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Quranic Perspectives, Scientific Thoughts, and its Mundane Applications: Analytical Commentary

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Abstract

The contemporary age of global dynamism, fast track paradigm shifts and scientific explorations, Quranic interpretation of human thoughts is essential as it is closely related to the fundamental roles and responsibilities of people living modern ages. In the current times many confusions and complexities continuously arise regarding the scientific phenomenon and its interpretation in the principles provided by the Quran. Although much has been written on this topic, however, less is known related to some critical scientific phenomenon and their relational interpretation in the light of Quranic injunctions and principles. This paper presents an elaboration of Quranic perspectives on scientific thoughts, its interpretations, and applications in worldly affairs. We further present an analysis of scientific phenomenon and encourage critique from the Islamic society for understanding the Quranic interpretation of scientific phenomenon and its applications. The review concludes that both Quranic principles and scientific phenomenon are mutually complimentary and supplementary because science is the manifestation of human explorations while Quranic thoughts and principles are the guidelines for human course. It is further concluded that in essence, modern science is the actual use of Quranic principles and teaching to the benefit of humanity in practical terms.

Keywords: Islamic perspectives, scientific phenomenon, Quranic interpretation, application of principles

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Introduction

Science provides a method, a course and paradigm to investigate into the universe for its diversity. Science means a phenomenon testable and verifiable beyond time and space limitations. While Muslim claim the revealed verses of holly Quran are final guideline- A manual for human course of line for the rest of ages. This means any statement given in the Book (Quran) if proven refutable or fall pray of contradiction would challenge the legacy of the Muslim claims. This investigation helps us understand, the purpose of the creation of the world and the creators therein. The argument herein presents Quran as the commands for humanity to explore the universe and its diversity.as Allah says: {سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ} (Al ankabot: 20) but in extreme abstract form. The evolutionist claims the climax of any progression is the stage of achieving extreme abstract from extreme absolute. Quran is the communication of Allah to His creators having the beauty of both simplicity but with extreme symbolism, complexity, and abstract form of communication. It is a direct source of interaction between Allah and its creation. Science on the other hand to date considered the best of human ability as a tool to satisfy the needs to redress answers to the complex situations they face or confront in dealing with wonders of nature. Quran encourages the people to use this tool for the development of humanity in the best possible positive manner (Ahmad, 2002). The Quran not only allows the human beings to read and write but also to explore the world through scientific studies. There are many questions which science very recently found answer for. These questions such as the reality of creator, the purpose of creation and the hidden treasures in the universe were hinted to and explained in detail but in abstract form by Quran almost fourteen hundred years ago. For example, the importance of knowledge was emphasized upon by calling the humanity to read and write as the very first order of Allah to the humanity. The Quran commands: اقرا باسم ربك الذي خلق --- الذي علم بالقلم (Alaq: 1-4). This was not for a particular nation or tribe. Rather, this message was for the whole humanity (Sayili, 1960).

One of the famous scientists, Albert Einstein, the greatest scientist of the 20th century is quoted to have said that “science without religion is lame”. It means that religion provides platform for science to struggle and reveal the reasons for what they had to believe as part of their religion. It provides reason for creativity and exploration in the best interest of humanity. Otherwise, knowledge been used for destruction of humanity as magic been used for destruction and obstruction of human life. However, the moral checks on the application of human knowledge comes from the Holy Scriptures in all the major prophetic religions of the world such as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. Islam as a religion is guided by the Quran. Hence Quran provides injunctions and orders about how to lead a prosperous and ordered life. Hence, it is not only a book of divine orders; rather, it is a book of signs but more of a guide and manual for humans in all the spheres of human life, be it social, moral, economic, political, or religious (Abul, nd).

Quran provides guidance to humanity in all areas of life such as material and spiritual. It does not stop human being to explore knowledge or to invent. Quran considers science as the ultimate and better pursuit of knowledge and understanding of the social and natural world in a systematic manner and to use the resources for the best development of people with justice, equality, and decency. Many classical and modern sources agree that Quran encourages the acquisition of science and scientific knowledge on the condition that it does not harm anyone. At many places, the Quran urges people to think, ponder upon and reflect on the natural phenomenon as signs of Gods' creation in the universe and get lesson from it (Jamil, 2001). As Allah says: ان { في خلق السموات والارض واختلاف الليل والنهار لآيات لاولى الباطن (Al Imran: 190).

One of the famous French Physician, in his book named “The Bible, the Quran and the Science” strongly favors while explaining the Big Bang Theory that the concept of the creation of the universe is clearly presented in the Quran. He refers to the Quranic explanation of the creation of the universe as “expansion of universe” by giving examples of atom, molecules, shooting stars, embryonic facts, cosmology, genetic and other theories presented by the holy Quran. In the holy Quran Allah almighty calls the people to reflect and examine the signs of the creation around them deeply and through exploration. There are many examples from the pious life of the holy prophet when he himself advises the Muslims and the humanity to acquire knowledge. He greatly stressed that seeking of knowledge is compulsory for every man and woman. There is an authentic Hadith: "طلب العلم فريضة على كل مسلم" (ibn e maja:Vol: 1,pag: 81)“Seeking of knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim”(Henry, 1992).

Every who probes in the inner core of the universe, explores, seeks knowledge, learns, and investigates what lies around him/her is a scientist. Through these investigations, the researchers contribute toward the development in the universe around. All this invites towards the superior wisdom, knowledge, and the eternal power of God. Science is thus the manifestation of the power of Allah almighty.

There are many issues and matters which science investigates continuously and theories are formed to provide a framework for thinking of the people so that they can solve the problems of their lives. In the holy Quran that the almighty has invited His people to think and search out for solutions to their problems in the light of the guidance provided in the form of the holy book Quran which is according to Allah Almighty the book of power, wisdom, and cure. In one of the places the Quran says that “Do they not look at the sky above them? How We have made it and adorned it, and there are no flaws in it? And the earth- We have spread it out, and set thereon mountains standing firm, and produced therein every kind of beautiful growth (in pairs)- To be observed and commemorated by every devotee turning (to God). And We send down from the sky rain charged with blessing, and We produce therewith gardens and grain for harvests; And tall (and stately) palm-trees, with shoots of fruit-stalks, piled one over another. (Surah Qaf: 6-10). In another place the Quran declares that “He Who created the seven heavens one above another: No want of proportion will you see in the Creation of (God) Most Gracious. So turn your vision again: do you see any flaw? (Surat al-Mulk: 3) All this indicates that there is a close relationship between Quran and the science (Dalafi& Mohamed, 1994).

Rationale for Review

Quran as the message of Allah is the book upon which Muslims have faith and they order their lives as per the injunctions provided therein. Quran says that a person using his /her faculty of reason and conscience may contribute in a best way to the development of self and the society. Quran refutes the declaration that the world came into being on its own without any creator or any cause. Rather, the concept of creation of the universe is forcefully presented by no other religious book then Quran. In one place Quran says: “in the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the changing of the days and nights, there is a sign for those who possess wisdom”.(Al imran :190).This verse of the Quran is supported by the theories of modern science regarding the creation of the universe and the creation in it. In another place Allah in the holy Quran says that “Raise your eyes above and see around, again raise your eyes above and see around, you will not find any imbalance in the creation of Allah Almighty” (Saliba,1994).

Therefore, anyone who makes use of his/her reason quickly reaches to the conclusion that there is a close relationship between the holy Quran and the modern science. The

individual understands that the world does not come into existence by chance and without a purpose. This confusion is clearly elaborated by the Quran when it says that one who applies his/her mind and reason recognizes at great deeper level the God's signs around in their full clarity. Yet at another place the holy Quran in Surat Al-Imran 191 says that "Those who remember God, standing, sitting and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: 'Our Lord, You have not created this for nothing. Glory be to You! so safeguard us from the punishment of the Fire (Sabra, 1996). Quran provides guidance to humanity in all areas of life such as material and spiritual. It does not stop human being to explore knowledge or to invent. Quran encourages the people to use this tool for the development of humanity in the best possible and positive manner.

Scientific Phenomenon and The Quran

Quran is a life manual for humanity as a book of guidance fourteen hundred years ago. This book claims of guidance for all times and climes. Allah almighty has called this a book of truth and guidance till the Day of Judgment. It is matchless and its words are words of wisdom which are rarely found in other books. It is considered as direct revelation from God to humanity for its guidance. The attributes of the Quran have shown that many of the great scientific truths of the 20th century and even before that were stated in it some 1400 years ago (William, 2002). The Quran is a book of signs and philosophies in the light of which many scientific suppositions have been clarified. The facts about the scientific truths are presented in Quran in a more expressed manner. There facts have been discovered through technology in the 20th century. At the time when Quran was revealed, the whole world was in the grip of darkness. There were many superstitions among the people which were refuted by Quran. Later in the 20th century modern science also refuted them. For the humanity of pre-industrial world, believed that the earth was flat and there were very high mountains at the both the ends of the earth. The Quran clarified the concept that the earth and other such like bodies are revolving around there orbits. This was further fortified by the modern science that the center of the sun and all the heavenly bodies are revolving in their orbits for a definite period. As Allah says "والشمس تجري لمستقر لها" (Yasin :38). In the Quran God in Surah Al-Raad: 2 say that "God is He who raised up the heavens without any support (Iqbal, 2007).

According to Syed (nd) this verse of the holy Quran clarified the wrong concept about the sky that it remained above the mountains. The Quran was revealed at a time when very few knew about physics, astronomy, biology, and the facts contain therein such as the human creation, nature of the atmosphere and the great balance that has kept the universe intact and so on. All these realities were discussed in detail in the holy Quran. The origin of the universe is stated in the holy Quran in Surat al-An'am:101 "He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth. (Surat al-An'am: 101)". This information provided by the holy Quran supports the findings of the modern science that astrophysics has the entire universe along with all in it came into being as a result of great explosion. This event is known by the modern world as the Big Bang. The rationality behind the phenomenon is supported by the scientific truths of the modern day. Before the presentation of this theory there was no concept of matter. This means that everything was created from nothingness into life in the form of matter and energy. This fact was announced by the modern science very recently which was explained by the Quran some 1400 years ago (Saliba,1994).

Quran and universe

The concept of the expansion of the universe was presented by the Quran 1400 years ago in a more logical manner. At that time, the study or science of astronomy was in its embryonic stage. The Quran describes the expansion of the universe in the

following way. “And it is We who have constructed the heaven with might, and verily, it is We who are steadily expanding it. (Suratadh-Dharyat: 47)”. The word heaven has been mentioned at several chapters of holy Quran to refer to space and universe. In another the Quran says that the universe is expanding. Science also supports this proposition in the modern day as well that the universe is in the process of continues expansion (Jamil, 2001). Before the modern development in the field of science the major belief was that the universe is a constant entity. It is static since its creation. It has remained the same since infinite will remain the same till infinite time. In the beginning of the 20th century Russian scientist Friedmann and Belgian Cosmologist Lemaitre theoretically proved through their calculations that the universe is in constant motion and expanding. In 1929 Edwin Hubble, an American astronomer discovered that the galaxies and the other celestial bodies were in constant motion and going away from each other. This process is called constant expansion in the universe. This fact was clearly mentioned in the holy Quran centuries ago. This is because the Quran is the real word of God who is the creator and sustainer of the whole universe. Referring towards the moon and stars in their orbits in the universe the holy Quran in Surat al- Anbiya 33 says that “It is He Who created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon. They swim along, each in an orbit (Ahmad & Hill 1986).

Quran and the concept of atmosphere

The Quran reveals that the sky is made up of seven layers. In this regard it is described in the Quran that “It is He Who created everything on the earth for you and then directed His attention up to heaven and arranged it into seven regular heavens. He has knowledge of all things. (Surat al-Baqara: 29)”. Yet at another place Allah says that “Then He turned to heaven when it was smoke. In two days, He determined them as seven heavens and revealed, in every heaven, its own mandate. (Surah Fussilat: 12)”. Quran provides the concept of sky in a variety of ways such as in many places in the holy Quran the word heavens is used to refer to sky above the earth. It means that the earth’s sky or the whole atmosphere is made up of seven layers (Ahmad, 1986).

Modern science in the present day discovered that world atmosphere also consists of seven layers. These layers differ in physical properties as pressures and gasses. The layer of the atmosphere closest to earth is called Troposphere. It contains about 90% of the mass of the atmosphere. The layer above this layer is called stratosphere. The layer above this layer is called mesosphere. Similarly, thermosphere, ionosphere and exosphere lie upon each other respectively. Regarding this atmospheric balance in the Quran God says that “Verily in the heavens and the earth are Signs... (45:3). Modern science declares that at one time the universe was nothing but cloud of smoke. In this regard the Quran in a number of places has explains that “Have not those who disbelieved known that the heavens and the earth were one connected entity, then We separated them, we made from water every living thing.” (21:30).” At another place the holy Quran says that “Then He turned to the heavens when it was smoke...” (41:11) “keep expanding it.” (51:47). At another place Quran says that “It is He Who created the Night and the Day and the sun and the moon: all (the celestial bodies) swim along each in its rounded course.” (21:33) (Stark, 2005). Regarding the process of change in the day and night Quran says it has never happened that Night has lapped Day or Day has overlapped Night. Allah has in fact, perfectly made the sun and moon for a given period and appointed time. Science has proved that there is a balance and harmony in the proportions of earth. Quran says that “He created the heavens and the earth in true (proportions): He makes the “He drawnets the Night as a veil over the Day. Behold verily in these things there are Signs for those who consider!” (13:3)

Quran and the oceans

Robert (1998) argues that modern science has explored that where two seas meet there is a barrier between them which divides the two seas so that each sea has its own temperature. This scientific phenomenon is also explained in clear terms in the Quran in the flowing verse “He has let free the two seas meeting together. There is a barrier between them, they do not transgress.” (55:19-20).” At another place Quran shares that “He is the one who has let free the two bodies of flowing water, one palatable and sweet, and the other salty and bitter. And He has made between them a barrier and a forbidding partition.” (25:53)

Upon the condition in the deeper seas and oceans the Quran states that “Or is like the darkness in a deep sea. It is covered by waves, above which are waves, above which are clouds. Darkness, one above another. If a man stretches out his hand, he cannot see it...” (24:40)”. The darkness in the oceans is found at a depth of 200 meters and below. It is discovered by the researchers that at this level there is no light. Very recently some of the scientists have discovered that there are internal waves which occur at very deeper levels as well at different densities. According to modern science deep waters have more density than the waters above them. Internal waves cannot be seen by human. These concepts were explained by the Quran some 1400 years ago (Toshihiko, 1964).

Quran and human biological development (Evolution)

Regarding the biological development of human being’s science believes in a systematic and ordered fashion. Similarly, Quran has also presented and the process of human development in a systematic and ordered way. The following words explain this concept in a more elaborated manner. “We created man from an extract of clay. Then We made him as a drop in a place of settlement, firmly fixed. Then We made the drop into an *alaqah (leech, suspended thing, blood clot), then We made the alaqah into a mudghah (chewed, lump) (23:12-14).” Through this verse the concept of human biological development is clarified. This testifies that how scientific research has supported the Quranic view of human biology. Quran is the word of God. Allah in the holy Quran asks its followers to have a firm belief in the existence of God and His ability to create other lives. The entire scientific phenomenon of the natural world is deemed by Muslims as signs.

All the scientific processes of the natural world are taken by Muslims as signs. To clarify this, in Surat Al-Jathiyah, 3-4 of Quran that “Have not those who disbelieve known that the heavens and the earth were of one piece, then We parted them (Al-Anbiya' 21:30)”. Yet at another place the Quran clarifies the concept of creation in the following manner that truly, for believers there are different signs in heaven and earth to look at and get wisdom. Sidney (1977) further elaborated that all the modern scientific concepts of DNA, Orbits, Stars, Planets, Oceans, Clouds, Creation, seasons, germination of plants, genetics are signs of existence of God. All these are a testimony to His greatness, supremacy and strength. Modern science has discovered that there is a great balance and harmony in the systems of the universe. Regarding this balance and harmony, the holy Quran says that Allah will show them His signs in the universe and in their own physical shape. Furthermore, in the holy Quran Allah says is the ultimate truth. In Quran Allah Almighty says that He has created man from clay and water, then placed man as a sperm in the mother womb and later one transformed that into a leech like object, it resembled a chewed meat, then put bones together and places flesh around the bones and nurtured and sustained it till it became another creature (Surah Al-Muminun, 13-15)”. A closer look at explanations of the holy Quran shows about the developments of man in the embryo. It means that how the holy Quran accurately and remarkably describes the stages of human development

in a systematic manner. Quran in Surataz-Zumar 6 says that “He creates you stage by stage in your mothers’ wombs in a threefold darkness. That is God, your Lord. Sovereignty is His. There is no god but Him. So, what has made you deviate?” (Mehdi, 2003).

Quran and mountains

Quran has clarified the concept of mountains; it benefits and geological functions in a more logical manner. The Quran says that “We placed firmly embedded mountains on the earth, so it would not move under them... (Surat al-Anbiya: 31).” The verse states that the role of the mountains is to balance the earth and to control it from shaking due to internal and external shocks. This reality was not known to anybody before the revelation of the Quran. Modern geology very recently discovered this fact after centuries. The modern findings of geology are that mountains emerge because of movements and collisions of massive plates which are in the crust of the earth. Due to the collisions and sliding of the plates from their origin places the earth shakes and earthquakes occur (Ahmad, 1995).

Thus, the role of mountains is that of the pegs which keep tow things together intact. In a verse of the Quran the “Peg” role of the mountain is described “Have We not made the earth as a bed and the mountains its pegs? (Surat an-Naba’: 6-7)”. This fixing is called in scientific term as isostasy. The importance of mountains for the earth had been pointed in the holy Quran almost 1400 years ago. Modern geology and scientific research have proved it very recently. This also testifies to the supreme knowledge and wisdom of God. In another verse the holy Quran in Surah Luqman: 10says “It is God Who cast firmly embedded mountains on the earth so that it would not move under you (Ahmad, 2002).

There are some other verses which also explain this process in the following manner. “Have **We not made the earth as a wide expanse and the mountains as pegs?**” (78:6-7). The modern earth sciences have proved that mountains play an important role in giving stability to the earth and its crust. Thus, mountains have underlying roots under the surface of the ground. “**And he has set firm mountains in the earth so that it would not shake with you; and rivers and roads: that ye may guide yourselves**” (16:15) “**Have We not made the earth as a wide expanse And the mountains as pegs?**” (78:6-7). The modern theory of plate tectonics was presented in 1960s. This theory also says that mountain work as stabilizers (Saliba, 1994).

Quran and the concept of clouds

There is also a very close similarity between the concept of clouds presented by Quran and the modern science. Science says that the clouds are pushed by winds. It is discovered by the science that cumulonimbus clouds are formed by the pushing winds in small pieces of clouds. Finally, these clouds converge at a place where they change into rains. Quran says that “Have you not seen how God makes the clouds move gently, then joins them together, then makes them into a stack, and then you see the rain come out of it... (24:43)”. In another place the holy Quran says that “And he sends down Hail from mountains (clouds) in the sky, and he strikes with it whomever he wills, and turns it from whomever he wills. The vivid flash of its lightning nearly blinds the sight. (24:43)”. According to the scientists these clouds which cause hail ultimately to the height of 25000 to 30000 feet. They join and form big clouds. These clouds are then pushed by the winds (Jamil, 2001).

Concept of Water, Rain, Rivers, Seas in Quran

According to science water occupies a central position among other elements in the physical world. Life basically originates from. The holy Quran elaborates and testifies

about the importance of water as an essential element of the physical world. Allah says in Quran that we jointed the heaven and earth together and then we clove them asunder and created everything thing from water (Surah Ha-Mim, 11). Water cycle is also considered as the most physical phenomenon in the world. This was discovered by Bernard Palissey in 1580 that water available under the ground was formed by the rainwater that entered the soil. In the holy Quran there is a clear description of water cycle. For example, Allah almighty says that sent water to the earth and we cause to grow gardens and grain for harvest (SuraQaf, 9-11). In another place, Quran presents that Allah sends water from sky in certain measures and then lodges it in ground (Sura Al-Muminun, 18). The occurrence of precipitation is elaborated in Quran that only Allah sent the wind, and also raises clouds. Allah spreads them in the sky and breaks them into parts and fragment. And men see raindrops coming out of them (Surah Ar-Rum, 48). In different places in the Quran Ayats talk about the rain, wind, seasons and the rainwater and springs and so on (Ahmad, 2002).

Atmosphere and its electrical power are also elaborated in Quran. Allah says that did not you look that how the clouds move gently with the order of Allah, then He joined them, and they became heaps of layers. We can see raindrops coming out of this. In other place Quran provides that Allah sends from sky mountains of hail. The flash of it seems to snatch away nights (Surah An-Nur, 43). Recently sciences have also discovered some properties of seas. Holy Quran presents that Allah has let loose seas, converges them together and there is a barrier in between so that they may not break (Al-Rahman, 19-20) (William, 2002).

Quran and the universe

Ahmad and Hill (1986) write that the concepts of astronomy and astrology are described in Quran. There are many verses in the holy Quran which pertains to universe, planet, stars and other bodies. Quran further elaborates that blessing be for Him who places in the sky big stars and also a bigger lamp and moon that gives light (Surah Al-Furqan, 61). Further, Quran explains that Allah has created the seven skies and placed them upon one another. He made the moon for lighting and sun like a lamp (Surah Nuh, 15-16)". Thus, in the holy Quran, there is a description about the creation of the universe that Allah raised over the heaven which was a smoke. He called both to come on their own will. They came willingly (Surah Ha Mim, 11). Modern astrology also presents its theory that the world was made up of different gases initially. These gases were attached to solid substances.

Conclusions

Quran is a book of signs and guidance. Quran is the word of Allah almighty, the originator of everything. According to holy Quran there is discipline and harmony in the universe. Science also supports this view. In one of the verses, the holy Quran declares that "If it had been from other than God, they would have found many inconsistencies in it." (Surat an-Nisa': 82)". Every idea and information provided in the Quran is a miracle. The miracles of the Quran have been proved by the modern science. About the perfection and guidance of the Quran "And this is a Book We have sent down and blessed, so follow it and be afraid of God so that hopefully you will gain mercy. (Surat al-An'am: 155)". Quran has clarified the concept of mountains; it benefits and geological functions in a more logical manner. The Quran says that "We placed firmly embedded mountains on the earth, so it would not move under them... (Surat al-Anbiya: 31)." There is compatibility between the two regarding many realities of human life and the universe. There are no inconsistencies in the Quran about different realities of the universe and the scientific investigations. Modern science takes guidance and direction from the Quranic thoughts and philosophies as most of the major inventions of the modern science are manifestations of Quranic

ideas and discussions. Scientific investigations have discovered many truths in the universe which fortify the power, wisdom, and strength of the God as the creator and sustainer of the universe. Quran encourages use of reason, exploration, research, and discovery into the different phenomenon in the universe.

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