Science and Metaphysics in the Three Religions of the Book

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ABSTRACT

The three religions of the Book trace their origins back to the same Abrahamic experience, but only one, Christianity, developed a metaphysical framework consistent with that of modern science. Both Judaism and Islam during their formative years, and continuously up to modern times, considered Greek philosophy and science alien wisdom, jeopardizing their sacred scriptures. The different path followed by Christianity is due to the influence of Hellenistic thought during Christianity's early formative period. Both Judaism and Islam were spared the direct mediation of Greek culture and ideas because both Judaism and Islam developed geographically and linguistically isolated from the Greek influences during the reception of their scriptures.

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In science, for example, some theories are based on the ontological assumption of objects with properties (such as electrons having charge) while others may reject objects completely (such as quantum field theories, where spread-out "electronness" becomes a property of space time rather than an object). The opening arguments in Aristotle's Metaphysics, Book I, revolve around the senses, knowledge, experience, theory, and wisdom. The first main focus in the Metaphysics is attempting to determine how intellect "advances from sensation through memory, experience, and art, to theoretical knowledge".[47] Aristotle claims that eyesight provides us with the capability to recognize and remember experiences, while sound allows us to learn. (ENTIRE BOOK) An excellent and readable summary of the role of religion in an age of science. Barbour's Gifford Lectures -- the expression of a lifetime of scholarship and deep personal conviction and insight -- including a clear and helpful analysis of process theology. Preface. What is the place of religion in an age of science? How can one believe in God today? Statements in ethics, metaphysics, and religion were said to be neither true nor false, but meaningless pseudo-statements, expressions of emotion or preference devoid of cognitive significance. Whole areas of human language and experience were thus eliminated from serious discussion because they were not subject to the verification that science was said to provide. In the dialogue of science and religion, metaphysics, science, and religion do not necessarily refer to separate endeavors that need relating. Religious faith, for example, can be pervasive so that nature is seen as divine creation and science as a form of worship. Neither do the terms refer to universal bodies of knowledge and belief independent of context. Metaphysics has affected the dialogue between science and religion. Ancient Greek metaphysics shaped the understanding of God's action in the world in each of the three Abrahamic religions. (Eastern Orthodoxy is an exception in this respect while Judaism can be said to have been only insignificantly influenced.)