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Science of arithmetic and astronomy

The third question from Fatwa no. 1591

Q 3: How can we reconcile Din (religion) and science when it comes to issues that appear to be contradictory to one another? For example, we know through Din that stars were created for three reasons: beautification of the sky, missiles aimed at devils, and guiding signs. But in geography we read that they are a set of celestial bodies that have a special system in their rotation and what we see blazing and falling at night are meteors and shooting stars that exit from a certain gravitation to the gravity of the earth. Therefore, they burn and fall. The falling speed of these shooting stars is 45 miles per second.

A: It is only Allah, the All-Knower; the All-Wise, Who revealed the Glorious Qur'an and the Shari`ah (Islamic law) to His Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). He created the heavens and the earth and created everything and subdued it to achieve the purpose for which it was created. He knows the special characteristics and unknown things he gives to it. Therefore, there is no contradiction between what Allah tells us or legislates and what He has created for His servants. All these things are compatible with each other. In other words, what Allah says is compatible with scientific facts.

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In case that someone thinks that what Allah says in the Qur'an or what His Prophet (peace be upon him) says in the authentically reported Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) contradicts reality, this is because they lack understanding and knowledge of natural sciences and Shari`ah texts. What is revealed in the Qur'an concerning stars is an example of this. Allah (Glorified be He) says: ﴿Verily We have adorned the near heaven with the stars (for beauty).﴾ ﴿And to guard against every rebellious devil.﴾ ﴿They cannot listen to the higher group (angels) for they are pelted from every side.﴾ ﴿Outcast, and theirs is a constant (or painful) torment.﴾ ﴿Except such as snatch away something by stealing, and they are pursued by a flaming fire of piercing brightness.﴾ , ﴿And indeed We have adorned the nearest heaven with lamps, and We have made such lamps (as) missiles to drive away the Shayâtîn (devils), and have prepared for them the torment of the blazing Fire.﴾ , ﴿And indeed, We have put the big stars in the heaven and We beautified it for the beholders.﴾ ﴿And We have guarded it (near heaven) from every outcast Shaitân (devil).﴾ ﴿Except him (devil) who steals the hearing then he is pursued by a clear flaming fire.﴾ , ﴿It is He Who has set the stars for you, so that you may guide your course with their help through the darkness of the land and the sea. We have (indeed) explained in detail Our Ayât (proofs, evidence, verses, lessons, signs, Revelations, etc.) for people who know.﴾ , and He said: ﴿And landmarks (signposts during the day) and by the stars (during the night), they (mankind) guide themselves.﴾ The reports mentioned in the authentically reported Sunnah are compatible with the meaning of the texts of the Qur'an.

Whoever studies these texts will find that they are clear in pointing out some of the characteristics and benefits of the stars.

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Nothing in these texts confines the characteristics or benefits of stars to the three things mentioned above. There is nothing that denotes that meteors are confined to shooting stars by which devils are shot especially those who eavesdrop. There is no mention of other meteors whether in affirmation or negation. Whoever studies the Arabic language and knows the styles and tools thereof used for the sake of confinement can discern these styles.

If natural sciences say that there are stones and celestial bodies scattered in space, that these bodies form groups and every group falls in the range of the gravity of a certain planet, that in case these stones deviate from the range of the gravity of a certain planet and approach the gravity of another planet, they quickly fall and the friction between the surface of this meteor and other objects generates a firing flame and that this phenomenon is called a shooting star, this does not contradict the texts of Islamic Shari`ah that only inform us about shooting devils with meteors of these stars. It is possible that this phenomenon springs from these two things. Natural sciences do not confine meteors to what falls from planets. Moreover, there is no confinement in Shari`ah texts for meteors to what falls from planets for the sake of stoning devils.

As for the falling stars that were mentioned by the questioner, they are considered falling stars by geographers when they fall to the surface of the earth.

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They do not burn or turn into ashes. Therefore, they are not a type of flaming fire. They are falling stars. The questioner should be sure of his information and understand the affairs of his Din and that of the world. May Allah be merciful to someone who evaluate themselves rightly and do not deal with issues that are higher than their level.

May Allah grant us success. May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions.

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