

Faith From the Perspective of Theologians and Philosophers: An Analytical Study

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Abstract

The research indicates that scientists' pursuit of abstract knowledge leads them to acknowledge the existence of an effective, purposeful, and capable First Cause that created the universe. Through scientific investigation, it has been established that most Islamic teachings are ultimately beneficial to humanity, whether or not the wisdom behind them is fully understood. The research emphasizes that Islamic thought encourages contemplation and reflection on the Creator's intentions. Muslim researchers and scholars have ventured into various fields, including chemistry, medicine, astronomy, physics, mathematics, and various social sciences, leaving their mark as significant references in various scientific disciplines, forcing the West to acknowledge their intellect. The research distinguishes that the primary challenge of religious texts is to extract general rules and religious concepts in order to define beliefs and legal regulations that benefit humans in their lives and earn the approval of their Creator for happiness in the hereafter. The importance of the research lies in establishing ways of human knowledge acquisition, which include perception and the senses, and considering them of value in the empirical scientific field. These avenues lead to the truth, and the results of sensory perception or rational inference do not contradict Islamic principles, as they are all divinely bestowed for the benefit of humanity. The research addresses the issue of objecting to the conscience, which is concerned with the moral aspect, and argues that it is subject to error and should not be relied upon for argumentation. The research concludes that Islam is keen on preserving faith and not meddling with it under the pretext of evolution, while still benefiting from human experiences in all scientific and intellectual fields to support religion using the available means in every era.

Keywords: *faith, knowledge, speech, philosophy, thought.*

Introduction

The progress of nations is intricately linked to the advancement of knowledge, which serves as the key to their development. Societies cannot prosper without the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom. Efforts must be combined in all fields, and scholars should play a prominent role in halting the scientific decline in Islamic societies. Civilization is the outcome of human activities in various domains such as sciences, literature, and arts. It encompasses inclinations capable of shaping different lifestyles, behavioral patterns, and diverse thinking methodologies. The Islamic civilization, with its comprehensive approach to both material and spiritual aspects, dedicated itself to facilitating progress and development. This encompassed human thoughts, opinions, actions, and ethics in individual, familial, social, economic, and political life. Human development, aimed at

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improving the lives of present generations, has emerged as a significant endeavor. Youth, who constitute the future and energy of a society, deserve the utmost attention and support. Empowering them with knowledge and faith is essential for the nation's crucial role in building civilization. This research aims to understand the foundations upon which our past revival as Muslims and the recent Western resurgence were based. It is our hope that we can instill that creative, innovative, and unbridled spirit that did not stop at boundaries or prohibitions on scientific research and its pioneers.

The nature of the research requires that we divide it into an introduction, four sections, and a conclusion. In the introduction, we discuss the importance of the topic and the reasons for why it was selected. In the first section, we explore the claim of conflict between science and faith, while in the second section, we address the claim of stagnation in creed and thought. The third section delves into the concept and motivations behind the law of causality, and the fourth section examines the ethics from the perspectives of theologians and philosophers. Finally, we conclude by summarizing our key findings, hoping that our research will be viewed from various angles, with the sincere belief that it will not be judged superficially.

First Section: Claiming the Compatibility of science with Faith

Islam encourages its followers to search and contemplate heavens and the earth and all of God's creation, taking science as one of the ways to reach knowledge of the Almighty Creator. Many verses in the Quran indicate the praise of scholars and researchers (1). For example, Allah says: "Say, 'Are those who know equal to those who do not know?'" (Quran, Az-Zumar/39:9). The scholars' pursuit of abstract knowledge leads them to acknowledge the existence of a primary, effective cause with the ability to create the universe. This knowledge becomes a cause for them to fear Allah.(2) Therefore, the Quran describes them as: "Indeed, those who fear Allah among His servants are the knowledgeable. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Forgiving." (Quran, Fatir/35:28). Through scientific research, it has been proven that most Islamic teachings are for the benefit of humanity, and whether one understands the wisdom behind them or not, the ultimate goal is to obey the Creator, whether one comprehends his wisdom or not.(3)

When Islam encouraged contemplation and examination of the Creator's signs, Muslim researchers and scholars delved into various fields such as chemistry, medicine, astronomy, physics, mathematics, and various humanities studies. They left their mark in various scientific disciplines, making them the greatest reference for the modern era in various scientific fields. The West benefited from their knowledge, dispelling the supposed foreignness of Islam. Islam is not just a belief in divine matters; it encompasses scientific fields and practical aspects. What cannot be denied is that the primary purpose of religious texts is to extract general principles and religious concepts in order to introduce beliefs and legal rulings that guide people in their lives and seek the satisfaction of their Lord for their happiness in the hereafter.(4)

As for the perceived contradiction and conflict between knowledge and Islam, it boils down to three matters:

- 1- Scientific research has not reached the level of established scientific truth(5), and scientific theories(6), which are subject to change, have contradicted what is established in Islam, so they cannot be relied upon.
- 2- The religious text may be speculative or transmitted through an unreliable chain, such as in weak Hadiths or lacking some of the necessary conditions.
- 3- The religious text may be speculative in its interpretation by a scholar or jurist, and errors in interpretation may have occurred, so non-certain or incorrect opinions should not be considered when they conflict with established scientific facts.(7)

There is no harm in correcting misconceptions resulting from the efforts or interpretations attributed to esteemed Muslim scholars throughout various ages, provided that science can prove the opposite. Such errors should not be seen as a withdrawal from Islam; instead, the individual responsible for the error should bear the responsibility, and Islam remains the true religion that falsehood cannot touch.(8)

If we go back to the root of the difference between science and religion, we find that it often stems from generalization of specific matters, particularization of general matters, weak interpretations by some scholars presented as the essence of Islam, or the promotion of unconventional concepts by certain groups claiming affiliation with Islam, along with manipulation and misrepresentation of authentic statements and narrations.(9)

Critics like Dr. Al-Azam (10) have claimed that Islam and science cannot reconcile due to differences in their methodologies for attaining true knowledge, leading to contradictions between them. Some atheists in this era share this perspective, with the goal of spreading disbelief and atheism and undermining Islam in particular. They use these perceived contradictions to argue that religion is a product of human imagination or was devised to serve personal interests.

They call for the exclusion of religion from all aspects of life and advocate the elevation of science as the primary and ultimate methodology, even if it has not reached the level of certainty.(11)

However, upon careful analysis, it becomes evident that Islam and science are not in conflict, and there is no inherent contradiction between them. (12) As Morris Bucaille puts it(13), "The researcher is astonished to discover that there is not a single word in the Quran that contradicts the laws of modern science." (14) He also says: "The Quran does not contain any verses that can be refuted in the light of modern scientific methods and laws."(15) The relationship between science and Islam is like a debate with a single purpose, which is to attain knowledge and facts through perception using sensory and inferential means in order to make judgments about them with proof or refutation. However, these means come to an end when it comes to the realm of the unseen, and with the limitation of knowledge in comprehending it. Nonetheless, this does not prevent its occurrence.(16) Emile Boustani (17) says: "Science is incapable of solving all problems, and no matter how advanced it becomes, it is limited. There is nothing but religion that fills the void." (18)

Indeed, Allah the Almighty has made the means of knowledge in humans through perception and the senses responsible in the field of empirical science to be the path leading to the truth. The results of sensory perception or intellectual inference cannot contradict Islamic principles, for all of them have divine origins, designed for the benefit of humanity, just as Islam was established for the benefit of Muslims. (19) Any margin of error may be attributed to a fault in one of the tools, as the claim of a contradiction between cosmic knowledge through Islam and cosmic knowledge through empirical science is an impossibility. Allah would not misguide us by providing two contradictory means of evidence in the same matter. Therefore, it is necessary to delve into these fallacies, expose their falsehood, and rely on the religious foundation, for falsehood does not come to it from before it or from behind it."(20).

Second Section: Claim of the Rigidity of Belief and Thought

The claim that Islam contradicts the evolution of society and that its law is characterized by rigidity is not a new assertion. However, this claim lacks a scientific and logical basis.(21) It is unreasonable to suggest that Muslims established an empire that governed for centuries and contributed significantly to human civilization while adhering to inflexible beliefs that hindered human thought. Moreover, Islam has attracted millions of followers and spread rapidly across various regions without material or moral incentives, as observed in other religions. This is evidence of the elevated nature of Islamic beliefs

and their nobility.(22). As the current British monarch, Charles, has stated, "The problem is not only the existence of a significant misunderstanding in the West regarding the nature of Islam, but there is also a great deal of ignorance about the culture and civilization of Islam."(23)

Islamic beliefs have distinctive characteristics:

1- Their source is divine, with no human involvement in their formation. They are revealed by Allah to His greatest Prophet (peace be upon him). Therefore, there is no room for distortion or alteration. Allah says: "And when Our verses are recited to them as clear evidences, those who do not expect the meeting with Us say, 'Bring us a Qur'an other than this or change it.' Say, 'It is not for me to change it on my own accord. I only follow what is revealed to me. Indeed, I fear, if I should disobey my Lord, the punishment of a tremendous Day.'" (Quran, Yunus/10:15).

2- Despite their profound impact, Islamic beliefs are straightforward and free from ambiguity and complexity. They are simple, making it easy for individuals to comprehend and accept them, aligning with human nature. Allah says: "So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. Adhere to the fitrah of Allah upon which He has created all people. No change should there be in the creation of Allah. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know." (Quran, Ar-Rum/30).

3- In their textual references, Islamic beliefs do not oppose reason. Any apparent contradiction can usually be resolved, allowing for harmony between faith and reason through careful examination.(24).

4- Islam liberates individuals from slavery, political and social oppression, and the submission to anyone other than Allah alone. Allah says: "And do not invoke with Allah another deity. There is no deity except Him. Everything will be destroyed except His Face. His is the judgment, and to Him you will be returned." (Quran, Al-Qasas/28).

5- Furthermore, Islam honors humanity and appoints humans as vicegerents of Allah on Earth to develop and cultivate it. Allah says: "And [mention, O Muhammad], when your Lord said to the angels, 'Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority.'..." (Quran, Al-Baqarah/2:30).

6- Islamic beliefs also emphasize the importance of intellectual inquiry and discourage blind conformity and following illusions and falsehoods. Allah says: "And when it is said to them, 'Follow what Allah has revealed,' they say, 'Rather, we will follow that which we found our fathers doing.' Even though their fathers understood nothing, nor were they guided?" (Quran, Luqman/31:21).

7- Islam meets the human need for a connection with God, allowing individuals to seek Him for their psychological well-being. It also addresses the concepts of resurrection, accountability, and reward, making individuals responsible for their actions and instilling a sense of continuous divine oversight, motivating them to perform virtuous deeds and avoid sinful ones. This framework ultimately leads to human happiness in both this world and the hereafter.(25) Claiming that Islam is the cause of the backwardness of the Muslim world in our present time is a clear fallacy. In fact, Islam serves as the foundation for contemporary revival and has the capacity to rejuvenate it anew. The true reason for the backwardness lies in the deviation from Islam, the abandonment of its principles, and the neglect of many of its components, which has led to weakness.(26). As the Orientalist Leopold Weiss (27)stated, "There is only one reason for the social and cultural decay that has affected Muslims, and it is their distance from the spirit of Islam."(28)

Sheikh Muhammad Ramadan Al-Bouti believes that excessive attachment to what is new and the rejection of what is old is a form of self-indulgence. If the human soul does not submit to the authority of knowledge and reason, it will be inclined to follow anything new, regardless of its harm, and distance itself from everything old, regardless of its

virtues. It is essential for established truths to have fixed laws that correspond to universal facts. Renewed laws must also be established when needed, based on changing human experiences or cosmic changes. This includes changing the ruling in analogy if the underlying cause changes. Consensus may also be subject to abrogation if it is based on a specific temporal interest.(29)

The concept of stability here does not imply freezing thought and ignoring the developments of life. Likewise, the concept of evolution does not mean manipulating or changing Islamic legal rulings. Instead, it means that Islamic principles should be maintained within a stable framework that refers back to the Quran and the Sunnah as sources. Islam values preserving creed from unnecessary alterations while being adaptable to changing human experiences and cosmic developments, which allows for evolving legal rulings based on the Quran and the Sunnah, with flexibility in applying the Sharia to changing circumstances. "Islam has been keen on preserving the creed, refraining from frivolous claims of evolution. However, it has not prohibited the utilization of human experiences in all scientific and intellectual fields, in a manner that supports the religion, according to the available means of each era. (30) Jaroudi (31) says: 'Islam is a great spiritual force for reform and progress in the future, as it has always been.'"(32).

Measuring divine legislation against human legislation is a comparison with a significant difference, as the errors that occur in human laws and legislations, which are discovered over time through experimentation and practice, and the ongoing efforts to correct and develop them in order to reach their completeness, should not be equated with divine judgment, in which humans have no say. The creator of something knows it best, and it is more fitting for the one who created something to establish its laws and rules, and it is impossible for them to be flawed by their nature.(33).

Drifting towards claiming the ineffectiveness of Islam and its rulings in the modern age is a dangerous path that can lead one to leave the faith. The basis of arbitration in Islam is to adhere to its commands and abstain from its prohibitions as outlined in the Quran and Sunnah.(34) As stated in the Quran: "It is not for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter, that they should [thereafter] have any choice about their affair." (Quran, Surah Al-Ahzab, 33:36).

The third Section: The law of causality, its concept, and motivations

When contemplating the universe, we find that everything requires a cause for its existence. The needed cause is called a reason or a cause, and what depends on it is called the effect or the caused. A cause cannot be a cause for something else unless it has the capacity to produce, terminate, and adapt – to manage its affairs. It necessarily follows that the impact must be deterministic; otherwise, it would nullify its role as a cause.(35) The universe, along with everything in it, operates according to various causes. This is established through observation and perception. The proof of determinism contradicts the fact that the universe is part of the realm of possibilities, as a cause must have its existence and function necessitated. Therefore, it is impossible for these causes to have inherent reality and influence by themselves, except in the existence of a necessary and self-subsisting Creator who is the one responsible for creation and nothingness.(36)

The existence of causality in the universe is analogical because of a perceived connection, solely existing in mental association. In reality, there is no inherent determinism in causation; it is rather confined to the existence of a necessary God, the Creator, who established causes according to His will and power.(37)

The repetition of the presence of the cause along with something else, as demonstrated through the conditional reflex, has been proven through experimentation. Ivan Pavlov's (38) experiment with hungry dogs, where he paired ringing a bell with providing food, and then ringing the bell alone causing salivation, illustrates this point. This conditioning

happens because the association between the food and the bell has been established in their minds, leading them to believe that the bell is the effective cause of the presence of food.(39)

The will of Allah Almighty is attached to the presence of causes. Rain does not fall without the existence of clouds, the earth does not yield vegetation without water, and humans are not born except through procreation from pairs. If Allah Almighty willed to eliminate these causes and sever the connection between them, He could do so. This is simply a demonstration of Allah's will for the sake of comparison.(40)

Al-Ghazali referred to them as "causes of causality" because they are inherent, effective, and created causes, not comparative causes like in Pavlov's example. In these causes, there is an inherent influence that Allah Almighty has deposited within them, and when He wills to disable this cause from being effective, He removes the inherent power that He had placed in it.(41) Dr. Mustafa Al-Khn argues that Al-Ghazali's analysis is closer to a scientific analysis of observable phenomena. The majority agree with this analysis that "causes exist with things, not in them."(42). The verbal differences among these descriptions converge to one truth, which is that the effects of causes are not a necessary inevitability; they occur by the will and power of Allah Almighty, not by the choice of the causes themselves. This happens in accordance with divine wisdom.(43)

Muslims should believe that there is no power, strength, influence, or greatness except by the will of Allah Almighty. What we see as these causes is only in appearance, and the role of science and experiments is to describe these repeated causes in terms of their apparent effects. In reality, these causes do not go beyond being created or comparative causes. Claiming otherwise leads to disbelief in the divinity of Allah Almighty and denial of the miracles of the prophets, such as the absence of causality in the birth of Jesus (peace be upon him) and the alteration of fire's heat into coolness for Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). This is nothing but a rejection of the Quranic verse: "And when He decrees a matter, He only says to it, 'Be,' and it is." (Quran, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:117).

If expressing the effect of something on another as an expression of affinity for that thing or due to frequent usage, without attributing intrinsic self-effectiveness to it(44), as in saying "the medicine benefited me" or "the doctor healed me," or through intermediaries like invoking prophets and seeking blessings through Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), there is no harm in that, as long as it aligns with the law of causality created by Allah Almighty, with the full belief that the ultimate effect belongs to Allah alone and that these causes are in accordance with His will.(45).

The Fourth Section: The Proof of Morality from the Perspective of Theologians and Philosophers

Human beings possess, by their very nature, a moral conscience that grants them ethical responsibility, which they enforce through laws. In general, all humans distinguish between good and evil, and this is an undeniable general truth. While there may be differences in the origin of morality, whether it is intrinsic in humans as a gift from God or acquired through customs and accumulated experiences, there is a consensus on its existence and its impact on human life. There is no room to deny the existence of differences and errors in laws and regulations concerning specific actions. However, the fundamental principles of morality are considered areas of agreement.

Objecting to the reliability of conscience, which is responsible for the moral aspect, and claiming that it is susceptible to error and cannot be relied upon is an invalid objection. (46) Humans are not infallible, and other faculties, whether sensory, logical, scientific, or even memory, are all subject to error.(47) This argument traces back to the philosopher Immanuel Kant(48), who made the objective nature of morality, represented by the conscience in humans, a sign of the existence of God. According to Kant, since determining what is good is inherent in human nature and takes precedence over evil, and

since human souls tend to approve of it, there must be a powerful deity who instills goodness in souls and makes it the measure of justice in the universe. Social customs cannot become deeply ingrained in human souls merely due to acceptance and approval by humans because knowledge of the cause does not negate the end.(49).

The philosopher John Stuart Mill (50) argued that belief in the existence of a hidden force that prefers goodness and is responsible for managing the world toward righteousness does not necessarily require its overt appearance. He argued that differences and injustices observed in reality must have consequences and rewards in another life, where each person is compensated according to their deeds.(51). Ethical philosophers go on to prove the existence of morality as an objective and absolute aspect and then use it as evidence for the existence of a God who provides objective morality. The scholar William Lane Craig (52) views the proof of morality as a conditional, necessary proposition: denying God's existence means denying morality, but morality exists; therefore, God exists.(53) Graham Oppy(54), another philosopher, uses a conditional analogy: he believes that the inclination towards morality is necessarily inherent and cannot be inherently necessary without the existence of a rational God.(55) The philosopher Rashid al-Ghannouchi sees that the objective and absolute nature of ethics establishes the fact of the existence of a mind from which all real events, including ethics, arise.(56)

The philosopher Bergson (57) laments that ethics are considered an effect or evidence of the existence of God, claiming that belief in religion is nothing more than a human invention. He argues that the notion of the existence of an afterlife is a baseless myth and is merely a creation of the human imagination—a reaction against the fear of the unknown nature of life's inevitable end, which nature itself has imposed(58). Therefore, people invented the concept of God's existence and the belief in life after death as a defensive act stemming from instinct to reassure the mind that observes death without finding anything beyond it.(59)

Bergson dedicated himself to studying primitive pagan religions and subsequently discarded all rational and scientific facts, refuting the idea of religion and attributing it to mythical psychological interpretations. He extended his arguments to encompass all religions, whether primitive or divine.(60). Sheikh Abdul Rahman Al-Maidani criticized this generalization, especially since it relies on a Whether the religion is primitive or divine, it is based on flawed human actions, either from human creation or the distortion of divine religions by humans. Based on this, he refuted Bergson's theory since he assumed that these religions are necessary to reassure the soul and prevent the suppression of reason, which is not supported by the observation of the behavior of atheists who, despite denying religion, did not experience the inhibition and fear that Bergson claimed.(61)

Results:

It is necessary to pause and reflect on the research's achievements and the conclusions drawn after it has taken its final shape as we have outlined. We can say:

- 1- Scientists reaching abstract knowledge leads them to acknowledge the existence of a prime, effective, and purposeful cause capable of creating the universe.
- 2- Through empirical scientific investigation, it has been confirmed that most Islamic obligations are ultimately for the benefit of humanity, regardless of whether the wisdom behind them is understood.
- 3- Islam encourages contemplation and reflection on the Creator's signs. Researchers and Muslim scholars have ventured into various fields, including chemistry, medicine, astronomy, physics, mathematics, and various social sciences, establishing themselves as

leading authorities in various scientific disciplines, contributing significantly to the modern era.

4- The primary function of religious texts is to extract general principles and religious concepts to define beliefs and jurisprudential legislations that benefit humans in their lives and earn the pleasure of their Lord for ultimate happiness in the hereafter.

5- Human knowledge and perception, obtained through senses and cognition, are responsible in the scientific and empirical field, leading to the discovery of truth. None of the results of sensory perception or intellectual inference contradict the principles of Islam, as they are all divinely ordained for the benefit of humanity.

6- Objecting to the reliability of conscience, particularly in ethical matters, is flawed and cannot be used as a valid basis for objection or reliance.

7- While Islam safeguards its core beliefs from unwarranted alterations under the guise of progress, it does not prohibit the utilization of human experiences and knowledge in all scientific and intellectual domains, provided it upholds and supports the religion within the means available in each era.

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