Although science claims to achieve correct results by using methods such as experiments and observations, metaphysics has an important place in scientific subjects. A scientific study always begins in metaphysical stages before reaching the stage of using concrete methods such as

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experiment and observation. Scientific works including assumption, prediction, hypothesis and even theories have their base in the metaphysical field. Moreover, it is known that induction, which is the basic method of sciences, does not give absolute correct results but includes general truths. For this reason, the sacred rule of science as being the only source of correct information is actually a contradiction to the essence of science. There was also the growing popularity of opinions such as the fact that assumption is the basis of scientific philosophy, and that scientific results are usually progressed not by verifying the truth of an assumption, but by proving the falsity of other possibilities.

Every thought has a metaphysical aspect, including the positivist and materialist thoughts. In other words, there is a philosophical infrastructure on which every thought is based. It made no difference whether the metaphysical aspect on which a thought is based is religious or not. Because in the field of metaphysical issues, only some conclusions can be reached with reason and feelings/emotions.

When we consider the Qur'an as the metaphysical source of science, we will realize that the unity of the Qur'an and science does not contradict science at all. As every thought has a metaphysical source, the metaphysical source of Islamic understanding of science is the Qur'an. Therefore, just as the materialist theory is based on materialist philosophy, the understanding of Islamic science is based on the Qur'an. After determining the metaphysical source of science, there is no obstacle in doing scientific studies with scientific methods in each discipline. In other words, there is no difference in scientific value between the discovery made by a religious scientist who accepts the Quran as a metaphysical source and the discovery made by a materialist scientist in biology.

Quran and science are two different expressions of the same truth. The truth (i.e. meaning) is the same, but the way it is shown and expressed is different. Thus, whilst the truth of Quran and science is the same, the expression of such truth can differ in terms of methodology and language (Kırca, 2012, 9). Einstein expresses this as follows: “Though religion may be that which determines the goal, it has, nevertheless, learned from science, in the broadest sense, what means will contribute to the attainment of the goals it has set up. But science can only be created by those who are thoroughly imbued with the aspiration toward truth and understanding. This source of feeling, however, springs from the sphere of religion. To this there also belongs the faith in the possibility that the regulations valid for the world of existence are rational, that is, comprehensible

to reason. I cannot conceive of a genuine scientist without that profound faith. The situation may be expressed by an image: science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.” (Kırca, 1997, 37)

Conclusion

The main reason for the conflict of religion and science in the West was the severe pressure the Church exerted on scientists. The victory of the scientists in this conflict, saw the beginning of the process of the removal of religion in the world of science. Although there is no conflict with religion in the Islamic world in that way, a similar situation emerged in the Islamic world due to the deep influence of Western civilization. Despite the important difference between the two worlds, that should not be the cause of conflict/separation of religion and science in the Islamic world. Indeed, this conflict/separation has no historical, cultural, scientific and religious base in the Islamic world.

The Quran, creation and human beings are three realms waiting to be understood and discovered. The fact that the Quran exists in the form of a concrete book in our hands and that it is constantly read creates an illusion that it is understood. Or having a tangible presence in front of a human being leads to the idea that it is understood and known. However, just like the universe, the Qur'an and man are two unknown realms waiting to be discovered. When the Quran, the human and the universe trio are examined together, they can be understood more accurately. Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's saying “The Qur'an reads/recites the universe in the Grand Mosque of Universe. Let's listen to it.” touches this truth.

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