
**RELIGIO-SCIENTIFIC DISCOURSE AND ITS IMPACT
UPON EXEGETICAL APPROACH CONFRONTING
VARIOUS RESPONSES AND LIMITATIONS**

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This paper aims to discuss various responses against exegetical approach which have taken place due to Religio-Scientific Discourse (RSD) and its impact upon scholars and exegetes as a central point of the discussion elaborating RSD with different modes and limitations along with comparative sketch and nexus between both Islam and science. The discussion has been divided generally into two main phases, one is about RSD and other is its impacts upon exegetical approaches. Groups of scholars e.g. advocates or supporters, opponents with different tone called as rejectionists together with other two categories known as moderates and modernists are also important contributors to overall debate expressing their own opinions and vantage points. Employing analytical method, we may examine question of clash or harmony from Islamic perspective with historical background, different reactions from exegetes and scholars and various dimensions of impact upon exegetical domain. What are the exegetical responses, methodological approach with reference to Scripture's inspiration towards knowledge as well as advancements in scientific research in order to judge the contextual clues by scholars along with thematic approaches? So, in current context, the latest awareness of discourse, methodological consideration with thematic approach, scholar's carrier and background interweaved and knitted across the well-balanced response and reaction by exegetes against any new development in contemporary scientific uplift and progress along with epistemological consideration and limitations.

Keywords: Religio-Scientific discourse, Exegetical Responses, Contextual Consideration, Thematic Exegesis.

Introduction

In this paper the impact of Religio-Scientific Discourse (RSD) upon exegetical domain has been examined considering the data and information from different relevant dimensions i.e. Islam and science in addition to their mutual link along with positive and negative responses. RSD understanding with different measurements prior to elaborating the desired impact has also been visited for data provision to analyse the subject thesis. It may be observed that due to this relationship, there exist an influence in varying degrees upon scholars and exegetes of modern era to interpret the Scripture (*Nuṣūṣ*) with respect to scientific sign and discoveries presented by new advancement. As literature review exposed that a lot of data regarding Islam and science as well as scientific exegesis has already been published but the domain of this article is relatively different. It may be a source and initiative for scholars to approach up to some possible extent towards a new dimension and thought.

Hence it is required to test the hypothesis that Religio-Scientific Discourse (RSD) has impact upon the interpretative approaches or in order to grasp that there exist any mutual track among their views apparently different or even opposite where a number of scholars may incline unanimously towards truth i.e. the state of discourse where it should actually exist. For this purpose, already existing literature and available data analysis may help us to arrive at result after hypothetical testing due to different approaches that cause to expose real picture what Scripture demands, and compatible with every time and domain. Therefore, overall discourse may be demarcated as:

I-Religio-Scientific Discourse RSD	II-RSD Impacts upon Exegetical Domain
One phase of the discourse what has been wished for this paper is related to religion Islam and science, mutual nexus, limitations and comparison. Opinions of religious scholars as well as scientists regarding RSD. Question of consonance and dissonance from Islamic perspective, Qur'ānic Inspirations towards study of natural	On the other hand, an analytical review has been given judging RSD in the front line of various responses from exegetical domain. Different Modes and Limitations in relation to contextual consideration with critical appraisal is also an integral part of discussion.

Inspirations towards study of natural phenomenon have also been discussed and tried to provide relevant aspects of discourse up to possible extent.

of discussion.

Thematic exegetical domain and methodological approaches have been measured succinctly with comments at the end of each subtitle elaborations before final conclusion and recommendations.

Comparative analyses prior to execution of analytical method have been given in different phases of the paper to deal with what is demanded by the paper. In current contextual consideration we require to find the mutual place of guidance from *Nuṣūṣ* to guide and tackle the situation of present time considering thematic exegetical methodology. No doubt *Ijtihād* and analogical reasoning may cause to put forward again the scholars elaborating with their exegetical methodologies containing both situations i.e. current scenario to that of time of revelation with pondering over historical context and consulting that particular theme and scientific topic thoroughly with what is mentioned and indicated at different places throughout in the Holy Qur'ān.

In a nutshell, the overall discussion moves around the question of impact of discourse upon exegesis, their methodologies, one's need to become familiar with text and context interconnection, scholar's critical remarks, interpretative trends and switching the discourse with thematic exegetical mode to that of epistemological reflections along with discourse of clash and harmony between religion and science and contextual consideration.

A Succinct comparative sketch of Religio-Scientific Discourse (RSD)

Prior to discussing scientific exegetical approaches analysing RSD that may also be called as discourse related to scientific exegesis (*al-Tafsīr al-'Ilmī*)¹, we are required to discuss some preliminary elaborations regarding Religio-Scientific Discourse, mutual nexus between Islam and science and is there any domain to tie up both up to some limitations or not which is necessary to help grasp the frame of reference for methodology or the knowledge that has been established through scholars' methodologies fluctuating between acceptance or rejection of RSD in accordance with various responses and argumentations.

As the word Science has been taken from Latin “*Scientia*” means “*Knowledge*” is the study of natural world with proper well defined methodology or the knowledge that has been established through observations and experiments. *Cambridge Advance Learner’s Dictionary* defined the term science as: “*The careful study of the structure and behaviour of the physical world, especially by watching, measuring, doing experiments and the development of theories to describe the results of these activities.*”¹

Comparatively, Religion on the other end, in addition to providing guidance (*Hidāyah*) in the life deals also with super natural world and to know about whether, anything exists beyond the nature or not i.e. metaphysical approach. What has been investigated and produced by the modern research any new invention and cultural change close to that innovation, the discourse of text and context may provide very useful and applicable criterion that is not outside the domain of Religion. Although both the domains have different foundations, scopes and limitations, but some commonalities are also there that may also be considered important with their relevant areas and approaches some extent about perceptible world. As Mehdi Golshani (b.1939) in his concluding remarks concerning some fundamental questions of discussion on Islam and the science of the nature, he put that:

“*In the Qur’ānic view, the study of nature is really the study of signs of God. Therefore, scientific work is to be considered some kinds of religious activity.*”³

No doubt, any sort of action which causes to proceed toward reality is religious activity either due to any advancement or rational approach.

Examining history, we may add that after the revelation, as time goes on day to day scientific research has also been exposing some important facts about nature that were not well known to the mankind earlier, allowing human mind to rethink over the creation and the order in the universe. So, it may also be added that Science behaves like the servant of Religion and it is the question of complementing religion instead of clashing with it.

Number of scholars having different religious convictions and greatly enriched by scientific knowledge have to admit the revealed facts and some have even expressed their trust in the Scripture due to scientific background. For example Ouspensky (d.1947) has spelled out that, “*A religion which contradicts science and a science which contradicts religion are both equally false.*”⁴ It means that truth is the common

paradigm for whole humanity. Furthermore, a well-known remark stated by Albert Einstein (d.1955), one of the greatest scientists of the 20th century, declares religion-less science is subject to lame and science-less religion is blind one. He also admitted the fact declaring that “*The more I study physics, the more I am drawn to metaphysics.*”⁵ Dr. Maurice Bucaille (d.1998) reinforced this concept stating in introduction of his book, that in Islam, the discourse of religion and science has flourished like twin sisters. As a result, at the time of height of Islamic civilization, science made astonishing developments in various fields, from which the West was later enlightened.⁶ Similarly, Father of Thermodynamics, Lord Kelvin (d.1907), tried to convince that if you ponder over, you will be drawn by science to faith in God. One may find that science is not hostile but supportive to religion.⁷ Nearly, all these scientists expressed that science and religion both are so closely related to each other and one may help understand other. Atomic scientist Engineer Sulṭān Bashīr Maḥmūd (b.1940) added that “*Science has in fact turned out to be supporter of the revelations of the Holy Qur’ān.*”⁸

Our view point in the light of this comparative elaboration is that the scientific advancement based upon facts and religious data are in harmony with each other. Religion expands the vision of science and also gives the paradigm for the better use of scientific productions. On the other hand, science also has serving aspects of the religion that can be extended by the mutual relationship of scientists and religious scholars. It may also be added, that as the pendulum of time swings with the force of values depends upon the culture and relevant changes from time to time. So, Religio-Scientific Discourse (RSD) is required to be revisited periodically that may provide chances to understand unattended aspects of phenomenon in comparative manner where religious guidance may become more transparent and understandable.

RSD clash or harmony: Investigating nexus from Islamic perspective

Science from Islamic perspective may be considered as supportive device which is helpful to know and understand various unattended dimensions of natural phenomenon where religion guides us how to deal with. As already pronounced mandamus and prohibition may become rationalized and crystal clear after any new scientific exploration with closer relation to the truth. Facts (of life and nature) mentioned in Scripture

became more comprehensible later after the scientific advancements. Scientific knowledge and proved facts may support the religious scriptures indicating that there is no wrangle and clash between them. The traditional conflict between religion and science began in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is pointed out by Waḥīd ud Dīn Khān (b.1925) stating that the opponents of the religion tried to draw attention towards scientific research because of that various aspects of the universe have been explained, so ‘*the God exists*’, this hypothesis is not required any more. He added, in fact by this advancement of science, some realities addressed by the religion can be investigated with better scientific approaches.⁹

It means the question of clash is due to narrow-mindedness and unreasonable attitude towards RSD. Furthermore, it is also affirmed by Hārūn Yaḥyā (b. 1956) that this atheistic understanding of science is not very old but a recent phenomenon. Science and religion were never thought to be in clash with each other and science was accepted as a method of proving the existence of God.¹⁰ The main contributors of science belonged to the Muslim’s World is a testimony for the mutual harmonic relationship between the religion and science. Kecia Alī (b.1972) and Oliver Leaman (b.1950) also stated as:

“There can be no general incompatibility between Islam and science since for many centuries the center of scientific investigation internationally was precisely the Islamic World.”¹¹

This is how Islamic World welcomed scientific advancement and transferred to the next generation its rich contribution.

Karl Von Frisch (d.1982), a specialist in the field of ethology¹² known for remarkable research about honeybees and who was given a Nobel Prize in 1973, acknowledged that his research subject to be compatible with the Scripture of Islam. Moreover, Hārūn Yaḥyā (b.1956) after a careful analysis of the comments of a number of scholars and scientists regarding religion and science has declared as:

“For only then may science adhere to way of God. When a way opposite to religion is adopted, scientists waste both time and resources, and impede the progress of science.”¹³

Referring to the Qur’ān and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) as the true source of information, he advised that the secrets of scientific

development, are only possible if guided by the Qur'ān. Dr Muḥammad Iqbāl's (d.1938) examination regarding RSD, based on the expression that both have different limitations and religion researches for special human experience in real sense, regarding the question of conflict, according to him, is due to misunderstanding, both religion and science interpret the same data of experience. He predicted the agreement between science and religion in the coming advancements as he added:

“The classical physics has learned to criticise its own foundations. As a result of this criticism the kind of materialism, which is originally necessitated, is rapidly disappearing, and the day is not far off when religion and science will discover hitherto unsuspected mutual harmonies.”¹⁴

Religion and science in their relevant foundation have different scope where mutual conflict and clash may not exist logically.

Nature is the manifestation of Divine Signs and therefore science and religion cannot be conflicting disciplines. Rather, they are two (apparently) different expressions of the same truth. It is necessary to enlighten the mind with sciences, while hearts are required to be illuminated by religious teachings as indicated by Badiuzaman Said Nursī (d.1960).¹⁵

In view of above discussion, it may be added that scientific advancements and religious teachings and fundamentals in reality are common relating to God's Truth. This harmony could be appreciated by broad-minded and well-versed people in multiple aspects of RSD and not by those religious scholars or scientists who remain rigid in their approaches. In Islamic philosophical thought it has also been endorsed that guidance both from science and religion is necessary for personality to be scintillated.

RSD mutual nexus and Qur'ānic inspiration broadening mental horizon

Regarding the question of clash or harmony from Islamic perspective, we believe that a knowledgeable person cognizant of both religion and science may understand RSD's mutual nexus comparatively better. As far as the Islamic Scripture is concerned, it is stated in various verses of the Holy Qur'ān inviting the human intellect and reason like “*Perchance*

they may reflect".¹⁶ Qur'ānic Inspiration towards this discourse has been mentioned which finds expression in various verses. For example some references are as, *"Thus doth Allah make clear to you His Signs: In order that ye may consider,"*¹⁷ to divulge more detail up to man's ultimate destination Holy Qur'ān stated as: *"Do they not reflect in their own minds? Not but for just ends and for a term appointed, did Allah create the heavens and the earth, and all between them"*¹⁸

Similarly, we may visit some other verses and Prophet's saying laden with the message of inspiration for humankind to observe and reflect. The Qur'ān with inquiring phrases invites to reason, logic, rationality and intelligence so that one may be able to extract the pearls of meanings from the Holy Scripture with watchful mind towards nature that may leads us ultimately towards Ultimate Reality.

This understanding more and more is associated with our limitations of contemplation, so that we may be blessed with the various connotations of these words along with observation of stated natural phenomena in the verses, in the heavens and the earth including the human beings. As in the Holy Qur'ān it is also stated:

*"Soon will we show them our signs in the (furthest) region (of the earth), and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the truth...."*¹⁹

That is why the prayer, *"O My Lord! advance me in knowledge"*²⁰ was bestowed upon Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ). What a perfect message is this from Lord to Prophet of Islam? In the preamble to his book, Sulṭān Bashīr Maḥmūd added that I reached at the conclusion after my long scientific carrier that every talk of the Lord of Universe (Allah Almighty) is the utmost limit of the truth. Therefore, the points in the Qur'ān regarding the knowledge of things (*'Ilm al-Ashyā'*) are the apex standard of the science... in fact the end of science is the beginning of the Qur'ān.²¹ Therefore, in RSD Islamic Scripture has different status as compared to other religious texts.

It may be added at the end of this discussion, science is a powerful tool that urges mankind to understand themselves and what is in the cosmos, with better ways in order to know what is being expressed by the natural phenomena. It may lead humanity to reflect deeper on one's own existence and the surroundings that hold the Creator's Signs. Here is the Islamic Scripture that helps us in broadening our mental horizon.

Science is a source for the benefit of humanity and to know various dimensions of natural phenomena and their purposes. It is not a Divine revelation but a little knowledge as compared to that of revelation.

RSD impact confronting various responses from exegetical domain: An analytical review

There are number of reactions concerning RSD from exegetical perspective and impact of this discourse upon exegetes and scholars in relation to Scripture's elaborations about a particular theme or topic. For example, one scholar may have either negative or partially negative response towards this discourse while other may comment positively in favour of Qur'ān and science relationship, having different outlooks with various limitations. Dr Yaḥyā Khālīd Abū Milha explained the concept with reference to Baṣṭāmī Muḥammad Khir, dividing the discourse into four groups like Modernists, Advocates, Moderates and Rejectionists. A brief sketch of each category is necessary to synthesize data for analytical evaluation.

Modernists

The Modernists are those who try to bring the religious concepts and interpretations in accordance with scientific advancement. Sometime the people having this approach have no more inclination towards metaphysical realities. For example miracles mentioned in the Qur'ān have been dealt with scientific prism as by Sir Syed Aḥmad Khān (d.1898) etc. Robinson said about group that, "Jesus does not create living birds from clay (III:49),... nor does Solomon have super natural powers which enable him to understand the speech of birds and ants."²² So, according to Robinson, Modernists attitude towards Scripture ignoring metaphysical realities is not imbued in the revealed guidance.

Moreover, Dr Abdul Raḥmān commented that people having this approach are influenced by Western approaches and interpret Qur'ānic verses in accordance with science pointlessly and beyond need.²³ It shows that this nexus is not a reasonable attempt towards Qur'ānic exegesis as done by Modernists.

In brief it could be claimed that these scholars give precedence to the scientific approach and try to mold the Qur'ānic concept in accordance with science. Metaphysical dimensions of the religion have also been

handled scientifically by these scholars e.g. djinns have been rendered as microbes etc. So, the attitude of Modernist towards RSD is some things exceeding more than what is required.

Advocates

Religio-Scientific Discourse (RSD) has been encouraged by the group known as Advocates. These scholars having keen interest in the subject matter with some limitations have been welcomed by various schools of thought approaching the Holy Qur'ān from the scientific point of view. Shaykh Ṭaṭṭāwī Jawharī (d.1940) and Mustafā al-Marāghī (d.1945) may be included in this category although both have different approach to the field of Qur'ānic exegesis.

We may judge their demands towards science as articulated by Ṭaṭṭāwī (d.1940). He advised to observe the nature, rich study of universe to proceed further for betterment of Muslim Ummah, thus helping reduce shortage of Islamic scholars in the current field. In the exegesis of Surah al-Raḥmān, he emphasized on the study of natural phenomena indicating that about 750 verses of the Holy Qur'ān are related to this subject of Islam and Science discourse.²⁴

Some scholars like Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d.1111), Muḥammad bin 'Umar al-Rāzī (d. 1210), Ṭahir bin 'Āshūr (d. 1973), Ṭaṭṭāwī (d.1940) and Matwalī al-Sha'rāwī supported the scientific explanation with different limitations depending upon scholars own expertise and skill.²⁵ For example Sulṭān Bashīr Maḥmūd, a retired scientist from Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission, tried to explain next world, isthmus (*barzakh*) and eschatological writing about paradise and hell. Dr Syed Masuad Aḥmad added that Qur'ān and science both have rational and logical method to expose the cosmic secrets while Qur'ān is one step ahead inspiring towards thinking, reflection and meditation upon realities of universe... so Qur'ān brings movement, motivation and inspiration while Science comes into existence due to this encouragement. In this way nexus between Qur'ān and Science is like movement and action.²⁶

Examining exegesis of HAMKA, results revealed that out of four hundred (400) cosmic verses (*Ayāt al-Kawniyyah*), 298 have been interpreted by him employing seven methodologies of interpretation including scientific approach elaborating creation, atmosphere, length of six days, theory of Evolution and eschatology etc.²⁷ One may visit in the writings of advocates having foot notes rich with scientific discussion.

It may be added that although aforementioned schemes and of

interpretation may be called as supporters and advocates of scientific exegesis, there are further differences among their approaches and patterns procedure. They quote some relevant verses showing the legitimacy of the discourse what they adopted from Qur'ānic point of view.

Moderates

This Group may be placed in the middle approximately assigning them intermediary position with fluctuating opinions. They don't extreme demand of scientific exegesis as desired by the scholars of Modernists category. Scholars like Dr 'Aṭā Ur Raḥmān (b 1942) may be included in this group although he is not an exegete but only due to comment about a phenomenon mentioned in Sūrah *al-Raḥmān* (LV: 17).²⁸ He explained it with respect to the earth internal magnetic field effects which cause "*Geomagnetic Reversal*" interchanging the north with south that happened more frequently about two times in 50,000 years. Dr 'Aṭā Ur Raḥmān stated that it is an interesting reality mentioned in the verse 17 of Sūrah *al-Raḥmān*. He commented that, "*Obviously, each time the reversal of north and south occurs, east becomes west, and the west becomes east. The planet earth has therefore had two easts and two wests many times over its life period.*"²⁹

This is one scientific elaboration out of many interpretations that elaborates multiple dimensions of natural phenomenon. Furthermore, Bint al-Shātī and Maḥmūd Shaltūt also criticized the scientific exegesis while Muḥammadal-Bahī, Ḥasan al-Bana may be added to the group of Moderates as stated by Dr Khālīd Abu Milha.³⁰

We may add that scholars and exegetes stated in either of the previous groups or mentioned now when we observe their well-balanced, vigilant, careful attitude towards the valid and proven facts of scientific achievement then that particular exegetical work of those scholars may be added to this category. These elaborations may expand the views of observer and thinker towards the apparent and hidden signs in Lord's creation and the truth ultimately.

Rejectionists

According to this category the exegesis in the light of scientific data are sensitive and it is essential to be careful. They argued that Qur'ān is the book of guidance (*Hidāyah*) but not a scientific treatise. Abū

Ishāq al-Shāṭibī (d.1388 A.D.) discussed that fields of learning which were well known to the Arabs while Qur'ān was being revealed in the light of objective of *Sharī'ah*. Dividing these types of knowledge ('*Ulūm*') into beneficial and non-beneficial categories, he disallows to add physics, mathematics and logic etc. into Qur'ānic Sciences ('*Ulūm al-Qur'ān*').³¹

So, co-relation of Qur'ānic verses with any new scientific findings has not been appreciated and not allowed by the group of rejectionists.

Al-Shāṭibī (d.1388 A.D) may be graded as the top of the list among the rejectionist of scientific exegesis. Amīn al-Khulī (d.1966), Muḥammad 'Izzat Darwaza (d. 1984), Ṣubḥī Ṣālīḥ, Muḥammad Ḥussain al-Dhahbī (d.1977) and Syed Quṭb (d.1966) all rejected the Qur'ānic interpretation in the light of science.³² Muḥammad Ḥussain al-Dhahbī endorsed al Shāṭibī's views as compared to al-Ghazālī and added that to find laws, principles and theories of scientific knowledge in the Qur'ān is not the objective of verses laden with sign.³³ Shaykh Maḥmūd Shaltūt (d.1963), Abdul 'Azīm al-Zurqānī (d.1948), Muḥammad bin Luṭfī al-Sabbāgh (b.1930), Abd al-Majīd al-Muhtasib (b.1937) are also against this approach.³⁴ Furthermore, Dr Abdul Raḥmān stated that their inclination towards science is strange because they corroborate Qur'ānic verses ludicrously. However, they know that their opinions are baseless, in spite of this they write (enhancing RSD) so that their view point can be considered as 'scientific'.³⁵

It may be added that these scholars thought that the most essential message of verse may be overlooked in this way focusing on scientific aspect of the phenomenon indicated in that particular verse. They don't allow to correlate *Higgs Boson Particle*³⁶ (God Particle) with finding from Holy Scripture.³⁷ It is why RSD doesn't appeal to the scholars of this category. We may add further, that it is essential not to obscure the meaning of Qur'ānic verse, therefore, to reject the interpretation involving RSD is one of the objective of this group.

This division may be extended or divided further into sub-divisions for understanding multiple thought about any common issue of science and religion. What is scientific proof or remarks about a phenomenon and how religious guidance and concepts with numerous dimensions may lead to understanding is comparatively better way to deal them thematically. Although due to various modes and aspects of RSD, some scholars and exegetes may not fit exactly into above mentioned categories. Sometime a scholar expresses more than one opinions with slightly difference having resemblance with aforementioned categories where

we have to classify the RSD with respect to various modes instead of scholars like modernist or advocate.

For Analytical Evaluation one may consider the following table for better understanding and data for critical appraisal before the discussion of different modes and multiple aspects for measurement of RSD impact and its origin.

RSD-Oriented Response/ Category	Main Concern/ RSD Impact	Analytical Evaluation	Remarks/ Overall Review
Modernists	This group realized the importance of RSD and tried to elaborate Scripture expressing its rational understanding whereas meta physical entries have been ignored by Modernist. RSD has different degree of influence vis-à-vis the scientific awareness along with religious knowledge.	These scholars are impressed by Western knowledge and interpret Qur'ānic verses in accordance with modern scientific data frequently giving less importance to the meta physical realities. So, it is estimated that this category comparatively may be called as Partially Misfit Approach toward Qur'ānic interpretation.	Modern knowledge regarding any theme mentioned in the Holy Scripture may amplify the domain of understanding. Sometime in current contextualization due to helpful data from RSD, as well as revealed guidance and instruction may become more prominent approaching to rational realm. It depends upon the methodology and ability of exegetes to put the concepts and
Advocates	RSD has been encouraged by the group of Advocates elaborating multiple dimensions of natural phenomenon. Scholars having keen interest	In this way human mind may get open observing acumen and insight from the verses laden with the Divine Wisdom. On the	

	in mentioning scientific point of view along with religion tried to apply rational and logical method to expose the cosmic secrets.	other hand, in order to support RSD, it may be observed that number of verses have been co-related sometime partially accepted. They justify their view point quoting (cosmic) verses.	interpretation either towards exegesis worthy of praise (<i>Tafsīr-i Maḥmūd</i>) or towards exegesis not welcomed and ill-favored (<i>Tafsīr-i Madhmūm</i>) We may find certain
Moderates	This group may be placed in the mid, approximately assigning them intermediary position with fluctuation of opinions. They have no extreme demand of scientific exegesis as compared to Modernist and Advocates Science has no more importance as compared to texts (<i>Nuṣūṣ</i>) and revealed guidance.	It is estimated that a well balanced, careful attitude towards the valid and proven facts of scientific achievement may be called a reasonable exegetical work from scientific perspectives. This category may have equilibrium position either to delete something from Moderates and Advocates or to add something to Rejectionist allowing admired <i>al-Tafsīr al 'Ilmī</i> .	exegetical views and interpretations like traditional, mystical (<i>Tafsīr-i Ishārī</i>) and some scholars having traditional-cum-modern approached towards a phenomenon. Actually for Islamic scholars these are the alternative ways to visit the same thing either form scientific lens or from religious guidance. It is to be noted that scholars of different categories may
Rejectionist	Qur'ān is the book of guidance (<i>Hidāyah</i>) but not a scientific	It is wrong to claim that Qur'ān provides scientific data. Assessing	have similar views or may be of changing opinion due to different

<p>treatise. Exegesis in accordance with science is sensitive case. To find laws, principles and theories of scientific knowledge in the Qur'ān is not the objective of verses laden with Sign.</p>	<p>we may add that perhaps these scholars are also not against the RSD. Scientific findings are not ultimate and subject to change from time to time. Epistemological judgment may be helpful to solve the dilemma.</p>	<p>context.</p>
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In addition to this table, we may observe different modes for measurement of RSD impact and its origin to make it wider in order to understand the concept through analytical prism.

Different modes for measurement of RSD impact and its origin

There are number of modes due to different approach to visit the same thing or issue with multiple thought that may be added to the integral part of RSD for example the context in which one conducts a survey to find out patients' health condition being treated by recitation of Qur'ānic verses and their check medically on laboratories based data. Similarly, direction of *Ka'bah* and RSD, *Ilm al-Munāsabah*, current context and extension in the domain of RSD instead of just scientific exegesis (*al-Tafsīr al-Ilmī*).

We may add another mode that deal with the other fields of knowledge for example discussion of al-Ghazālī in his treatise *'Incoherence of the Philosophers'* about cause and effect and its comparison with *Quantum Physics*³⁸. This research was conducted at McGill University by Umit Yoksuloglu Devji arriving at the conclusion that numerous parallels can be drawn between Ghazālīan concept and *Quantum Physics*.³⁹

Try to explain Qur'ān by scientific way, therefore, suffer from the intrinsic disparity between the Qur'ānic views and scientific outlooks about universe as indicated by Dr Muzaffar Iqbāl (b.1954).⁴⁰ And it is incorrect to say that Qur'ānic verses prefigure the modern scientific

theories as necessary correspondence does not exist between the terminology and weltanschauung of modern science and that of the Qur'ān.⁴¹ Moreover, according to Zafar Iṣḥāq Anṣārī (d.2016), to say that Holy Qur'ān is the source of scientific data, is a vehement claim that may create the epistemological confusion.⁴²

The epistemological considerations⁴³ are important for RSD in which it is necessary to find out the fundamental assumptions of science in the light of Islamic injunctions and to judge the foundation of this concept in the very beginning of the Islamic history along with the attention toward discourse epistemologically and observing its own relevant terminologies. In this way it may be assumed that, RSD becomes logically Islamic discourse.

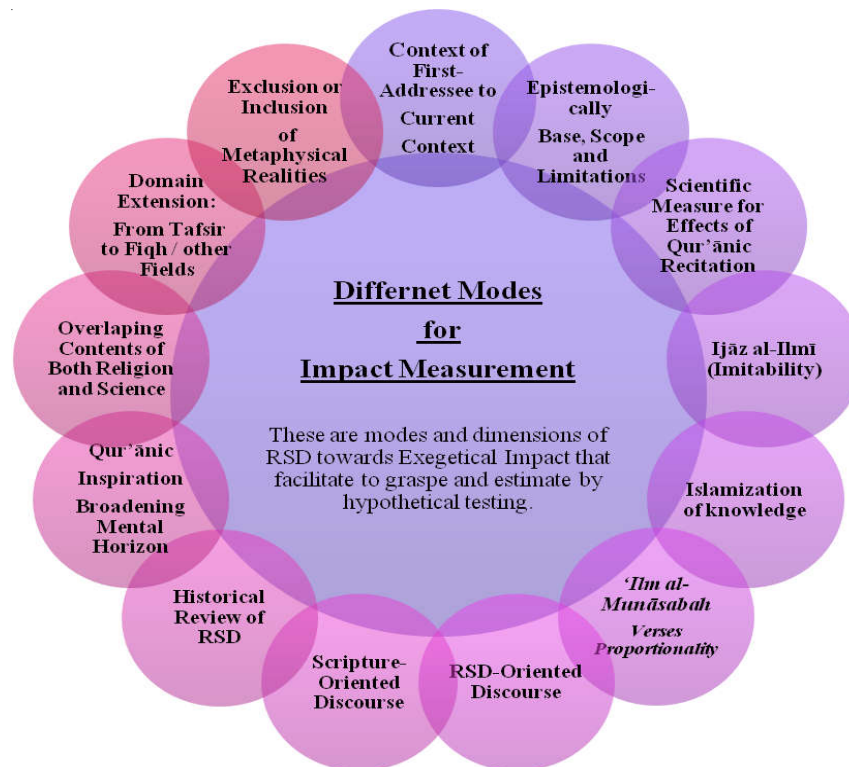
There is another mode for understanding contextual consideration in which we try to determine the current concerns, issues, requirements that seem to be relevant to the message of the text under consideration. It is necessary to explore the present context relevant to the text with specific values and norms comparing present context with the socio-historical context to that of relevant period evaluating the universality related or unrelated to the broader objectives and concerns of the Qur'ān as discussed by Abdullah Saeed.⁴⁴ The demand of historical evidence⁴⁵ of scientific exegesis from very earlier days of its development and later on is also important one. We may supplement this view quoting Dr Ṭāhir ul Qādrī (b.1951), as he expressed that the confused humanity due to whirlpool of Greek philosophy at the beginning of Islam was illuminated by the light of knowledge [spread by Qur'ān and Sunnah] which results in the foundation of modern science.⁴⁶ He further added that the reality of Islam is being accepted by the progress of science. It is the most advanced religion, which not only seems parallel with the development of science step by step, but also a universal remedy for those scientific minds that may cause to confuse at the research track.⁴⁷

Furthermore, the discourse like *Ijāz al-Ilmī* (Imitability) is the integral part to understand RSD having impact upon thought similarly as well as Islamization of knowledge within its own limitation and scope.

Various impact measuring modes may be visited in the following illustration as:

It may be added that if we look at the concepts of these scholars, we could find more or little variations in the outlook of scholars due to

which we can't fit them exactly in the prescribed categories. It is necessary to differentiate both domains of knowledge either from science or religion in the perspectives of their origin and ingredients, scope and objective, man-oriented and God-oriented etc. It widens the scope of enquiry and helps look at various facets when we take into consideration impact measuring modes and mutual links and overlapping of sub-elaborations concerning RSD. So, Religio-Scientific Discourse has many dimensions that may impact a scholar blessed with traditional knowledge along with modern scientific learning that may be seen in the field of exegesis. Any interpretation by him may have some glimpses of scientific exegesis in the context of current era by applying relevant conditions in any upcoming spatio-temporal domain with new circumstances and challenges.



Examples of impact of RSD upon exegetical approaches

The degree of impact varies from scholars to scholars depending upon their understanding of RSD different modes which may or may not appeal him and its various limitation with the knowledge of religious

Scriptures. In 1880, an Egyptian physician Muḥammad bin Aḥmad al-Iskandarānī (d.1889) published his book, *The Unveiling of the Luminous Secrets of the Qur'ān* in which he discussed heavenly bodies, the earth, animals, plants and minerals etc.⁴⁸ Scientific interpretation of religious Scripture also done by 'Abd Allah Basha Fikrī, Sayyid 'Abd al-Raḥman al-Kawākibī (d.1902), and physician Muḥammad Tawfīq (d.1920), all of whom either wrote exegesis or works supporting scientific explanation of the verses of the Qur'ān. For instance, Akhtar Ḥussain Ṣiddique while discussing the topic *'The Impact of the Qur'ān on the Development of the Muslim Geographic Thought'* says: "*The concept of water cycle is revealed in a number of Qur'ānic verses.*"⁴⁹

Likewise, about fifty verses of Qur'ān for comparison with the latest discoveries of modern science have also been discussed by Dr. Halkūk Nūrbākī (d.1997) proving how each verse sheds light on numerous dimensions of modern science.⁵⁰

We may consider an example of Dr Zaghoul El Najjār (b.1933), who stated the percentage of different elements in the human body giving an important comparison of the sounding clay to that of decomposed body constituents. According to him the process continued when soil mixed with water and then it becomes mud, where water of mud dissolves the substances of the soil then a more special extract can be found in the unit of that clay. He proceeded with the following Qur'ānic references.⁵¹ By the process of vaporizing, we found the 'sticky clay' as Qur'ān states in the *Sūrah al-Ṣāffāt* (XXXVII:11). 'Abdullah Yūsuf 'Alī' (d.1953) translated the verse as: "*When Just ask their opinion: are they the most difficult to create, or the other being We have created? Them have we created out of sticky clay!*"⁵²

When this clay turned to dry gradually, it turns black and rotten as stated in *Sūrah al-Ḥijr* (XV:28). Yūsuf 'Alī's translated the verse as: "*Behold! Thy Lord said to the angels: "I am about to create man, from sounding clay from mud moulded into shape.*"⁵³

That is 'sounding clay of altered black smooth mud' after that when dryness process increases it develops into 'Sounding Clay' or (*Ṣalṣāl*) as stated in the Qur'ān that "*He created man from sounding clay like unto pottery.*"⁵⁴ For man's final shape, God breathes into it His soul after that it has been named as man (*Ādam*), father of the whole humankind. After death the question of rebirth of human body is stated by Dr Zaghoul (b.1933) where he quoted Holy Saying of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) that on the Day of Judgment, Allah (SWT) will cause

water to descend from the sky and people will sprout from their coccyx, like plants from their seeds. He added that: “*The body’s water content evaporates, and the body becomes part of the soil and merges with it, except for the coccyx that Allah (SWT) preserves with His Mighty Power until resurrection on the Day of Judgment.*”⁵⁵

It may be added that with respect to scientific view point, Dr Najjār (b.1933) tried to explain beginning of human life to that of its rebirth and eschatological discussion in the light of Qur’ānic verses and Prophet’s Holy Sayings. The theme has been elaborated with the help of scientific data as well as how science endorses different religious views, although religion does not require scientific approval fundamentally.

RSD and exercising exegetical limitations: A methodological approach

We may understand methodological techniques that may help us to arrive at the conclusion closer to what message of verses contain in relevant context. So, we may divide this study as:

Thematic exegetical methodology and RSD

Thematic Exegesis or Topical Exegesis is a way of interpretation in which scholars and exegetes collect the verses of Holy Qur’ān related to a single theme and relevant topic without the condition to adopt the sequence of Holy Book. It may play an important role in these type of exegetical tendencies. M. Anwar Syarifuddin and Jauhar Azizy in the paper *Thematic Scientific Interpretation of the Qur’ān in Indonesia*, presented in International Conference on Qur’ān and Ḥadīth Studies (ICQHS) 2017, concluded that a significant impact of *Mufasssir’s* background, especially related to their expertise in natural sciences to the interest of interpreting the cosmic verses and findings of contemporary science that contribute to the emergence of either element of scientific style of Qur’ānic interpretation in *tafsīr* literature in Indonesia as well as the thematic scientific works of Qur’ānic understanding in forms of thematic treatises and compendia⁵⁶ is an expression of Religio-Scientific Discourse (RSD) and its impact upon exegetical approaches.

Similarly, some modern scholars with exegetical approach are interested to visit scientifically terms like ‘*nuṭfah amshāj*’, *al-‘alaqah*, *al-mudghah*, *Mā’in Muhīn*, *al-Samāwāt al-Sab‘u*, *Rab al-*

*Mashriqayn*⁵⁷ and the word *Sultān*⁵⁸ etc. Ibn ‘Āshūr (d. 1973), in his exegesis, *al-Tahrīr wa al-Tanvīr*; added that it can be concluded from the various meanings of ‘*alaqah* as defined by exegetes that it is a slice of blood in a lumpy condition, dried, damp, red in colour and is leech-shape. There were even claims that it was called ‘*alaqah* because of its characteristic that sticks to the blood vessels on the uterus and obtaining the energy from the mother.⁵⁹ Elaborating further Muḥammad Matwallī al-Sha‘rāwī mentioned ‘*alaqah* as a fertilized egg and scientist named it zygote that acquires its food from the uterus. That is the reason why women who are not pregnant will experience period, while pregnant ones would have the blood converted as the food for the embryo.⁶⁰

We may add that every topic of Religio-Scientific Discourse (RSD) may be visited in the light of thematic exegetical principles, visiting relation, correspondence and proportionality among verses (*‘Ilm al-Munāsabah*) and current context with multiple views of scholars consulting number of references from Islamic Scripture where whole discourse should be harmonic with an expression closely related with Qur’ānic worldview.

Methodological limitations

This concept may be understood considering three domains Redundancy, Circumscription and Amplitude with reference to exegetical limitations. Where we know number of statements and claims are exceeding regarding RSD, it is known as Redundancy (*Zayādah ‘an al-Hājah*). For example, *Sultān* Bashīr Maḥmūd an engineer, scientist and author of numbers of religious books about Islam having noteworthy work and remarkable contribution (also discussed in Advocates category), whereas he suggested to get energy form djinns as a fuel for energy crisis solution or even for atomic energy as expressed by Dr Hoodbhoy (b. 1950) in his book *Islam and Science: Religious Orthodoxy and the Battle for Rationality*.

This is perhaps more than required working about RSD with reference to exegetical applications. Moreover, Dr Şafdar Jang Rājput, a senior scientist at DESTO⁶¹, concluded in his paper regarding djinns as something similar to the views of *Sultān* Bashīr, referring to Qur’ānic claim that God made djinns out of fire.⁶² In addition to that, he added that a senior scientist Dr Arshad Alī Beg at the PCSIR⁶³ tried to measure the degree of hypocrisy (*munāfiqah*) in a society by mathematical formula.⁶⁴

Circumscription (*Tahdīd-o-Taqyīd*) means restriction on those types of elaborations where argumentations take place in the light of Qur'ānic references as aforementioned may be called as redundancy (*Zayādah 'an al-Hājah*) and overstatement in the field of Qur'ānic sciences. There should be limitations so that misfit elaborations should be exempted and to mold them into acceptable limits within relevant methodological domain taking into consideration amplitude i.e. maximum limits in which we may exercise boundaries of discourse. As Dr Ḥanfī Aḥmad, a disciple of Shaykh Ṭanṭāwī (d.1940), stated that our mentor in his voluminous exegesis *Al-Jawāhir fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* left no stone unturned in the field of scientific exegesis but at some places in the Qur'ān during interpretation he did what is more than a threshold line and crossed the limitations of meanings associated with verses.⁶⁵

Dr. Aḥmad 'Umar Abū Ḥajr added that scientific research may be divided into three categories--hypothesis, theory and proven or valid facts. There is no question of contradiction with logically well-founded and proven facts. He also quoted al-Marāghī (d. 1945) with similar views regarding Religio-Scientific Discourse.⁶⁶ While Dr. Yūsuf al-Qarḍāwī (b.1926) conditionally accepts scientific exegesis when this endeavour may cause an addition to already work done in *Tafsīr*: It shouldn't reject previous scholarship in the field of Qur'ānic interpretation declaring them as outdated.⁶⁷

The Commission on Scientific Signs of the Qur'ān and Sunnah⁶⁸ revolves around the recommendation and opinions establishing criteria for evaluating researches relating to the scientific signs in the Qur'ān and Sunnah along with examining and coordinating the efforts of scientific researches. It also aims at seeking, examining, and evaluating the work of scientists in the field of scientific signs besides deepening the link between Muslim and non-Muslim specialists in the Islamic and cosmic sciences. It is also recommended to offer scholarships for postgraduate research in this domain in addition to develop curricula in this respect publishing books and journals, organising conferences and seminars.⁶⁹

Dr Yahyā Khālid Abū Milha discussing about scientific issues in the Holy Qur'ān, has drawn some conclusion while dividing the scholars into the four main groups like *Modernists*, *Advocates*, *Moderates* and *Rejectionists*. He said what was suggested by '*The International Commission on Scientific Signs of Qur'ān and Sunnah*' (ICSSQS) established by *Muslim World League (Rābṭah al-'ālam al-Islāmī)* at *Makkah* that attempted to make the following rules:

Scientific exegesis should be rejected if it is based on scientific theories which have not yet reached the status of well-established facts. It should be rejected as well if it does not respect Arabic language and if it is based on the premise that the Qur'ān is subservient to science, as well as, if it contradicts the Qur'ān and authentic Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ). It is to be accepted only if it confirms to the general, well-known rules and systematic methods of exegesis, which respect the linguistic rules and Islamic *Shari'ah*. It is accepted only from those scholars who have adequate knowledge of both the Qur'ān and the relevant fields of science.⁷⁰

We may add that what is amplitude and maximum acceptable domain it should be in the light of numbers of opinions of scholars like Dr Yūsuf al-Qarḍāvī, Dr. Abdullah al-Muṣliḥ and ICSSQS's suggested rules and limitations as well as in the light of whole discourse. So that we may be able to know the amplitude with the parameters considering what is necessary and leaving what is not.

Conclusion and recommendation

Examining the discourse one may conclude that both scientific advancement and religious teachings and fundamentals having reality are related to the common knowledge of God's Truth and also there is no question of clash among them. Various responses from Qur'ānic exegetical scholarship confronting Religio-Scientific Discourse (RSD) may have different tones with respect to the scholar's background, field and nature of work e.g. traditional, theological, scientific, philosophical, juridical, mystical as well as exegetical methodologies. What is the common factor among their responses in front of RSD depending upon socio-historical context may have a harmonic line of their agreement mutually? For this we have to adopt a well balanced approach neither totally rejecting opinions of any category nor crossing the limitations considering what is circumscription (*taḥdīd-o-taqyīd*) for discourse or any redundancy more than what is required (*Zayādah 'an al Ḥājah*).

So, all the relevant data may be reviewed to construct the comprehensive methodology. A road map for proper epistemological consideration is a sketch of great importance, for instance some ingredients indicated by various scholars regarding Religio-Scientific Discourse. Collection of data and facts from the very beginning of Islamic civilization, to divide it into various types, introducing some relevant terms, rehashing

the discussion within the domain of modern understanding, this looks like the proper field of '*al fiqh*' *al- 'Ilmi*', assimilating number of discussed aspects and modes in the paper. As in the history of Islamic jurisprudence due to diligence mistake, a jurist claims one reward out of two rewards (*ajrān*), so for the painstaking mental exercise of the scholars regarding the Religio-Scientific research in the light of well-defined methodology is also a remarkable endeavour.

We may affix stated dimensions and views about RSD to categorize them according to their conditions and levels to set harmonic tone with Islamic spirit manifesting Islamic weltanschauung. As Mazhar Maḥmūd Quraishī (d.2011) stated that recent scientific development, no doubt, strengthen and amplify the earlier exegeses by providing them more comprehensive meaning.⁷¹ The domain of scientific study of natural phenomena requires to recognize the facts pondering over the creation of Allah Almighty and its various aspects emphasized by scientific advancement. It may cause to understand the multiple aspects of under observed things, which may broaden the mental horizon of exegetes and scholars for better contextual consideration of Islamic Scripture in current scenario.

While any interpretative workdone by a scholar blessed with traditional and modern knowledge may have some glimpses of scientific exegesis in the context of his era with necessary conditions which may be called as sound and reasonable elaboration in any upcoming spatio-temporal domain with new circumstances and challenges. Analyzing multiple views, we may add a question that is whether any prediction in the light of Islamic Scripture done by Islamic scholars exercising their reasoning intellectually, is acceptable by the scientists of that field or not after justification. It may lead one to a research track whose precursors may be from Qur'ānic perspectives. It is also necessary to know that instead of just struggling to co-relate the subject discourse, Muslims need to play the role as their forefather have done in the field of science and technology.

There are some recommendations from different conferences and seminars on this subject as well as pieces of information from the discussions of Islamization of knowledge that may be endorsed. We may develop the environment for the whole mankind, where the entire world be able to research on Islamic Scripture and Qur'ān, considering themselves its addressees in order to get instructions from it, and to

grasp the facts that the Qur'ān is God's revelation to Prophet Muḥammad and it is guidance for whole mankind and djinn, instead of just for Muslims.

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