

UICI 2022: SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY
AND MANKIND

ISLAMIC SCIENCE Vs WESTERN SCIENCE

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A COMPARISON BETWEEN

WESTERN AND ISLAMIC SCIENCE

WESTERN SCIENCE

- Faith in rationality
- Science for the sake of science
- One all-powerful method, the only way of knowing reality
- Emotional neutrality as the key condition for achieving rationality

ISLAMIC SCIENCE

- Faith in revelation
- Science is a means for attain the pleasure of Allah; it is a form of submission which has a spiritual and social function
- Various method including reason and revelation, objective and subjective, all equally valid
- Emotional commitment is essential for a spiritually and socially uplifting scientific enterprise

A COMPARISON BETWEEN WESTERN AND ISLAMIC SCIENCE

WESTERN SCIENCE

- Impartiality – a scientist must concern himself only with the production of new discovery and not with the consequence of its use

ISLAMIC SCIENCE

- Partiality towards the truth: that is, if science is a form of worship (*ibadah*) a scientist has to concern himself as much with the consequences of his discoveries as with their production; worship is a moral act and its consequences must be morally good; to do any less is to make a scientist into an immoral agent

A COMPARISON BETWEEN WESTERN AND ISLAMIC SCIENCE

WESTERN SCIENCE

- Absence of bias- the validity of scientific statements depends only on the operations by which evidence for it was obtained, and not upon the person who makes it

ISLAMIC SCIENCE

- Presence of subjectivity: the direction of science is shaped by subjective criteria: the validity of a scientific statement depends both on the operation by which evidence for it was obtained and on the intention and the worldview of the person who obtained it; the acknowledgement of subjective choices in the emphasis and direction of science forces the scientist to appreciate his limitations

A COMPARISON BETWEEN WESTERN AND ISLAMIC SCIENCE

WESTERN SCIENCE

- Suspension of judgment – scientific statements are made only on the basis of conclusive evidence

ISLAMIC SCIENCE

- Exercise of judgment – scientific statements are always made in the face of inconclusive evidence; to be a scientist is to make expert; as well as moral judgment, on the face of inconclusive evidence; by the time conclusive evidence has been gathered it may be too late to do anything about the destructive consequences of one's activities

A COMPARISON BETWEEN WESTERN AND ISLAMIC SCIENCE

WESTERN SCIENCE

- Reductionism – the dominant way of achieving scientific progress

ISLAMIC SCIENCE

- Synthesis – the dominant way of achieving scientific progress, including the synthesis of science and values

A COMPARISON BETWEEN WESTERN AND ISLAMIC SCIENCE

WESTERN

- Universalism. Although science is universal, its primary fruits are for those who can afford to pay, thus the secrecy is justified

ISLAM

- Universalism. The fruits of science are for the whole of humanity. Knowledge and wisdom cannot be bartered or sold; secrecy is immoral

A COMPARISON BETWEEN WESTERN AND ISLAMIC SCIENCE

WESTERN SCIENCE

- Neutrality. Science is neutral , neither good nor bad
- Absolute freedom. All restraint or control of scientific investigation is to be resisted

ISLAMIC SCIENCE

- Value orientation. Science, like all human activity is value-laden; it can be either good or evil; “praiseworthy” or “blameworthy”. Science of germ warfare is not neutral, it is evil
- Management of science. Science is an invaluable resource and cannot be allowed to be wasted and go towards and evil direction; it must be carefully managed and planned for. It should be subjected to ethical and moral constraints.

A COMPARISON BETWEEN WESTERN AND ISLAMIC SCIENCE

WESTERN SCIENCE

- Individualism – which ensures that the scientist keeps his distance social, political and ideological concern

ISLAMIC SCIENCE

- Community orientation; the pursuit of science is a social obligation (*fard kifayah*). Both the scientist and the community have rights and obligations on each other which ensure interdependence of both

A COMPARISON BETWEEN

WESTERN AND ISLAMIC SCIENCE

WESTERN SCIENCE

- Fragmentation. Science is too complex an activity and thus has to be divided into disciplines, sub-disciplines, and sub-sub-disciplines

ISLAMIC SCIENCE

- Holistic. Science is too complex activities to be divorced and isolated into smaller and smaller segments. Science is a multi-disciplinary, interdisciplinary and holistic enterprise

A COMPARISON BETWEEN WESTERN AND ISLAMIC SCIENCE

WESTERN SCIENCE

- Group loyalty – production of new knowledge by research is the most important of all activities and is to be supported as such

ISLAMIC SCIENCE

- Loyalty to God and His creations – the production of new knowledge is a way of understanding the 'signs' of God and should lead to improving the lot of His creation – man, wildlife and legitimacy for this endeavor and therefore it must be supported as a general activity and not as an élitist enterprise

A COMPARISON BETWEEN WESTERN AND ISLAMIC SCIENCE

WESTERN SCIENCE

- Ends justify the means – because scientific investigations are inherently virtuous and important for the well being of mankind, any and all means- including the use of live animals, human beings and foetuses – are justified in the quest of knowledge

ISLAMIC SCIENCE

- Ends do not justify the means – there is no distinction between the ends and means of science, both must be permitted (*halal*), that is, within the boundaries of ethics and moralities

BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MUSLIM SCIENTISTS

- To God – whose pleasure they must seek at all times
- To the Ummah – whose needs, requirements and problem must be the focus of their attention
- To themselves – for making the best of his life in this world and the hereafter

Reference:

- Sardar, Ziyaudin. 1984. *The Touch of Midas : Science, Values and Environment in Islam and the West*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.