

All Roads Leads to the Truth: A Panoramic View of the Search for the Truth by Religion and Science

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Abstract: *Often times, man view science and religion as two things that just do not go together; this is because the former relies on proven and calculated facts; while the later relies on faith and intuition. Meanwhile the common feature of science and religion stems from their ability to inspire wonder, query and seek truth. When a case is brought to the court of Law; there is every tendency that a testimony is either true or false. Thus, there is a motion to strike in the tenacity of science and religion's search for truth. Science and religion gallantly boast of their end result as a logical and reasonable certainty which stems from experiences and calculations; therefore, the following questions pops in the mind of a modern man: What is truth? Is there anything like truth? In fact, how true is truth? Can science and religion lead to the truth at the same time? Which of these two is false? What possibility is there that these two are actually providing any truth at all? On this note, this study presents a lucid study on the end-result of the two search dimensions, which is science and religion with the aim of engaging in a panoramic discourse and ascertaining the route and reality of truth.*

Keywords: Faith, Religion, Science, Truth.

INTRODUCTION

In the twentieth century there was a widespread conviction that a trend toward secularization inevitably goes hand in hand with the development of a modern industrialized society. There was much talk about the impossibility of a modern, scientific mind believing in God. Although faith and reason are both sources of authority upon which beliefs can rest; many scientists, theologians and philosophers have argued that religious faith and logical reason are not compatible on many grounds over the years (Platinga, 1991; Tavani 2008; Caldecott, 2011).

On this note, several attempts have been made by scholars such as Loncham, Robert Russell, Brooke, Barbour, Bowler, Peacocke, Polkinghorne, Haught, Collins, Rudwick, Lindberg, McGrath, Clayton, Plantinga, Dawkins, and others to investigate the nitty-gritty of science-faith relationship (Swindal, 2001). According to Adebayo (2013), most of their efforts have been structured towards evolution-creation debate and the nature of the universe with little attention on the practical inter-interface of science-faith in human experience.

Science is understood as the principles for a methodological inquiry; some kind of algorithmic demonstrability is presupposed. But religion involves a stance toward some claim that is not demonstrable by reason (Allen, 2009). Thus, religion makes some kind of implicit or explicit reference to a transcendent source (Migliore, 2004). The basic challenge is whether science undermines religion, or whether there are particular tenets of religion that are at odds with some tenets of science; to simply put, do religion and science actually lead to the truth? This inquiry first brings the identity-question of what truth actually entails. It is important to note that in the context of this discourse, religion is not discussed in a narrow sense; instead it is explored and represented in a broad sphere without sentiment.

The Concept of Truth

Truth is one of the central subjects in philosophy (Michael, 2018). It is complex term which is discussed and debated in art, theology, philosophy, and science (Grudem, 1994; Blackburn, and Simmons, 1999; Geisler, and Roach, 2012). In fact, several theories pertaining to the concept of truth have been propounded by scholars; correspondence (Hylton, 1990; Baldwin, 2018), coherence (Walker, 1989) and pragmatic theory (Misak 2004), among others (Kripke, 1975; Simmons, 1993; May, 1993; Sahakian and Sahakian, 1966; Le Morvan, 2004).

Nietzsche (2006) argued that that truth is only a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms; in fact, it is nothing more than the invention of fixed conventions for merely practical purposes, especially those of repose, security and consistence. More so, Foucault (1970) opined that truth becomes problematic when any attempt is made to see it as an objective quality. Kant cited by Young (1992) explained that the definition of truth is merely nominal and, therefore, we cannot employ it to establish which judgments are true. Also, Spirkin (2019) posits that truth is the true reflection of reality in the consciousness, the reflection of reality as it exists for itself, independently of the will and consciousness of people.

Truth is usually held to be opposite to falsehood; this suggests a logical, factual, or ethical meaning. Truth is most often used to mean being in accord with fact or reality. To simply put, the perception of truth is linked with moral concepts of honesty and

sincerity. On this note, the study submits that truth is contrary to false and that it stands to mean ‘fact’, ‘reality’ or ‘standard’; also, the nature of truth is determined by the lens used. Therefore, the concept of truth has to do with the reality and existence of a ‘supreme and transcendent being’ (God) and his relationship with the ‘existing universe’, which envelops man and his environment; however, truth can be subjective or objective.

Religious Truth: Subjectivism

The value of religion is its potential to lead man to the truth; a transcendent, fundamental or spiritual reality and thereby to a deeper and reverential recognition of God. Religion entails spiritual truth; inherently pointing to God as the ultimate being (Aboyeji, 2019). Onyewueke (1984) explained that religion “has always manifested itself as a social fact, an associative reality with a communitarian character. According to Stephen (n.d.) whatever is true in this sense is unchanging and immutable. In contrast to the methods of science, religion adjudicates truth not empirically, but via dogma, scripture and authority, in other words, through faith.

What’s more, if someone says his favorite color is orange, there are absolutely no grounds on which another person can argue against this – even if the person feel inclined. Why would the person want to argue, and what would he hope to gain? This is because what the person experience is true for him, end of story (Peter, 2012). Thus, truth has its direct origin in God through man’s inductive reasoning. Here, truth is that which religious teachings, scriptures, and religious traditions affirm as well as whatever is deduced from them. Such people consider knowledge outside this scope as untrue and unacceptable.

Scientific Truth: Objectivism

Truth is whatever has been scientifically established; in other words, only what can be seen, feel and touched is considered true. One form represents unchanging principles in the material universe and may be properly called scientific laws (Stephen, n.d). Therefore, truth in science is gotten through deductive and inductive logic; where certainty is based on facts and figures.

The study notes that the directives to truth given by religion and science seem to contrast via the means to the given end, which is truth. Clear enough, religious truth is subjective while scientific truth is objective; this is congruent with Kierkegaard’s (1992) opinion when he says objective truths for the study of subjects like mathematics, science, and history are relevant and necessary, but it do not shed light on person’s inner relationship to existence like the subjective. Looking at the contrast in means to truth explored in this section; can science and religion actually lead to “the Truth”? This question forms the framework for the next section.

The Search for Truth in Religion and Science

While subjective truth is final and static (religion); objective truth is continuing and dynamic – science (Kierkegaard, 1992); this accounts for why there are different religious beliefs and doctrines. Having observed that approaches of science and religion to truth in the preceding section, the focus of this part of the study is to explore several areas of which truth is sought between religion and science. Here, the study classifies it into two (2): God and creation; in other words, the creator and the existing universe argued to have been created by a supernatural being.

God: In the search for truth, the first question that comes to the mind of a modern man is the identity of the person who created the world? The quest to unravel the identity of this being lingers, since there has been various questions puzzling about the existence of God, who is regarded as all powerful, all knowing and all-loving. Over the years, the quest for “God” informs and influences the two other areas of search for truth.

The quest about God by science is basically due to the occurrences in the *kosmos* which are favorable to some people; while at the detriment of some others, which is technically known as ‘the problem of evil’. This expedition of the identity and reality of God had ignited various questions in the mind of rationalistic beings (philosophers and scientists) resulting into classifications; theist and atheist. The former believes in the existence of a supreme being – ‘God’ as the creator of the universe while the latter denies this claim with explanations to support their various positions.

Theists posits that God exists with about four premise of argument to support their claim, these includes; teleological, cosmological, axiological and ontological arguments. They submit that the wonderful, magnificent and great design of universe suggests a great architect. They also argue that the consistent functioning of nature reveals a mode of dependence on an independent being. Theistic argument is further enshrined on the human universal morals values and ideals (truth, justice, goodness, among others). In the same vein, theists opined that the concurrent man’s innate thought of God’s existence is enough evidence to proof the existence of God. On a contrary, atheism is not a belief system, instead it is an argument that God does not exist with the fact that there is no substantial evidence to validate theistic claims. Thus, there is a dividing standpoint among scientific search for God’s existence.

It is important to note that religion does not defend the existence of God; rather, it assumes that God exists with emphasis on the relation between man and God. Religion provides man with several answers concerning God’s identity having to do with provision of information from several sacred texts such as; Bible (Christianity), Qur’an (Islam), Tanak and Talmud (Judaism), Tipitaka (Buddhism) and the Vedas and Upanishads (Hinduism), among others. The study notes that these sources form the bedrock on which religious information is based; this informs the rest of the discourse in this section of the work.

However, perceptions of God's identity varies across religions; resulting in polytheism and monotheism. The former has to do with the belief and worship in more than one God, while the latter has to do with the belief and worship of one God. Either way, God is often viewed as being supernatural, supreme and transcendental with scriptural supports to these effects (Gen 1:1; Isa 55:9; Sura 13:2; Sura 50:6).

Creation: In the search for truth, how the world came to be has been a serious issue. The study notes that man is a part of creation; in fact, man is a cardinal constituent of creation. A view of the existence of man and the universe marvels a modern-mind, bringing about the quest for how man and the universe were manufactured.

Well known is the scientific argument of "evolution" propounded by Charles Darwin and Russell Wallace in the nineteenth century (Hall and Olson, 2003) as well as the 'big bang theory' (Taylor, 1968) which says billions of years ago, vast field of gas gradually condensed and finally became incandescence and because of increase in pressure or perhaps set off by heat, a blast occurred (explosion) that shot the galaxies into space of inconceivable speed which results in the planetary bodies. In other words, the universe occurred with a boom! On the other hand, evolution theory states that all species are related and gradually change overtime; arguing that man evolved from the family of apes. In regards to evolution, there are other scientific theories, these includes; steady-state theory, fossils, pantheistic evolution theory and theistic evolution (Awokoya, 2014).

From the religious lens, the existence of man and the universe is encapsulated in the concept of creationism. This is defined as the absolute bringing into existence by God by masterminding the manufacturing of the universe; man inclusive. Creationism is explained as God's means of bringing the whole universe into being; this is explicit in the religious sacred scriptures. Therefore, man was created by God.

Science and Religion: A Lead to the Truth

Truth is important; even a person who is false wants to lay hold of the truth. Can there be different routes to a truth? Is there anything called truth? Can science and religion as two distinct entities lead to truth? The search for truth began from the time man's rationality becomes explicit; this is because man's being is with prudence; asking several questions in order to know more about how *homo sapiens* arrived in the *kosmos* and the place of God in the existence. From the preceding section of this study, it is clear that there have been several concerted efforts in providing answers to this puzzle.

The study notes that sciences' search for truth is a continuous struggle with view of its development and discoveries over the years; meanwhile religion resolves this issue in its established and endorsed scriptures.

Why is it that every sacred text often begins with a transcendent being? Even religions that seem not to have a specific written or documented sacred text (like African Religion) are aware of certain narrative to establish the personality of a supernatural being. The fact is; the first question that comes to human mind is how did he come to being? And how was his environment created? Who is responsible for such activities? The attempt to provide man with answers to such question shows the effort of religion as a route to the truth!

Therefore, the conflict between science and religion rests on the methods used to decide what is true, and what truths result; these are conflicts of both methodology and outcome. Junno (2017) argued that science and religion are not at odds but are united in the continuing search for truth in unlocking the mysteries of the *kosmos*. This stance is congruent with the aim of the conference held in Vatican City titled "Black Holes, Gravitational Waves and Space-Time Singularities": this program brought together scientists and theologians from several religious tentacles coming up with the position that even "the church supports good science".

Although science is distinct from religion, the study observes that even some religious people are scientist. In other words, science and religion are not outrightly far-fetched; therefore, they are means to an end.

CONCLUSION

Of a truth, science with its level of improvement and advancement can be weighed as a great tool exploring several questions disturbing the heart of man, though not absolute; religion on the other hand gives human a sense of hope and assurance for the future he is yet to enter. Adeboye, (2013) concludes that the much-hyped conflict between faith and science is not really a conflict between science and faith itself; instead, it a friction between men of science and men of religion. A clear understanding of this stance reveals that the two subjects understudy unravels that they actually have something to offer to man and his environment. Either or not, there seems be a tenacity and truth-revealing potency in them. Truth as a term itself presents a modern-critical mind with an impression that it is relative. The study posits that that status quo of truths depends on the lens with which it is been viewed. On this note, 'truth' is relative; what is true to you might not be true to me; thus, religion and science leads to truth in themselves; but the question of "The" + "Truth" remains! The study concludes by acknowledging the existence of an ultimate reality with which human researches, doctrines, beliefs, experiences and calculations with its ages of existence finds difficult to grapple and unravel.

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