



RELATIONSHIP AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SCIENCE, PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION

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Abstract:

The study of the relationships and differences between science, philosophy, and religion is an attempt to understand the epistemological foundations that shape human civilization. Science relies on rationality and empirical observation in seeking objective truth, while philosophy serves as a critical reflection on the nature of knowledge, existence, and life values. Meanwhile, religion provides a transcendental dimension through revelation as a source of absolute truth that cannot be fully grasped by human reason. The relationship between the three is complementary; science explains natural and social phenomena, philosophy provides a rational and methodological basis, and religion guides the moral and spiritual direction of human life. However, differences arise in the sources of truth and the methods of attaining it: science relies on empiricism, philosophy on reason, and religion on revelation. This study concludes that the integration of the three can produce a complete and balanced worldview between the rational, ethical, and spiritual dimensions of humankind.

Keywords: *Science, Philosophy, Religion, Epistemology, Knowledge Integration.*

INTRODUCTION

The development of human civilization is inseparable from three main pillars of knowledge: science, philosophy, and religion. These three serve as the foundation for the formation of ways of thinking, value systems, and worldviews that determine the direction of human life (Kartanegara, 2003). Science develops as a human endeavor to understand empirical reality through rational methods and systematic observation, while philosophy serves as a critical reflection on the nature of knowledge, existence, and values (Fikri, 2025). On the other hand, religion offers a transcendental dimension based on revelation as the source of absolute and moral truth (Nasr, 2007).

In intellectual history, the relationship between science, philosophy, and religion has experienced complex dynamics. In classical times, all three functioned harmoniously and complemented each other, as seen in the medieval Islamic scientific tradition that combined revelation, reason, and observation (Al-Attas, 1995). However, in the modern era, a dichotomy emerged between science and religion due to the development of positivistic views that reject the metaphysical aspects of reality (Chalmers, 2013). As a result, philosophy and religion are often considered irrelevant in explaining empirical phenomena, even though both still play a crucial role in providing ethical direction and meaning to science.

Studying the relationships and differences between science, philosophy, and religion is crucial because all three play a strategic role in establishing a

balance between the rational, moral, and spiritual dimensions of humankind (Zubaedi, 2012). Science provides objective knowledge about the world, philosophy guides critical and reflective thinking, while religion affirms moral and spiritual values in life. By understanding these relationships and differences, it is hoped that epistemological integration will emerge, serving as a foundation for the development of science that is inseparable from values and ethics.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach with a library research method. This approach was chosen because the topic under study is contextual and philosophical, necessitating an analysis of ideas, concepts, and theories found in classical and modern literature. The primary data sources were books on Islamic and Western philosophy, theology, and epistemology relevant to the relationship between science, philosophy, and religion.

Data were collected through a literature review, exploring the works of figures such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Mulyadhi Kartanegara, and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. Data analysis was conducted using content analysis techniques, which interpret the meaning and relationships between key concepts to find an epistemological synthesis between them.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Nature and Epistemological Foundations of Science, Philosophy, and Religion

Essentially, science, philosophy, and religion are three forms of knowledge that share the same goal: to seek and understand the truth. However, differences arise in the methods and sources for obtaining this truth. Science emphasizes rationality and empirical experience as the basis for discovering the laws of nature and social phenomena. Scientific truth is relative and subject to change with new discoveries. Therefore, science is always open to revision and criticism (Hadi, 2019).

Philosophy holds a more reflective and rational position. It functions to examine the nature of all things in depth, including assessing the foundations of science and religion. Philosophy questions the essence of reality, existence, knowledge, and life values. In Chalmers' (2013) view, philosophy serves as a critique of science by examining the epistemological assumptions that underlie it. Thus, philosophy is not simply a collection of theories, but rather a systematic and reflective way of thinking about the nature of reality and knowledge itself. Meanwhile, religion is based on Divine revelation, which is believed to be the source of absolute truth. In Islam, revelation is direct guidance from God, which is absolute and cannot be changed by humans. Religion provides spiritual and moral orientation in human life and emphasizes that human reason has limitations in understanding the essence of metaphysical reality (Nasr, 2007).

According to Al-Attas (1995), religion in Islam is not simply a belief system, but rather a way of life that unites intellectual, moral, and spiritual aspects. Thus, religion becomes a source of meaning that guides humans in understanding existence and the purpose of life. In this context, revelation does not reject the role of reason, but rather guides it so that it does not deviate from the ultimate truth.

These three fields complement each other: science provides facts, philosophy provides meaning, and religion provides values. If one of them is ignored,

humanity's view of reality becomes unequal: rational but devoid of value, or religious but anti-rational.

The Relationship between Science, Philosophy, and Religion in the History of Civilization

Throughout the history of human civilization, the relationship between science, philosophy, and religion has experienced an interesting dynamic. During the classical period of Islam, all three functioned harmoniously. Muslim scientists such as Ibn Sina, Al-Farabi, and Al-Ghazali successfully integrated revelation, reason, and empirical experience into a unified epistemology. They understood that the source of knowledge comes from God, thus eliminating the dichotomy between science and religion (Kartanegara, 2003).

The medieval Islamic scientific tradition demonstrates how science developed under the inspiration of revelation. Muslim scientists saw no contradiction between reading nature and reading scripture. Nature was considered a sign (ayat kauniyyah) pointing to the existence and greatness of God, while the Qur'an was a verbal sign (ayat qauliyyah) providing moral and spiritual guidance. These two types of verses formed the basis for the integration of knowledge in Islam (Nasr, 2007).

However, in the modern era, this harmonious relationship began to disintegrate. The scientific revolution and the development of rationalism in the West gave rise to a positivistic paradigm that rejected the authority of metaphysics and revelation. Science was then considered the only path to truth. This has led to the secularization of science and a separation between the empirical and spiritual realms (Chalmers, 2013).

The spiritual and moral crisis in modern civilization demonstrates that a scientific approach alone is insufficient to address questions of meaning and value. Therefore, there has been a renewed awareness of the importance of reconciling science and religion through philosophy. Philosophy serves as a bridge of dialogue that can reconcile reason and revelation within a balanced epistemological framework (Hadi, 2019).

Differences Between Science, Philosophy, and Religion

Although interrelated, science, philosophy, and religion have significant differences in terms of sources, methods, and objectives.

Science is based on empirical observation and is based on scientific methods that are systematic, measurable, and retestable. The goal of science is to explain phenomena and predict events through the laws of cause and effect. Due to its empirical nature, science tends to be objective and value-free. However, in practice, science cannot be separated from the human values and morality that frame it (Zubaedi, 2012).

Philosophy is based on reason and logical reflection on all things. It does not rely on experiments, but on deductive and speculative reasoning. Philosophy seeks the deepest meaning of knowledge, existence, and value. Therefore, philosophy can function as an epistemological check on science, preventing it from falling into materialism and reductionism (Kartanegara, 2003).

Religion is based on revelation believed to come from God. The religious method is textual, normative, and spiritual. Religion not only explains empirical reality but also answers existential questions such as the purpose of life, the nature of humankind, and life after death. In Islam, revelation is the highest

source of knowledge that complements reason and experience (Al-Attas, 1995).

The distinction between the three does not constitute a contradiction, but rather a division of epistemological domains. When science, philosophy, and religion are placed in proportion, a complete and balanced worldview is formed.

Integration of Science, Philosophy, and Religion in Islam

In the Islamic perspective, knowledge is not separated into rational and spiritual. Al-Attas (1995) asserts that all knowledge ultimately originates from God, because He is the One who gave reason and revelation to humans. Therefore, true knowledge is knowledge that leads humans to knowledge of God (ma'rifatullah).

Kartanegara (2003) calls this process "integration of knowledge," namely the effort to reunite empirical science, philosophy, and religion into a holistic whole. This integration is not achieved by eliminating methodological differences, but by placing each discipline in a position appropriate to its essence. Science functions to explain phenomena, philosophy guides reasoning, and religion guides values.

Nasr (2007) criticized modern science for losing its sacredness by separating knowledge from its spiritual source. He called for the importance of a "resacralization of knowledge," namely, a return to awareness of God as the center of all knowledge. According to him, knowledge without awareness of God will give rise to a moral crisis, exploitation of nature, and dehumanization.

Therefore, the integration of science, philosophy, and religion must be based on three main principles:

1. Tawhid as the ontological basis, that all reality originates from the One God.
2. Reason and revelation as the epistemological basis, that knowledge is obtained through a balance between reason and faith.
3. Ethics and welfare as the axiological basis, that knowledge must be used for the good of humanity and the environment.

This integration is not only theoretical but also practical in education, research, and social life. Islamic education, for example, must teach science beyond mere technical aspects, but also ethical and spiritual (Zubaedi, 2012). In this way, humans become not only thinking beings, but also civilized beings.

Implications of Integration in Modern Life

In the context of the modern world, the separation between science, philosophy, and religion has given rise to various multidimensional crises: a moral crisis, an ecological crisis, and a spiritual crisis. Science that develops without ethical values tends to be used for destructive purposes, such as the exploitation of natural resources and social inequality.

Philosophy that loses its spiritual orientation tends to fall into value relativism, while religion that is not in touch with rationality easily falls into fanaticism. Therefore, the integration of the three is an urgent need to build a human civilization that balances rationality, morality, and spirituality (Hadi, 2019).

This integration can be achieved by returning the paradigm of science to the values of monotheism, where all knowledge is seen as a trust from God that must be used for the benefit of mankind. Knowledge must be directed not only toward knowing, but also toward being and doing in accordance with divine values (Al-Attas, 1995).

Thus, the relationship between knowledge, philosophy, and religion is not only an epistemological issue, but also an axiological one, as it determines the direction and purpose of human existence in the universe.

CONCLUSION

Science, philosophy, and religion are three forms of knowledge that are deeply intertwined in the development of human civilization. While they differ in their sources and methods of seeking truth, they share a common goal: to attain wisdom and ultimate truth.

Science provides empirical explanations of the world, philosophy provides a rational and reflective foundation, while religion provides moral and spiritual direction. In the Islamic perspective, these three must be integrated within the framework of monotheism to avoid a dichotomy between reason and revelation. This integration will create a holistic worldview, where knowledge is not merely a tool for mastering nature but also a means of drawing closer to God.

Thus, a balance between science, philosophy, and religion is key to developing a knowledgeable and civilized human being (*ulul albab*), and serves as the foundation for a just, ethical, and godly civilization.

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