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# Compatibility of Researches in Earth Science from the Perspective of the Qur'an

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**Abstract:** An attempt has been made in this paper to assess the compatibility of research in earth science from the perspectives selected verses of the Qur'an. The objective of the paper is to examine the past research in the field of geo-ecology, which are consistently metamorphoses due to paradigm shifts. Therefore, scientific facts need to substantiate in the light of revealed knowledge, because there cannot be any conflict between the word of Allah, and the work of Allah. Hence, religion and science can work in harmony with each other if, scientific facts are compatible with the Qur'an, and the Qur'an endorses it. The paper will also describe the concept of knowledge which got fallacious with the passage of time. However, revealed knowledge is offered infinite opportunities to do research from the provided signs in the universe and on the Earth.

**Keywords:** Qur'an, Science, Compatibility, Knowledge Integration, Universe, Evolution, Organism.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This study provides an overview of the past earth science researches if they are compatible or incompatible in the light of the verses of the Qur'an. As we know that the Qur'an is not a book of 'science' but a book of "signs", i.e. *ayats* (verses). These signs invite man especially the *ulul-albab* (men of understanding/Scholars) to conduct research for development to realize the purpose of man existing on the earth and to live in harmony with Nature. It is not possible to quote all verses of the Qur'an but will discuss a few of them for the objective of the research study.

This study expresses the position of scientific facts in light of revealed knowledge (the Qur'an). This topic needs to be addressed because scientific development without religion is blind to the point that the goal of development to produce prosperous human beings will not be achieved without a man of

understanding. While religion without science is equally lame because religious demands cannot be implemented without appropriate knowledge of science. Therefore, the realms of theology and science in themselves are clearly bound from each other.

Albert Einstein states, “Science without religion is lame, and religion without science is blind” [1]. He makes it obvious that it works together. Nevertheless, there exist between the two strong reciprocal relationships and dependencies. Though religion determines the goal, in a broad sense it has, nevertheless, learned from science. The scientific facts can only be discovered by those who are filled with the aspiration towards truth and understanding. This source of feeling, however, springs from the sphere of religion. To this there also belongs the faith in the possibility that the regulations valid for the world of existence are rational, that is, comprehensible to reason. Einstein further states, “The more I study science, the more I believe in God” [2]. This qualification strongly relates to the existence of Allah and makes our belief strong that religion and sciences cannot be separated. They can work in harmony with each other if; scientific facts are endorsed by the Qur’an.

The study of earth science with knowledge integration such as the origin of the universe, biological evolution, and organism is an area where science and theology meet. Creation was a supernatural event. That is, it took place outside of the natural realm. Discoveries in astronomy and physics have shown beyond a reasonable doubt that our universe did in fact have a beginning. Prior to that moment, there was nothing; during and after that moment there was something, i.e. our universe.

Allah (SWT) says, “*But does not man call to mind that we created him before out of nothing?*” [3].

However, before the matter was created, we were basically nothing- the big bang theory is an effort to explain what happened during and after that moment. Astrophysicists, Steven Hawking, George Ellis, and Roger Penrose turned their attention to the Theory of Relativity and its implications regarding our notions of time. In 1968, they published a paper in which they extended Einstein's Theory of General Relativity to include measurements of time and space.

According to Steven Hawking, George Ellis, and Roger Penrose “calculations, time and space had a finite beginning that corresponded to the origin of matter and energy. The singularity didn't appear in space; rather, space began inside of the singularity. Prior to the singularity, nothing existed, not space, time, matter, or energy - nothing. So where and in what did the singularity appear if not in space? We don't know. We don't know where it came from, why it's here, or even where it is. All we really know is that we are inside of it and at one time it didn't exist and neither did we”. [4].

Allah is behind the creation of the universe, He created matter and energy. Allah (Singularity) is out of time and space therefore, He can't be confined or didn't appear in space. For example, Philo Taylor Farnsworth who invented electronic television is not in the television, he is out of space and time, though exists. In the same way, Allah (SWT) is the Supreme Creator of the universe and exists out of space and time. When He wills or intends something to happen, He only says “Be and then it is,” (*Kun Faya Kun*), which means to produce effect perfectly by the sheer force of will. He only needs to command a thing once; it does not need to be repeated or confirmed.

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Allah (SWT) says in the Qur'an, "*and at the sky-how majestically it is raised; and at the mountains-how firmly they are erect; and at the earth- how smoothly it is spread? So remind the people, O Prophet, of the blessings and oneness of their Creator, for you are but a reminder sent to them*" [5].

Allah (SWT) further Says, "*For to God alone belongs all dominion over the haven (universe) and the earth. Now, all through the earth, there are wondrous signs of God, for those who are firm in the faith. And they are within yourselves; as well, Can you not, then, see?*" [6].

Allah (SWT) again mentions in Qur'an, "*Moreover, He alone has subjugated for you by the night and the daylight and the sun and the moon. And the stars too are subjugated for you by His sole Command. Indeed, in all of this, there are sure signs for a people who would use their reason to understand*" [7].

Allah (SWT) has created and ordained laws (popularly known as natural laws) in all spheres with clear signs and then challenged human intellect and his experience to find any flaws in the universe and assured man that such will not happen. Indeed, in the above-mentioned verses, there are sure signs for people who would use their reason to understand and for those who are firm in the faith. Islam regards the universe as a tool helping mankind to perform its role as a trustee of Allah on earth.

### **Objectives of the study**

The objectives of the study are to examine the past researches in the field of earth sciences which are invariably changing due to paradigm shift and also filling gaps between revealed knowledge and acquired knowledge compatibility.

Allah (SWT) says in the Qur'an very clearly, "*Moreover, you all see the mountains that deem firmly fixed, passing away like traces of clouds pass away. Behold the mighty work of Allah- who has perfected all things! He is all aware- of all the acts that you do*" [8].

Therefore, the aim of the paper is to look at the scientific claims in the light of the Qur'an, because it is our *iman* (firm belief) that there cannot be any conflict between the 'word' of Allah (SWT) and the 'work' of Allah (SWT). Hence religion and science can work in harmony with each other if; scientific facts are established and endorsed by the Qur'an.

## **2. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

The methodology employed in this study is descriptive and qualitative content analysis. The method of data collection is based on primary source-revealed knowledge (the Qur'an) and from secondary sources such as journal articles, books, and e-resources.

### 3. DISCUSSION

Scientific methods of research have a degree of rigorousness, verifiability, and validity that consist of systematic observation, classification, interpretation, analysis, and presentation of data. Scientists are constantly trying to make new discoveries or to develop new concepts and theories, but the body of knowledge produced by science should undergo constant change. Such change is progress toward a better understanding of nature. It is achieved by constantly questioning whether our current ideas are correct. The result is that theories come and go, or at least are modified through time, as old ideas are questioned and new evidence is discovered.

When scholars lacked sufficient knowledge or information to identify errors in their analogies, they simply adopted interpretations that matched the overall spirit of Islamic law and adhered to the practice of juristic preference. This approach developed into the discipline of *maqasid al-shariah* (the higher intents of Islamic law), which involves examining particulars in light of universals to fulfill the spirit of Islamic law intangible human situations. In this way, scholars were able to protect and uphold people's spiritual and material interests. However, time and space variables challenged men to reason, logic, rationale and the Muslim scholars of the time are presenting 'Integration of Knowledge' to bring reformation in all aspects of life globally[9].

Allah (SWT) says, "*Man is created weak*" [10].

This verse in general terms includes all aspects of weakness such as psychological, physical, intellectual, emotional, and structural. Man is weak in nature because he is influenced by the good and bad inclinations that are created in him, as well as the *waswaas* (whispers of the *Shaytaan*) and whims and desires to which he is also subject. Man is also physically weak because of what he is exposed to problems and sickness, in comparison to many other creatures that are great in size and strong in build. He is intellectually weak and corrupt because of the limited capabilities that allow him some measure of success and innovative thinking, but only within the boundary of the visible limits of the universe. He is also weak in terms of emotions and feelings, so he is readily influenced by that which may make him weep, feel joy, feel cowardly, become miserly, be encouraged, or become afraid.

Allah (SWT) says in other verses, "*And by the soul and Him who fashioned it- and informed it with a consciousness of its wickedness and its righteousness*" [11].

Allah inspired the human soul its falsification and its righteousness that is why senses are weak in terms of absolute thinking and decision making. Sometimes false and illusory perceptions and man's experiences that are in many cases based upon false reasoning and false impressions of the senses are all characterized by inherent weaknesses and deficiencies in research.

Therefore, since antiquity research has been a subject of criticism and not free from falsification. No human research can claim 100% true; only established facts are considered true. But we should keep on utilizing the provided senses through scientific methods to discover facts with consciousness and its righteousness.

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*“Allah has made everything which He has created most good; then ordained his progeny from germs (cells) of life, from sorry water, then shaped him, and breathed of His spirit unto him and gave you hearing and heart”* [12].

So, the reality and truth a sense of perception and feelings supplemented in heart and mind. Therefore, reality and truth are exclusively from within and moved within outwards. In this sense of perception, the research is to find ‘truth’- which is unknown.

Since divine revelation and natural laws derive from the same source, hence, there is no discord between the “work” and “word” conveyed by Qur’an.

The Qur’an command, *“Read in the name of your Lord who has created!”* [13].

*“Iqra”* Read intends to guide humankind to use *aql* (mind/intellect) for good, and is motivated by faith with ethical purposefulness. A Muslim researcher requires investigating facts and substantiating available inputs in the light of the Qur’an.

Allah (SWT) says, *“Will they not, then, (tadabbur) reflect or contemplate or examine on the meaning of the Quran? If it had been from other than Allah they would, most surely, have found in it much discrepancy”* [14].

Muslims consider the universe a visible sign of Allah. To understand Allah’s Omnipotence, it is necessary to investigate all the aspects of this universe. This belief was manifested in a wealth of Muslim scientific advances that lead to the formation of the renaissance.

### ***i) Universe***

Our understanding of the universe has changed over time due to the advancement of scientific knowledge. In the early 1<sup>st</sup> century, the Greek astronomer Ptolemy presented his “Geocentric model”. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the Arab astronomer Nur ad-Din al-Bitruji proposed an alternative theory of Ptolemy’s geocentric model to the “Homocentric model” that was based on planetary motion. The Homocentric model of Al-Bitruji was replaced by the “Heliocentric model” published by Nicolas Copernicus in 1543 states that, “the Sun near the center of the Universe, motionless with Earth and the other planets orbiting around it in circular paths. Although, the heliocentric model wasn't completely discarded; it was modified to account for more detailed new observations improving scientific understanding of astronomy. [15]. In 1609, the German Scientist Yohannus Kepler published the *‘Astronomia Nova’*. In this he concluded that not only do the planets move in elliptical orbits around the sun, they also rotate upon their axes at irregular speeds. With this knowledge, it became possible for modern scientists to explain correctly many of the mechanisms of the solar system including the sequence of night and day [16].

Allah (SWT) says clearly, in His book the Qur'an, *"It is not possible for the sun to overtake the moon, nor for the darkness of the night to outstrip the daylight. For each, within a course, is swimming on through the spheres as preordained"* [17].

This verse of the Qur'an mentions the fact discovered by earth science, i.e. the existence of the individual orbits of the Sun and the Moon, and their journey through space with their own motion. Indeed, the Solar system is moving in space towards a point situated in the constellation of Hercules (alpha Lyre) whose location is firmly established.

*"Have those who disbelieve not seen by the knowledge they acquire that the heavens and the earth were conjoined as one mass, then We separated them"* [18].

In another verse, Allah (SWT) says, *"then he directed Himself toward the heaven, while it was yet smoke (gas). Then He said to it, and to the Earth: Come into form, willingly or unwillingly! They both said: We come willingly!"* [19].

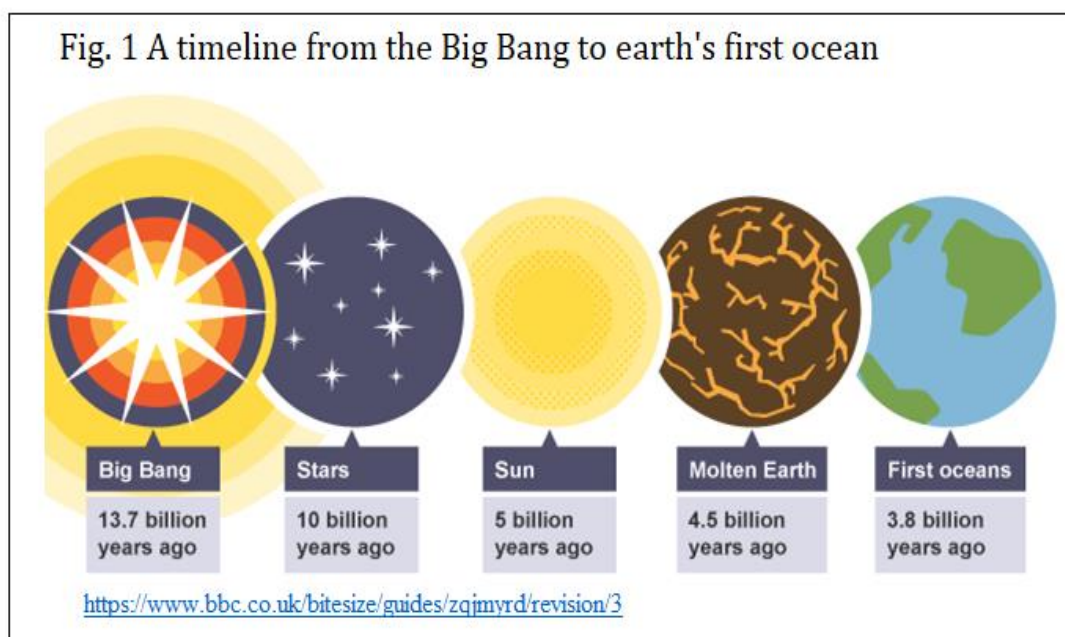
These verses of the Qur'an are compatible regarding origin of the universe. The nebular hypothesis was initially proposed by Immanuel Kant in 1755 and later the theory of Laplace incorporated Kant's idea of planets coalescing from dispersed material, their two approaches are often combined in a single model called the Kant-Laplace nebular hypothesis which states that the solar system developed out of an interstellar cloud of dust and gas, called a nebula. Nebula started to collapse and condense. As gravity condensed the gas, rotation of the gas increased, spreading the gas cloud into a rotating disk that formed the solar system. Initially the whole universe was one big mass (Primary Nebula); then there was a Big Bang (Secondary Separation) which resulted in the formation of Galaxies. Later in 1900, Thomas Chrowder Chamberlin and Forest Ray Moulton considered that a cigar-shaped extension of material was separated from the solar surface. As the passing star moved away, the material separated from the solar surface continued to revolve around the sun and it slowly condensed into planets. They considered that the sun was surrounded by a solar nebula containing mostly hydrogen and helium the dominant elements of gases. As gas and dust collapse toward the central condensation, their potential energy is converted to kinetic energy (energy of motion), and the temperature of the material rises. Ultimately the temperature becomes great enough within the condensation for nuclear reactions to begin, thereby giving birth to the Sun. Once such an accreting body achieves approximately 10 times the present mass of Earth, its gravity can attract and retain large amounts of even the lightest elements, hydrogen and helium, from the solar nebula [20].

Big Bang theory was first proposed by Alexander Friedman, a Russian mathematician in 1922 and expanded upon in 1927 by Georges-Henri Lemaitre, a Belgian physicist. Edwin Hubble has made detailed observations and measurements that support and develop this theory. Presently, the Big Bang theory is accepted by the vast majority of scientists, astronomers and endorsed by the Qur'an. The Big Bang theory states that around 12-15 billion years ago the universe came into existence from one single extremely hot and dense point and that something triggered the explosion of this point that brought about the beginning of the universe. The universe, since then, has been expanding from this single point. In 1965, Penzias and Wilson discovered a 2.725 degree Kelvin Cosmic Microwave

Background Radiation that spreads through the universe. Thus, it was understood that the radiation found was a remnant of the initial stages of the Big Bang [21].

Allah (SWT) says, "Now, behold the heaven! It is We alone who built it with mighty Hands. And indeed, it is We alone who are expanding it" [22].

Edwin Hubble (1889-1953) observed that not only were galaxies moving away from the Earth but were also moving away from one another. This meant that the universe happened to be expanding in every direction, in the same way a balloon expands when filled with air. Hubble's new findings placed the foundations for the Big Bang theory.



Allah (SWT) in another verse of the Qur'an says, "Is not He who created the heavens and the earth Able to create the likes of them? Yes; and He is the Knowing Creator. His command is only when He intends a thing that He says to it, 'Be,' and it is." [23].

The above verse proves that the universe had a beginning, that Allah is behind its creation, and all that Allah needs to do in order to create is to say "Be," and it is.

In 1925, Edwin Hubble, an American Astronomer discovered the galaxies of the universe are moving farther apart. This means that the universe is getting continually bigger or expanding. Alternatively, the galaxies may come together, until finally they will collide and explode. This event is called the "Big Crunch". If the Big Crunch occurred, the sky would grow as hot as the sun. Finally, everything would vanish into a black hole [24].

At the time of the revelation of the Qur'an, the word "space" was not known, and people used the word 'heaven' to refer to what lies above the Earth. In the above verse of the Quran, the word



'heaven' is referring to space and the known universe. The verse of the Qur'an points out that space and the universe happen to be expanding.

Stephen Hawking, in his book, 'A Brief History of Time', says, "The discovery that the universe is expanding was one of the great intellectual revolutions of the 20<sup>th</sup> century." The Qur'an mentioned the expansion of the universe in the 6<sup>th</sup> century before man even learned to build a telescope! We found in the light of the established scientific facts that the above verse of the Qur'an is fully compatible with Hubble's Law.

**ii) Biological evolution**

The Charles Darwin theory of biological evolution was based on the idea that all species of organisms arise and develop through natural selection with modification from a single common ancestor that competes, survives, and reproduces. His theory of evolution gained widespread acceptance as an explanation of the origin of species, but there was continued criticism of his idea of the significance of natural selection as the mechanism of evolution. Especially, the religious international community rather than biologists continue to discard the Darwin theory in favor of creationism, the belief that the universe and life were created by a supernatural power. According to the Qur'an, Adam had no parents and was a fully formed human being.

Allah (SWT) says, "*Allah created Adam from dust, then said to him: "Be." And he was*" [25].

Allah (SWT) in another verse of the Qur'an says, "*Allah has separating the conjoined heaven and earth and creating a variety of living creatures which walk on their belly...upon two legs and...upon four*" [26].

The above verses of the Qur'an when explained scientifically are completely incompatible with the evolutionary theory of Darwin. However, the human being is created creative with the knowledge of pen and his creations are well evidenced by the advancement of science and technology while animals are not creative by nature.

Allah (SWT) further says, "*They have hearts with which they do not understand, they have eyes with which they do not see, they have ears with which they do not hear; those are like animals and even worse, those are the absent-minded or the heedless*" [27].

The sudden creation of complete modern organisms is naturally incompatible with Darwin's theory of evolution. When this passage is interpreted literally, it is completely incompatible with the modern science of evolutionary theory. It is creationism.

**iii) Organism**

Scientific research revealed that most organism consists of 50% to 90% water and every living being requires water for its existence.

Allah (SWT) says clearly, *“And He is the One who, from water, created a human being. Then He made for him kinship of blood and of marriage. And ever is your Lord all-able”* [28].

Allah (SWT) again says, *“Moreover Allah created every animal from water”* [29].

Again Allah (SWT) further says, *“and that We have made every living thing therein from water”* [30].

Only after the advancement of sciences, we have come to know that cytoplasm; the basic substance of the cell is made up of 80% water. The above-mentioned verses of the Qur'an are compatible with the scientific fact that every living thing is made of water.

Again Allah (SWT) says, *“Moreover, in the earth, there are neighboring tracts of varied land and gardens of grapevines and crops and date palms- some branching from the same root and some from different roots- watered by the same water in the same soil, Yet We make some of these plants superior to others in the quality of their produce. Indeed, in all this, there are sure signs of One Creator for a people who would use their reason to understand”* [31].

This verse of the Qur'an clearly explains that every plant is strongly influenced by its environment, which is in turn, influenced by its geography (climate, topography, soils, and the abundance or scarcity of water). Although plants are influenced by their surroundings, their primary influence comes from their genetic makeup. Essentially, each plant's genome controls its attributes and its different abilities to use the elements and compounds from the various soil tracts. Every plant species has a specific code of chromosomes that distinguishes it from other plants. Every chromosome carries a number of genes that encode the information necessary for cells to synthesize certain proteins. The diversity of genes from one plant to another leads to the diversity of the proteins, carbohydrates, mineral salts, vitamins, proteins, manganese, and iron produced within the cell, and so their fruits differ in their taste, smell, colors, form, and size. Hence, in harmony with its surrounding environment, each plant has an appropriate form, color, and size. Although they can be alike and derive from one species, or can be dissimilar and come from different species, they are still watered by the same water; yet some of them are more delicious than others to eat.

**iv) Social and cultural factors influence the outcome of research**

Agreeing in part with both the tenets of faith and the laws of science is a common way for people of many faiths to reconcile potential incompatibility between science and religion. Researches in geology are in constant change; such change is progress toward the advancement and better understanding of nature by constantly questioning whether our current ideas are correct. Despite all the methodological controls, influences from interests, social and cultural, and religious backgrounds are difficult to avoid in research and its findings. These factors influence the formulation of research

questions and hypotheses as well as the interpretation of data and results. The end result is that theories come and go, or at least are modified through time, as old ideas are questioned and new evidence is discovered. Many Muslims, Christians, and Jews agree with established scientific facts, but with the understanding that God's will underwrites the laws of physics and is the ultimate creator and sustainer of those laws. From this position, He can allow the miraculous to occur.

Flick [32]. Argues about results of research in sciences and social sciences; utilization research has demonstrated that scientific findings are not carried over into political and institutional practices as much expected. When they are taken up, they are obviously reinterpreted and picked to pieces. "Science no longer produces 'absolute truths' which can uncritically be adopted. It furnishes limited offers for interpretation, which reach further than everyday theories, but can be used in practice comparatively flexibly. Analyses of research practices have demonstrated that the (abstract) ideals of objectivity formulated by methodologies can only be met in parts in conducting concrete research. Despite all the methodological controls, influences from interests, social and cultural backgrounds are difficult to avoid in research and its findings. These factors influence the formulation of research questions and hypotheses as well as the interpretation of data and relations.

Husaini [33]. Also mentioned in the same line with referencing the verse of the Qur'an, Surah Al-An'am 6 Verse: 77, described as "we can realize our potential as *hanif* (one who turns towards what is right) if we do not allow ourselves to succumb to distorting influences like social pressures and traditionalism. This is exactly the same argument put forward by Harris, [34]; and Sulaiman, [35]. Shehu [36] summarized the whole idea as follows:

- Derived conclusions cannot be locally valid for generalization because there could be exceptions.
- The methodology of data collection is theory-laden; that is the investigator has pre-conceptions and motives which influence his choice of methodology in his investigations and this subsequently affects the outcome.
- In trying to gain data about the world, filtration mechanisms operate between our sensation of the world and our perception of knowledge of it. Such mechanisms include:
  - i) Psychological delusions- insanity for instance affects our perception and there is a difficulty in knowing who is a sane person. Galileo, for instance, was regarded as being insane when he publicized his scientific findings.
  - ii) Our conceptual schemas may describe the world as what it is not if they are inadequate.
  - iii) Social pressure may lead us to accept things simply because they are stated by famous authorities or the majority of the people.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Islamic worldview provides a conceptual framework that is not only distinctive but inclusive in nature; it is also compatible with modern sciences. It is evident that a theory turned into a paradigm

will be rejected for the sake of a new paradigm by means of a scientific revolution. When such a revolution takes place, the meaning of the previous observations and experimentations, sometimes appreciated or entertained by for a long time, may lead to transforming into another paradigm. Actually nothing in the universe should contradict; if it does, maybe because sciences have not been so advanced or there may be some inaccuracies or falsification that prevented the researcher from arriving at the correct and valid facts. It is imperative that scientific knowledge in constant advance 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. Therefore, there cannot be any conflict between the 'word' of Allah and the 'work' of Allah, and hence religion (*deen*) and science must work in harmony with each other if, science is compatible with Qur'an and Qur'an endorses it.

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