

The Divergence of Intellect, Religion, and Science: An Islamic Debate Regarding Transcendental Guidance

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Accepted and published July, 2024

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Abstract

This paper examines the distinctions between intellect, religion, and science as discussed in the writings of contemporary Iranian scholars, particularly focusing on the thoughts of Mohammad Mehdi Mirbagheri. By analyzing Mirbagheri's critique of mystical and philosophical approaches, we explore the broader implications of conflating or separating religious faith, intellectual pursuit, and scientific inquiry.

Keywords: Wisdom, Intellect, Religion, Mohammad Mehdi Mirbagheri

Introduction

In a previous work, the Platonic principle of transcendental guidance and the necessity of achieving maximal understanding from the ultimate source of knowledge, God, was discussed. The first step in understanding sciences from the source of all

knowledge involves recognizing that the creator, as the ultimate source of knowledge, cannot be fully comprehended by human intellect. The second step is distinguishing between the concepts of intellect and knowledge, as previously noted.

We previously examined the interplay between hikmat (wisdom) and scientific achievements, focusing on their representation in Persian and Arabic literature and their practical implications in contemporary conflicts, such as in Gaza. Hikmat, encompassing moral and practical wisdom, is a central theme in Persian educational literature and is reflected in the works of Jahili poets in Arabic literature (Mohseni Nia & Maryami, 2011; Abdul Jalil, 2001). This wisdom, as defined by Dehkhoda and others, involves understanding life issues and living ethically (Musaheb, 1966). In contrast, science, characterized by empirical methodologies and the pursuit of universal truths (Kuhn, 1970; Popper, 1959), often lacks the ethical and experiential dimensions of wisdom. The comparison illustrated distinct theological and literary traditions. Furthermore, the paper discusses how scientific advancements, while providing significant benefits, can be misused for destructive purposes, as seen in the Gaza conflict (2023-2024), which exemplifies the divergence and potential conflict between science and wisdom. (Davoudpour, A.R., 2024)

We also explained The matrix is a profound and intricate concept representing the intersection of knowledge, existence, and divine wisdom. This article begins with the assertion that someone who considers creation to be the result of chance has not received the initiation to understand the interconnectedness of the global reality of the matrix. Conversely, those who acknowledge the existence of God possess a basic score to understand the will and learn the matrix by birth. For those truly willing to know God, the book of God from A to Z and from Alpha to Omega and beyond is inscribed in the matrix, revealing that God is the author of the genetics of the world (Davoudpour, A. R., 2024).

Differentiating Intellect and Religion: A Critique of Islamic Jurisprudence in the Islamic Republic

Mohammad Mehdi Mirbagheri was born in 1961 in the religious city of Qom, Iran. His parents migrated to. After completing high school, Mirbagheri entered the seminary in 1975. From 1981, he studied advanced jurisprudence (Dars-e-Kharij) under prominent scholars such as Mousa Shobeiri Zanjani (b. 1938), and advanced principles of jurisprudence under Kazem Haeri (b. 1938) and Hossein Vahid Khorasani (b. 1921). His other notable teachers included Mirza Javad Tabrizi (1926–2006), Mohammad-Taqi Bahjat (1913–2009), Hassan Hassanzadeh Amoli (1928–2021), and Abdollah Javadi Amoli (b. 1933). Despite being taught by these well-known scholars, Mirbagheri was significantly influenced by two other mentors. He attended philosophy and logic classes by Mohammad-Taqi Mesbah-Yazdi (1934–2021) and extensively benefitted from the foundational theories of Moniruddin Hosseini-Hashimi (1930–1999). Hosseini-Hashimi's teachings on the "practical application of philosophy," "methodology of religious science and philosophy," and "principles of governmental jurisprudence" profoundly shaped Mirbagheri's intellectual foundation, particularly in the areas of Islamic governance and the guardianship of the Islamic jurist (Wilayat al-Faqih). He argues that all knowledge can be categorized as either religious or non-religious. Mirbagheri is a staunch advocate of Islamizing universities and the theory of absolute guardianship of the Islamic jurist. He criticizes the juxtaposition of works like Rumi's "Masnavi" with the Quran, arguing that such mysticism cannot govern the world and is aligned with adversarial forces against Islam (Mirbagheri, 2009)¹

In contrast, wisdom (hikmat) in Islamic philosophy is not synonymous with religion. Wisdom leads to the purification of the self and the removal of spiritual impurities, as reflected in the Quranic verse "He purifies them and teaches them the Book and wisdom" (Quran 62:2). This viewpoint aligns with the ideas of Mulla Sadra (1571–1640), who sees wisdom as an independent path to divine understanding (Rizvi, 2007).

¹ BBC Persian broadcasting service: <https://www.bbc.com/persian/articles/c1vd21g9yvko>

Mirbagheri's Critique of Mysticism

Mirbagheri's views sharply diverge from those of mystics like Rumi. He sees Rumi's teachings as incomplete and accuses them of promoting a form of Islam that is disconnected from governance and societal order. According to Mirbagheri, the true Islamic mysticism, as taught by Ayatollah Khomeini, encompasses governance and revolutionary struggle (Mirbagheri, 2009).

Shahab al-Din Haeri, another religious scholar, critiques Mirbagheri's approach, highlighting his confinement within a particular ideological framework that sees Western influence and phenomena like COVID-19 as conspiracies against Islam (Haeri, 2020). This stance reflects a broader trend in some Islamic circles to interpret contemporary events through a lens of ideological struggle.

The Convergence and Divergence of Intellect, Religion, and Science

The intersection of intellect, religion, and science creates a triad where each element holds unique value for humanity. Intellect brings forth wisdom, which is infinite; religion fosters faith, which is both astonishing and restrictive; and science offers comfort and progress. This divergence in perspectives leads to a fractured understanding, where each domain claims a distinct approach to truth and human advancement. In Islamic context, those who have reached the stance of Wisdom (Intellect) are believed to have reached a great triumph. Quran refers to wisdom as a great virtue is found in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 269:

"الْحِكْمَةُ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ"

"He grants wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever is granted wisdom is indeed given much good. But none will remember except those of understanding."²

In this view the wisdom is considered not a scholastic achievement, but a spiritual triumph in its highest degree.

² Quran, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:269.

Differentiation of Wisdom, Intellect and Religion in Gaza Crisis:

Wisdom, Intellect, and Science: Conceptual Framework

Wisdom, intellect, and science, while interconnected, serve different functions in human understanding and decision-making (Davoudpour, A.R., 2024). Wisdom involves the application of knowledge and experience to make sound judgments, often encompassing moral and ethical considerations (Moussaieff Masson, 2010), while a higher Wisdom (Hikmat) is the divine judgment for the benefactor which cannot be judged by short term decrees (Davoudpour, A.R., 2024). Intellect, on the other hand, is the capacity for logical and analytical thinking, essential for problem-solving and innovation (Gardner, 1983). Science, as a systematic enterprise that builds and organizes knowledge in the form of testable explanations and predictions, is fundamentally empirical and based on observable phenomena (Kuhn, 1962). Intellect and Science has the capacity to persuade and satisfy human understanding, while while the higher wisdom does not necessarily require acceptance by intellect or science as explained in the confrontation between Moses and Khidr in Quran.

The confrontation between Moses and Khidr in the Quran is a significant narrative that appears in Surah Al-Kahf (18:60-82). This story highlights themes of knowledge, patience, and the limits of human understanding. Here is a detailed explanation of this encounter:

The Quest for Knowledge

The story begins with Moses seeking to learn from someone who possesses greater knowledge than himself. Moses is informed that there is a servant of God who has been given special wisdom and knowledge. Determined to gain deeper understanding, Moses sets out on a journey with his servant to find this wise man, who is later identified as Khidr.

Meeting Khidr

When Moses finally meets Khidr, he asks to follow him to learn from his wisdom. Khidr agrees, but with a condition: Moses must be patient and not question anything Khidr does until Khidr himself explains it. Moses agrees, although he acknowledges that this will be difficult for him.

The Three Events

1. **The Damaged Boat:** As they travel together, they come across a boat and Khidr damages it by making a hole in it. Moses, unable to contain his curiosity, questions Khidr's action, noting the apparent harm it causes to the boat owners. Khidr reminds Moses of his promise to be patient, and Moses apologizes, promising not to question him again.
2. **The Slain Boy:** Next, they encounter a young boy whom Khidr kills. Shocked and horrified, Moses once again questions Khidr, unable to understand why he would commit such an act. Khidr again reminds Moses of his promise, and Moses, realizing his mistake, apologizes once more and vows to keep silent.
3. **The Repaired Wall:** Finally, they arrive at a town where they are denied hospitality by its inhabitants. Despite this, Khidr repairs a wall that was about to collapse. Puzzled by this act of apparent generosity to unkind people, Moses asks for an explanation. At this point, Khidr decides it is time to part ways and explains the reasons behind his actions.

The Gaza Crisis: A Case Study

During the Gaza crisis, the differentiation between wisdom, intellect, and science becomes particularly pronounced. On October 7th, Hamas launched a significant attack, resulting in severe casualties. This raises the question: did Hamas demonstrate elevated intellect? While the operational decisions may have been strategic, the claim of elevated intellect is contentious, given the brutal consequences of the attack. Following Israel's retaliation, which led to the martyrdom of over thirty-nine thousand individuals, the ethical and moral dimensions of the conflict became starkly evident.

Moral and Ethical Dimensions

The aftermath of the attack starkly exposed Israel's brutality to the global community. Despite its technological advancements and military capabilities, Israel's actions have been widely criticized for their moral deficiencies. The scientific and technological superiority of Israel and its ally, the United States, underscores a significant gap between scientific advancement and ethical conduct. This gap highlights the critical role of wisdom and moral reasoning, which are often overshadowed by technological and scientific prowess (Said, 1978).

The Role of Technology and Moral Deficiency

Israel and the United States' technological advancements provide them with significant military advantages. However, the moral and ethical implications of their actions in Gaza reveal a profound deficiency. The high-tech weaponry and sophisticated military strategies used in the conflict do not necessarily translate to moral superiority. Instead, they highlight a troubling disconnect between scientific capability and moral responsibility. This observation aligns with critiques from various scholars who argue that technological advancement without ethical oversight leads to moral decay (Post, 2008).

Conclusion

The debate among scholars like Mirbagheri and mystics like Rumi underscores the ongoing struggle to reconcile religious faith with mystical and scientific pursuits. We have clarified that Wisdom involves understanding the divine plan and the path toward spiritual progression, while higher wisdom, as a spiritual attainment or understanding of the "Matrix," does not necessarily require acceptance by intellect or science. The integration of intellect, religion, and science remains a crucial discourse in contemporary Islamic thought. Referencing the story of Khidr and Moses in the Quran, we see how higher wisdom is distinguished from intellect, religion, and science, as exemplified by Moses' reactions. This narrative illustrates the boundaries of human understanding and highlights the distinction between divine wisdom and human knowledge.

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