

Contemporary Secular Approaches to the Origin and Study of Man: An Islamic Critique

Halima Wakabi Akbar
Islamic University in Uganda
Lecturer, Department of Educational Psychology
Email: faza83@hotmail.com

Abstract

This paper critically analyses contemporary secular psychological approaches to the origin and methodological study of man from an Islamic perspective. The paper argues that the contemporary theories on human existence and behaviour emerged from secularism which has taken a philosophical view that the world and all that it contains is a result of evolution. Both the ontology and epistemology of research have been influenced by this view point. Thus, the behaviour of man is defined and studied to exclude his spiritual dimension, a direct conflict with the Islamic view point which links every creature and its behaviour to the creation and guidance of Allah. It is recommended that an integrative methodological approach be adopted to cater for both the materialistic and spiritual aspects of man.

Keywords: evolution of man, creation of man, Islamic epistemology, contemporary psychology, secularism

Contemporary approaches to the study of man emerged as a result of secularism which has taken the philosophical view that the world and therefore human existence is a result of evolution; that the world evolved by itself as a consequence of the formation and subsequent fusing of atoms, molecules, gaseous matter, and other substances which led to a big explosion called the Big Bang; and that human beings evolved from monkeys through the ages. They have almost (if not completely) rejected the religious view that the world is a creation of God and that Prophet Adam was the first man.

Although the term secularism was coined by George Holyoake in the 1850s (Phillips, 2011), the process started much earlier. Simply put, it means separating religion from the state and distancing from the sacred, the eternal and otherworldly (Kosmin). It was after the Renaissance (period of enlightenment in Europe in the 15th century) it became much pronounced as a way of life determined and pursued by man exclusively on the basis of his reasoning and rational ideas. In this secularism, religion was ignored or completely rejected.

This is the stand that many psychologists like Freud and Skinner adapted when psychology as a science began in 1879, after Wilhelm Wundt establishing his experimental laboratory in Leipzig, Germany. Psychologists had originally been associated with speculative philosophers, but the desire to establish a more independent and empirically oriented discipline led them to incline to the natural sciences. To them, man is basically material and mental. This conception of the existence of man influenced the methods used by contemporary secular

psychologists in studying man. Accordingly, they adopted the scientific method which is exclusively concerned with things which are observable, manipulable and verifiable through empirical means using evidence of the senses and the laws of logic and consistency (Pring, 2000). Indeed, what exists beyond consciousness hardly bothers the contemporary secular psychologists.

Of course, not all psychologists believe in the above. It is however interesting to note that much as humanistic psychologists advocate for a drastic revision of the study of man and that topics like joy, love, and courage among others, should be acknowledged, they too adopted secularism. In spite of the fact that they have stressed the nobility of man, they have failed to realize and/or reject the view that the nobility of man emanates from his relationship with God as that of creator and the created.

Statement of the Problem

God created man from “mud”, into which He breathed His Spirit, thus making man a mixture of both material and spiritual aspects. The seed of belief which God has planted in every human heart comes from within, is intrinsic and cannot be uprooted without destroying man. When attempting to understand the nature of man, a holistic approach is necessary since religion and science should not be treated as inherently contradictory (Lemu, 1991).

In an attempt to study human nature and to account for a wide variety of behaviour, contemporary secular psychologists adopted the scientific method and constructed theories and models such Psychoanalytic, Trait, Behaviouristic, Social Cognitive, Humanistic, and Constructivist. However, their definition of man comprises his physical, mental and social-emotional aspects minus the spiritual aspect because according to them, it is not quantifiable through scientific tools. On the contrary, Muslim scholars have argued that these methods of data collection are inadequate because each one of them has limits beyond which it cannot function. Instinct is inadequate because there are a lot of things outside its reach. The senses too are inadequate because anything outside them cannot be reached. Even reason, too has its own limitations in that it can hardly comprehend anything beyond the senses. This therefore makes researchers not to have a complete understanding of the nature of man, hence the need for inclusion of a spiritual approach.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this paper was to critically evaluate contemporary secular psychological theories regarding the nature and study of man, and suggest ways in which these and the Islamic approach could be integrated to benefit from one another.

Research Questions

The study specifically sought to answer the following questions: -

1. How does the secularistic understanding of the origin of man differ from that of Islam?

2. How does the secularistic approach to the study of man differ from that of Islam?

Significance of the Paper

The contemporary secular viewpoint which looks at man essentially as a materialistic organism is repugnant to Muslim scholars who advocate for alternative approaches to the study of man, which the present study attempted to do. No doubt it is the Muslim scholars' recognition of biased information by the secular materialistic viewpoint about the origin and nature of man that prompted the search for a more viable explanation and approach on the nature of man and life itself.

The paper critically investigates the assumptions of the contemporary secular approaches to the study of man and evaluates the way in which the Islamic approach is more intellectually cogent, spiritually satisfying, and efficacious in explaining the origin and nature of human existence as a basis for the study of man.

Creation versus Evolution

The issue of the origin of man is vital to understanding the philosophical foundation of contemporary secular psychology and is the basis of the critique made by modern Islamic scholars on contemporary secular psychology (Bucaille, 1983; Philips, 2002). It provides a direction or orientation of man in the world and specifies his place in the universe vis-a-vis other creations. Thus, for thousands of years, man has pondered on his origin, his source of ideas consisting of notions drawn from religious teachings and various philosophical concepts. In recent times, reason supported by scientific inquiry has added a new impetus in providing logical answers to the question of the origin of man. This era is characterized by the rise of secularism between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries A.D.

The man who carried secularism to its peak was Charles Robert Darwin whose theory of evolution expounded in "The Origin of Species" published in 1859. As a general system of thought, evolutionism is the most powerful ideology in the modern Western secularist civilization whose echoes are heard nearly all over the world. Darwin suggested that questions regarding comparative anatomy and embryology could only be satisfactorily explained if species were considered to be immutable and to have evolved from other species with a common ancestry. He then advanced the 'survival of the fittest' theory – the process of natural selection in which the less able to adapt in the environment they occupied in the ecology of nature would perish while the most able to adapt would survive and flourish.

Lemu (1991) observes that the view on the nature of human existence which purports that the universe came into existence as a result of a combination of gases and dust which exploded and formed the galaxies – the stars and planets including the earth – has received a world-wide acclaim. On earth, chemical and electrical forces chanced to combine to form a mixture into which life came into

existence and that life-forms spontaneously emerged and grew progressively from simple one-celled micro-organisms to multi-celled creatures living in the sea. Subsequently, they emerged from the sea to live on land as reptiles while others took to the air and became bird – all this was through the process of evolution and natural selection. Those well adapted to the environment lived longer and multiplied. After so many millions of years they divided into distinct species and variant groups within species. Later on, mammals evolved from the reptiles and among this group evolved a creature resembling an ape. This creature at some time abandoned the trees and took to the earth, stood upright on two legs and thereafter used its hands for manipulation in its experimentation with tools. This led to the growth of its brain so that in due course it evolved into a human being able to speak and think although bearing some ape-like features. After millions of years, the brain and abilities of this early man grew and his ape-like characteristics were gradually shed.

However, it is important at this point to note that the theory of evolution is not a proven fact as many would like one to believe. It did little more than offer a hypothesis. With a basic hostility towards religious teachings that existed then, people saw in Darwin's theory what seemed to be a decisive argument. John Reader (1992) pondered on the mystery of the "missing link" and noted that the famous Darwin did not say that people were descended directly from living apes but had carefully reasoned and inspired the hypothesis that since apes and human being are so similar, they probably descended from a common ancestor. On the same issue, Lemu (1991) cautions that the theory of evolution is still only a theory without a status of a 'scientific law' which is verifiable by observation. What is questionable is not the observed facts but the deductions made from the discoveries of fossils and the philosophy of these deductions.

Nevertheless, scientists and secularists have desperately looked for ways to test the hypothesis. The argument is that if it is true that all living things had evolved from earlier forms as Darwin proposed, then proof of that fact should be found among the fossil remains of extinct creatures. This led to excavation of skeletons all over the world which were subjected to the scientific process of carbon dating and cross comparison with a view to establishing their nature, age and validity in relation to evolution – all in an attempt to adduce evidence which would establish the theory.

There is no evidence to show that any species has become extinct due to its evolution into another species. The great question ignored by secularists and scientists is that had man evolved from the monkey, then the monkey species would have been extinct by now. By the same token, Lemu (1991) questions why the gorillas, chimpanzees and other monkeys have not followed the evolutionary path attributed to man since they all have had millions of years in which to change. Could this mean that the theory of evolution was not consistent and universally applicable?

Consequently, one can only conclude that the secularist view point implies that the world and life have no purpose since they came about by pure

chance when suitable conditions facilitated the Big Bang and the processes which followed. Buccielle (1983) cautions that this is tantamount to saying that the construction of the Eiffel Tower would have been possible with the spontaneous forming of steel particles from iron ore and coal at high temperature which would assemble the materials in proper order.

Oparin (1956), a Russian Biologist and a well-known materialist, also rejected the theory of chance in the formation of life. According to him the entire network of metabolic reactions is strictly co-ordinated and oriented towards the perpetual preservation and reproduction of the totality of conditions set by the external environment. He maintains that this highly organized orientation characteristics of life cannot be the result of chance. He draws a particularly relevant comparison which illustrates how illogical chance theories are;

It is as if one jumbled together the printing blocks representing the twenty-six letter of the alphabet in the hope that by chance, they will fall into the pattern of a poem that we all know. Only through knowledge and careful arrangement of the letters and words in a poem, however, can we produce the poem from the letter (Oparin, 1956, p.76).

In an attempt to connect man to apes, the secularists and scientists tried to link the different features of man to those of the monkeys and apes. This notion was conceived due to the general anatomic features of man and the great apes that appear at first sight to possess striking similarities. However, when compared in greater details rather than just a cursory examination of the obvious, the contradictions in the evolution theory were revealed.

In this context, it is worth noting that even ardent, supporters of the theory, like Thomas Huxley (1896, cited in Farley, 1986), are aware of the evident differences that exist between man and apes. Huxley observed that every bone in the body of a gorilla bears a feature that distinguishes it from the corresponding bone in a human and that at least in creation today, there is no intermediary form that bridges the gap separating man from 'troglodyte'. Buccielle (1983) advances the argument that the existence of certain human attributes which prevent man from sharing a common ancestry with monkeys and apes is that the monkeys and apes lived in trees and therefore possessed extremely a biped posture. Furthermore, the few species of monkeys and apes that do not climb trees but live in mountain regions still remain 'quadrupeds'. Even among these, there are only a few (e.g., the gibbon) which occasionally display a biped posture but nevertheless possessing upper limbs that are long and well developed although serving no functional purpose.

Indeed, the two distinguishing features of the lineage of monkeys and apes are not present in man. Attempts were also made to genetically connect man with the apes, through the number of chromosomes they possess. When it was found that man possessed forty-six while the great apes possessed forty-eight chromosomes, it was suggested without any evidence that in the case of man two chromosomes had fused together.

Classification of this kind (looking at the different features) by the Darwinists are sometimes quite arbitrary because looking at it from an anatomical as well as biological point of view, living beings all share the same general structure. For example, all animals that breathe must have pulmonary vein and lungs. Similarly, all fish must have gills. In the attempt to link man with apes this was ignored.

Given all these ambiguities and inconsistencies in the theory of evolution, one is tempted to wonder whether there is no alternative explanation of the nature of human existence. Surely a religious view exists and it has held sway among its adherents. Islam in particular posits that the world and all that it contains and beyond are the creation of Allah, the Almighty, the Fashioner and Determiner of events and to whom all will return.

In trying to understand the Islamic view, it is pertinent to first note that the creative word of the divine command "Be" denotes creation out of nothingness. There need not be any 'physical conditions' necessary for a creature to come into being once the Creator says 'Be'. Allah's 'Word' is in itself the deed which needs no interposition of time or condition between His will and its consequences as the Qur'an 16:40 says, "*For anything which We have willed, we but say 'Be' and it is*". The Qur'an 6:54 further says that Allah is the Creator and Maker of the whole universe and everything beyond it.

Your Guardian Lord is Allah Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then He settled Himself on the Throne verily His are the creation and the command, blessed by Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds.

The Qur'an specifies the substance with which Allah created Man and the physical changes that he undergoes after conception thus,

Man did we create from a quintessence (of clay), then we placed him (as a drop) of sperm in a place of rest firmly fixed, then we developed out of it another creature. So blessed be Allah the best to create.

The Qur'an only accedes to the possibility of evolution within a species. We are aware that there are variant characteristics within the species as a result of breeding although there is no evidence of a completely new species. The differences in man are God-given as the Qur'an 49:13 says, "*O Mankind! We created you from a single pair of male and female and made you into tribes and nations that you may know each other*".

Selective breeding can produce new breeds with different appearances and local development of specialized qualities can take place under natural conditions in different environments. For example, a tropical sheep with its thin hair would easily die in the winter of Northern Europe while a European sheep with its thick woollen coat may not survive long in the tropics, though basically they are all sheep (Lemu, 1991).

On the issue of similarities between living things, the Qur'an states that everything has been created in its definite shape with its own characteristics (though they may look similar). It describes Allah as the Fashioner who gave plants, creatures and other substances their forms and nature. Let one consider an illustration with grapes as a particular kind of fruit. All grapes may look similar but each variety has a distinct flavour and other distinctive qualities and each individual grape may have its own special qualities.

Likewise, man was created for a purpose. God did not merely create human beings and let them free to determine their own lives and events. The Holy Qur'an 51:56-58 highlights this;

I have only created Jinns and men, that they may serve me. No sustenance do I require of them nor do I require that they should feed me. For Allah is He who gives (all) sustenance, Lord of power-steadfast (for ever).

The way in which man can serve his Lord is through obedience to His injunctions sent through the different Prophets-Prophet Adam being the first through to the final one, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) sent to the whole of mankind. Anyone who lives his life in accordance with these injunctions without deviating will be rewarded in the hereafter with a blissful paradise (*al jannah*). Furthermore, the injunctions guide man toward correct behaviour in this life. God, knows best about His created beings just as the manufacturer of a car issues a maintenance handbook to the buyer to guide him in running the car (Maiwada, 1986). Hence, man's true nature is only fulfilled if he follows the Creator's guidance and his nature is perverted if he denies this guidance.

Basically therefore, the nature of man has remained constant since the time of his creation. It is only his physical form that can and did undergo some minor changes as already explained. Nevertheless, Darwin's arguments were cleverly presented and many were quick to use them to discredit religious teachings on the subject of the origin of man and the fixity of species. Albeit, the whole of contemporary secular psychology continues to posit this theory and the accompanying erroneous explanation of the origin of humanity. They have failed to recognize man's true nature and continue to undermine the importance of human beings as Allah's vicegerent on earth created with a soul and some limited free will. Allah says,

O mankind! What has seduced these from thy Lord most beneficent? Him who created thee, fashioned thee in due proportion and gave thee a just bias (between right and wrong); in whatever form he wills does he put you together" (Qur'an 2:6-8).

The Nature of Man in Islam

From the Islamic perspective man's personality consists of both the physical (material) and the spiritual. Consequently, man is seen as a dualistic creature whose constitution at all times simultaneously possesses both the spiritual and physical aspects, Shariati (1979) notes that because of the mixing or

mud and divine spirit, man becomes a bio-dimensional being, a creature with a dual nature as opposed to other beings which are one dimensional. As Basher (1986, p.53) rightly observes. “The soul by itself is not man nor is the body by itself man”.

Man’s material being (his biological, physical, and intentional character) follows the same laws of nature as other creatures making him animalistic, but then, his spiritual element distinguishes him from all other creatures. While contemporary psychologists have viewed man’s personality as materialistic and animalistic ignoring the spiritual dimension, Muslim scholars maintain that man is both spiritual and material. They further contend that in order for one to have a balanced personality, it is of utmost importance that he/she maintains a relative balance between the two aspects. They believe that most psychological disorders are as a result of lack of relative balance of harmony between them, and who argued that just as the physical element of man has its own needs and potentials so does the spiritual aspect have its demands and needs.

These needs are part and parcel of human character. However, Islam maintains that if man emphasizes these aspects to the neglect of the spiritual ones, then he suffers from anxiety and insecurity and his actions (to dominate, destroy and consume) lower him to the level of a beast. At the same time, Muslim scholars believe that this aspect is only temporary (worldly).

Therefore, man is encouraged not to forget his other self (spiritual) and should always strive to cultivate and develop it. Consequently, it is this aspect which should influence his character. In everything man does, he should remember his Lord and be able to check the material inclination in him. This is because man was created with a purpose – that of submitting to Allah and acting as His vicegerent.

Muslim scholars purport that Allah has endowed man with the gift of conscience with which to differentiate between right and wrong, good and bad, and has been given the free will to choose between the two. Further still, they argue that because of these gifts, man is answerable for his behaviour (Qur’an, 10:99; 75:14-15).

If it had been thy lord’s will, they all would have believed all who are on earth. Will thou (Muhammad) then compel mankind against their will to believe?” “Oh, but man is telling witness against himself although he tenders his excuses.

Islam contends that man is created good and pure in nature in sharp contrast to the Freudian School which says that man is sinful by nature. Qur’an, 95: 5, “*We have indeed created man in the best of moulds*”.

Another major difference between contemporary psychologists’ and the Muslim scholars’ viewpoints is that while the former view a normal personality in the light of formulated theories and ‘ideal types’ of personality, the latter assert that the Holy Qur’an lays down the backbone of a positive personality as practiced or implemented by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Methodology of Secular Psychology: An Islamic Critique

The ways of epistemology or the methodology by which things are known derive from the fundamental issue of how one perceives the world – a creation of God or a result of evolution. To the secular psychologist who views matter and indeed all creation as a mere chance happening, the methodology of seeking knowledge about phenomenon is the scientific method and overemphasizes behaviour to the detriment of other salient aspects of human psychology (Hamid, 1977).

The basic principles underlying the secular view include the belief in the eternity of matter and energy i.e., eternity of the universe. Secondly is the rejection of the concept of creation, by taking the view that everything in the universe is the work of nature and its laws and the consequent refusal to relate it to the Super-Natural, the Creator, God. Thirdly the explanation of the graduality of life with time – Evolution.

The scientific method takes into cognizance only the observable and its main ways of seeking knowledge are the evidence of the senses, facts rationally deduced from observable phenomena, and the laws of logic and consistency. The scientific method also includes deductions, theories, suppositions and theorems. In an attempt to discover these, observations and experiments are made from which conclusions are arrived. These rigorously controlled or standardized observations are gradually recorded and repeatedly examined by trained minds before laws that govern them are formulated. Hamid (1977) notes that this restricted attention to overt behaviour, stimulus-response linking, and bio-instinctual explanations of human development has resulted in viewing man as an object and a living organism.

On the other hand, Muslim scholars contend that in as much as the scientific method can be useful in trying to answer questions about man and his origin and through precision of the scientific procedure, it has inherent limitations. First and foremost, in almost every sphere of knowledge, observations and conclusions reached by researchers are influenced by their cultural background, upbringing as well as the mental and psychological conditions. Because the conditions in which researchers see the world are ever changing, this may ultimately change the conclusions reached. Many philosophers and historians from JD Bernal and JJ Solomon to Hilary Rose have highlighted the role ideology and politics play in the development of science. They argue that the scientific method is shaped not only by the pure concern for illusive truth and dictates of objectivity but that subjectivity and value judgments influence the selection of problems, the selection of observations, the construction of the theories, and how facts are discovered and interpreted. It is even influenced by how research is funded and how the results are used. Badri (1979, p.6) put it aptly.

Laboratory-minded Western psychologists in their endeavour to be scientific will deny that they have major beliefs or dogmas influencing their conceptualization of man. They claim that their theories are based

purely on empirical observation.....But no man can assume detached objectivity in studying man. Both the observer and the observed have their values and ossified attitudes which are shaped by environment and early upbringing. Any degree of objectivity achieved in this social process is a product of interaction between the observer and the observed and the method of observation applied. Some of them limit themselves to single domain theories like audition, rote memory of motor learning thus focusing their valuable researches on behaviour that occurs only under certain prescribed conditions.

The ever-increasing knowledge about the universe and our obvious need to revise it continuously in the light of new discoveries with a view to updating the data is clear evidence of the limited scope of the scientific method. Lemu (1991) notes an article in Newsweek Magazine which reported that the universe was half as old as the scientists had predicted and concludes that such an enormous mistake is an obvious indication of the limitations of the scientific method.

There are things in the universe which cannot be comprehended by human senses either directly or indirectly but which are proven or known through evidence of a logical presumption known as scientific deduction. Nevertheless, major conclusions normally start where limited information derived from sensual observation ends, hence we find that with the limits of the human mind and its inability to make correct deductions in some cases, wrong conclusions may be reached.

Furthermore, is the fact that human senses have a limited scope because they cannot arrive at conclusive answers to questions by a single individual's effort alone. Consequently, in order to find answers to the present and future, the individual has to rely on the past in form of literature review and develop it as a fundamental part of his conclusion. However, he may fall prey to whatever errors there are in the original and be misguided.

Another limitation is that the object studied may not at all be directly observable through the senses except indirectly through employing some apparatus or contrivance. However, such observations are remote sensations of the evidence of the truth and may not be the truth itself. An example which can illustrate this is the projection technique used by Freud in his psychoanalytic theory of personality. In trying to 'read' the hidden motives of the neurotic patient, psychologists 'read back' what they themselves think (Badri, 1979). As Anastasi (1968, p.578) puts it,

Many controlled studies show that projective techniques are unreliable, giving different results on different occasions, they are difficult to score, they depend too much on clinical skills of the tester which itself is highly questionable, that they do not seem to measure what they claim to measure.

Furthermore, the scientific method is confined to material aspects only because it has been written from a secularist point of view. Consequently, knowledge has been confined to the here and now. Faruqi (1987), notes that it is due to the insistence of the secular paradigm to depend on materialism and reason alone that has deterred them from being capable of comprehending and explaining the whole truth. Lakatos (1976, pp.45) also shares this skepticism about the inability of this paradigm to explain the whole truth. He admits,

For more than two thousand years there has been an argument between dogmatists and skeptics. The dogmatists hold that by the power of our human intellect and senses we can attain the truth and know that we have attained it. The skeptics on the other hand hold that either we cannot attain the truth at all (unless with the help of mystical experience) or we cannot know it if we attain it or that we have attained it.

From an Islamic point of view, knowledge is a significant endowment as indicated in many verses of the Qur'an and in many Hadiths, for example, "*Say; are those who possess knowledge and those who do not possess knowledge, on equal footing?*" (Qur'an 39:9).

The Prophet (PBUH) had great love for knowledge and always encouraged and emphasized its necessity and importance. Emphasis is put, among other things, on its obligatory nature on every Muslim and seeking it even if it means going to faraway places. The Qur'an 6:71, indicates that the Islamic epistemology is based on the principle that all knowledge is Allah's and He bestows it on whom He pleases. Muslim scholars generally accept that the ways of knowing or obtaining the truth may be classified but that these classifications are only useful in as far as man is concerned, and they maintain that we should never be distracted from the focal point that all knowledge comes from Allah.

Unlike in contemporary secular epistemology where there is absolutely no room for Divine guidance, in Islam, the first and foremost method of knowing (or fundamental source) is revelation – the act by which God, having created the world disclosed Himself to His creation acting in His capacity as a guide. This self-disclosure began from the very first time Allah addressed Adam (A.S) and taught him the 'words and the names' of all things. The definite role and fundamental place that revelation occupies in the Islamic epistemology is seen in the fact that the Holy Qur'an is complete and suffices for man's guidance and salvation. As put by Al-Attas (1979), this source of knowledge is food and life for the soul for after attaining it, the mystery of Being and Existence is revealed. Hence, this source of knowledge becomes the basis and foundation of all other sources of knowledge because it is the Absolute truth as pointed by the Qur'an 31:34, "*Verily with Allah is full knowledge And He is acquainted with all things*".

Muslim scholars contend that besides the Qur'an, the sayings of the Prophet (PBUH) complement the it and are part of this source of knowledge, therefore being taken as a method of knowing the truth. The other source of knowledge recognized by the Muslim scholars is knowledge acquired by man

through his intellect and experiences (Al-Attas, 1979). Thus, in spite of the fact that Muslim scholars acknowledge the deficiencies of the senses, instinct and reason, they do not undermine their use but maintain that their deficiencies can only be corrected by revelation. Albeit, the central appeal of the Qur'an is reason. Man is encouraged to weigh relationally all matters and to take the most logical and reasonable one. The role of reasoning, even in understanding the truth of revelation is aptly put by Faruqi (1987, p.19):

...without reason the truth of revelation cannot be appreciated neither will they be recognized for what they are namely, divine and acknowledged as such...when acceptance of knowledge is based not on reason, it is subjective, arbitrary, whimsical. No religious thesis based upon personal whims could claim the acquiescence of mankind, or any significant part of it for a long time.

Furthermore, from the Islamic point of view different methods are pursued in accordance with the nature of the subject in question and ways in which the subject can be understood hence, no single methodology is used to the exclusion of all others. All the different methods are considered as valid ways and means of knowing. The Muslim scholars regard them as being complementary and not contradictory. They argued that in as much as the different methods of knowing differ, they are nevertheless harmoniously interrelated because they correspond to different aspects and levels of the same reality. We find such great Islamic scholars like Ibn Sina having relied on every avenue of knowledge open to man from rationalization and interpretation of the Qur'an to observation and experimentation (Bakar, 1984).

The argument of the Muslim scholars in this regard is justified by the injunctions of the Holy Qur'an. Many verses of the Qur'an encourage the use of these different methods of reasoning in order to come to the truth. The Holy Qur'an directs man to look at the miraculous way in which the universe has been built. There is harmony, unity and regularity in the universe (Maiwada, 1986). These regularities also indicate the unity of creation and the fact that there is only one Creator. Hence the Qur'an (10:101) uses self-evident truth (Baadala); "*Say O people observe what is in the heavens and the earth*". This implies the use of the senses and experiences which are further pointed out in the Qur'an 8: 24-32;

Let man consider his food, how We poured water in abundance Then split the earth in clefts and caused the grain to grow therein and grapes and green fodder and olive trees and palms and dense tree gardens and fruits and pastures and enjoyment for you and your folks!

The Qur'an also appeals to reasoning in form of human interest or gain (Maslaha). Maiwada (1986), notes that when the Qur'an refers to the human interest, it does so for man as a human being and not for individuals, races, tribes or classes. The Qur'an emphasizes the need for man to follow the divine injunctions not only for his spiritual benefit but also for the social and moral gain

of the whole community. Examples of this are seen in the benefits of prayer (Salah) and poor due (Zakat) as ways of purifying the individual.

The Qur'an also appeals to human sense through human conscience so as to lead man to the truth and reject the wrong as can be seen in Qur'an 17:4; "*Oh man! Read your book (the record of the deeds) It suffices today that you may judge by yourself*".

Summary and Conclusion

This paper examined contemporary secular approaches to the nature and study of man and the ways in which they conflict with the Islamic view. The central argument established is that the fundamental issue which affected the general outlook towards all these aspects was that of 'creation' or 'evolution', and this determined the methodology used in studying man.

The contemporary secular psychologists' view of man emanated from their belief that man came into existence by mere chance, that he evolved from the lower animals and though human, he still possesses animalistic instincts. He has no purpose in life other than to struggle and satisfy his materialistic being with no accountability in the hereafter. Consequently, they adopted the scientific method that takes into consideration only the observable and controllable. Although some of them came to be interested in attitudes, mental processes and other invisible behaviour, they failed to acknowledge the values and virtues which acted as stimulants or movers and ends for man because the scientific method had no means of justifying them.

On the other hand, the Islamic view first and foremost, posits that human nature should be looked at and studied on the premise that man is a creature of God, and was created with a purpose, i.e., worship of God for which he will be accountable in the life hereafter. Hence it is contended that we should look for answers to questions on the origin and nature of man as explained in the Holy Qur'an and Hadith.

Recognition is given to the appropriate use of the scientific method of investigation but, unlike the secularists who maintained that religion and science are contradictory, Islam argues that this is not so because religion and science are from the same source – Allah – hence they complement each other. Consequently, the question about man's nature and behaviour is approached from the two dimensions of man; the spiritual and the material. This view argues that due to the contemporary state of the materialistic dimension, the development of the spiritual dimension is vital in order to control the materialistic aspect which, if left unchecked becomes destructive.

The secularist view which is based on materialism and human reasoning alone can neither comprehend nor explain the whole truth pertaining to the nature of man. It can only explain part of the truth. On the other hand, affine combination of revelation and human intellect can explain the entire truth, for experimental science itself proves the existence of the unseen when one realizes that many discoveries have been made in the late centuries although they were mentioned

fourteen centuries ago in the Qur'an. This also implies that for the previous generations it was part of the unseen.

Accordingly, Muslim scholars recognize the scientific method as one of the means of discovering of the marvels of the great Creator and therefore scientific accomplishments are not considered as victories over religion but only as the means through which man can discover his true nature among other things.

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