

Science and religion is there any conflict?

Contributed by Administrator
Sunday, 22 January 2006

Science regards as 'scientific' the facts established through empirical methods. Therefore the assertions which have not yet been established through observation and experiment can only be theories or hypotheses.

Science cannot be sure about the future; it does not make definite predictions. Doubt is the basis of scientific investigations. However taught by God the All-Knowing the Messenger made decisive predictions most of which have already proven true the rest waiting for their time to come true. It is possible to find many verses in the Holy Book which point to certain established facts which science has recently established. As pointed out in the previous section the Holy Book mentions many important issues of creation and a great number of 'natural' phenomena which let alone an unlettered one even a most leading scientist could not have talked about fourteen centuries ago. Furthermore as will be explained below through the miracles of the Messengers the Holy Book has alluded to the farthest level of sciences. This is because it originated in the Knowledge of the All-Knowing One.

Does the Holy Book contain everything?

1. Being a Book describing man and the universe the Holy Book contains 'everything'. It declares:

"With Him are the keys of the Unseen. None but He knows them. And He knows what is in the land and the sea. Not a leaf falls but with His Knowledge not a grain amid the darkness of the earth nothing of wet or dry but (it is noted) in a Manifest Book (6.59)."

How can a book of medium size and which contains reiterations contain everything we need about life sciences conduct creation the past and future and so on?

As is known the Holy Book is a book of medium size and due to certain purposes it makes reiterations. So how can it contain everything we need about life sciences conduct creation the past and future and so on?

Before proceeding to explain this important matter we should point out that in order to benefit from the Holy Book which addresses all time and space and all levels of understanding from philosophers to sociologists and psychologists from physicists to biologists from lawyers to Traditionists and from spiritual guides to educationists one should be prepared to benefit from it. A student of the Holy Book should first of all have firm belief in the Holy Book and does his utmost to practice it in his daily life. Second he must try to refrain from sins as much as possible. Thirdly the Holy Book declares that a man has only that for which he makes effort (53:39) so in order to benefit from the Holy Book a student of the Holy Book should in the manner of a good experienced diver searching for coral or of a deep-sea explorer dive into the 'ocean' of the Holy Book and with no tiredness and boredom he should continue his research until death. Fourthly understanding the Holy Book requires a good command of the Arabic language and sufficient knowledge about all the branches of natural and religious sciences. Therefore a good interpretation of the Holy Book demands the cooperation of scientists from all the fields of natural and sociological sciences and religious scholars' experts on the Holy Book's commentary. Tradition. Religious Jurisprudence theology and spiritual sciences. Fifthly while reciting and studying it a student of the Holy Book should regard him as the first addressee of the Holy Book. He should be conscious of the fact that every verse of the Holy Book addresses each of its students directly. If we consider for example its verses telling of the past events or the stories of the Messengers and their peoples as simply an account of certain historical events which has nothing to say to us we cannot benefit from the Holy Book. We should know that with all of its verses the Holy Book addresses us directly and describes us to ourselves.

2. According to its nature significance worth and place in existence everything has a place of its own in the Holy Book

a. The Holy Book contains every thing but not in the same degree. The Holy Book pursues four purposes: it seeks to prove the existence and Unity of God. Messengerhood and bodily resurrection and concentrates on worship of God and justice. In order to realize its purposes the Holy Book draws our attentions to God's acts in the universe. His matchless art displayed through creation the manifestations of His Names and Attributes and the magnificent perfect order and harmony in existence. Also it mentions certain historical events; lay down the rules of personal and social good conduct and morality and the principles of a happy harmonious social life. Again it explains how we must worship our Creator and what we must do in order to please Him. The Holy Book also gives much account of the other life and expounds how we can gain eternal happiness and be saved from eternal punishment.

Everything is found in the Holy Book but everyone cannot see every thing in it since the things are found at different levels

b. The verse above (6:59) states that everything wet or dry is found in it. Is that really so? Yes everything is found in it but everyone cannot see every thing in it since the things are found at different levels. The Holy Book contains all things but since the basic duty of the Holy Book is as mentioned above to teach about the perfections essential qualities and acts of God and the duties and the status and affairs pertaining to the sphere of servanthood to God it contains them either in the form of seeds or nuclei or summaries or as principles or signs and they are found either explicitly or implicitly or allusively or vaguely or suggestively. One or other of these forms is preferred according to occasion in a way fitting for the purposes of the Holy Book and in connection with the requirements of the context. For example:

As the result of man's progress in science and industry some scientific and technological wonders such as airplanes electricity motor vehicles and means of radio and telecommunication have come into existence and taken the most prominent position in the material life of mankind.

As the Holy Book addresses the whole of mankind [at all times] it has not ignored scientific developments and points to them in two ways:

The first is as will be explained below by way of the miracles of the Messengers.

The second is in connection with certain historical events. This means the wonders of human civilization have no greater right than to be mentioned in the Holy Book either with a slight indication or implicit reference or allusions. For example if a man-made aircraft were to appeal to the Holy Book saying, 'Give me the right to speak and a place in your verses' then certainly the aircrafts of the sphere of Divine Lordship- the planets the earth the moon- would reply on behalf of the Holy Book: 'You may take a place here in proportion to your size!' Were the submarines to ask for a place among the verses of the Holy Book the submarines belonging to that sphere-the heavenly bodies 'swimming' in the vast 'ocean' of the atmosphere would say: 'Your place beside us is too small to be visible!' If the shining star-like electric lights were to demand the right to speak and ask to be included among the verses the electric lights of that sphere- the lightning the shooting stars and the stars which adorn the face of the sky- would say: 'You may have a right to be mentioned and spoken about in the Holy Book in proportion to your light!' If the wonders of human civilization were to demand a right to a place among the verses of the Holy Book with respect to the fineness of art they contain then a single fly would answer them: 'Shut up please! You do not have as much right as a wing of mine. For if all the fine arts and delicate instruments produced by man were banded together they could not be as wonderful and exquisite as the fine art and delicate members concentrated in my tiny body. The verse. "Surely those upon whom you call apart from God shall never create (even) a fly though they banded together to do it. (22:73)" will silence you!'

The Holy Book's viewpoint of life and the world is completely different from the modern one

c. The Holy Book's viewpoint of life and the world is completely different from the modern one. According to the Holy Book the world is a guesthouse. Man is a guest with many duties who will stay there for a short time only and he is charged with preparing all the necessities for eternal life. He will give priority to the most urgent and important of his duties. Therefore whatever is designed and used mostly for worldly purposes it will have very little share in servanthood to and worship of God which is founded upon love of truth and otherworldliness and therefore it will have a place in the Holy Book according to its merit.

Another reason why the Holy Book does not mention explicitly everything necessary for man's happiness in this world and the next such as the marvels of science and technology is this:

If the Holy Book had mentioned future events and scientific developments explicitly then the purpose for testing men would have been meaningless

Religion is for examination; a test and trial offered by God so that in the area of competition elevated spirits and base ones may be distinguished from each other. Just as raw materials are put in the fire so that diamond and coal gold and earth separate out from one another so too in this arena of trial the Divine obligations are for testing conscious beings and putting them to a competition so that the precious 'ore' in the 'mine' of human potential may be separated from the dross. Since the Holy Book was sent for man to be perfected through trial in this abode of testing in this arena of competition for sure it will only allude to the future events pertaining to the world which everyone will witness in due course of time and will only open the door to reason to a degree that proves its argument. If it had mentioned them explicitly then the purpose for testing men would have been meaningless. Simply the truth of the Divine obligations or proposals would have been as evident as if inscribed with stars on the face of the skies. Then everyone would be left no alternative other than affirming them. There would be no competition; the testing and trial would mean nothing. A spirit like coal would remain together with and appear to be of the same degree as a spirit like diamond.

Again the Holy Book addresses all times and places and all levels of understanding. It is the commonality in every community and in every age that constitute the great majority of people. Therefore in order to guide everyone to truth and to its basic purposes the Holy Book follows a style and language which is understandable to everyone.

As an ordinary man of the lowest intellectual level can benefit from the Holy Book a greatest scientist no matter to which branch of science he belongs to also benefits from the Holy Book. This is also why the Holy Book usually uses a symbolical language and frequently resorts to metaphors allegories comparisons and parables. Those who are well versed in knowledge (3:7) know how to approach the Holy Book and benefit from it and conclude that the Holy Book is the Word of God.

If the Holy Book had mentioned modern scientific and technological discoveries the people of earlier times would not have been able to understand them and therefore been deprived of benefiting from the relevant verses of the Holy Book. Also sciences are in constant advance and what is regarded today as true may appear tomorrow as wrong or by contrast what we see today as wrong may be proved to be true in the future.

d. God Almighty has endowed man with intellectual faculties so in many of its verses the Holy Book urges man to use those faculties of him and study nature and events. If therefore the Holy Book had mentioned say modern scientific and technological discoveries or everything pertaining to life nature history and man himself it would have been meaningless that man is created as the best pattern of creation endowed with many intellectual faculties. He would not have been able to use those faculties and improve them.

e. If the Holy Book had mentioned explicitly whatever we like it to do so then it would have been a book with hundreds of thousands of pages and therefore we would not be able to recite it completely to benefit from its spiritual enlightenment. Also it would give us great boredom to recite. This is contrary to the reason of its revelation and the purposes it pursues.