



Reflections on the Theory of the Contraction and Expansion of Religious Knowledge

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Abstract

The principle of the relationship between religious and non-religious knowledge is not hidden from anyone and it is obvious that without the help of sciences such as literature, logic, principles of jurisprudence, principles of understanding hadith and rijal, etc., a correct understanding of religion can not be achieved. Found. However, some consider this interaction to be maximal and refer to it as the theory of Contraction and Expansion of Sharia. This idea, which from the designer's point of view is delivered to the three pillars of description, explanation and recommendation, can be detailed into ten pillars with a little reflection. The author of this study, who has critiqued this theory with a descriptive analytical method, considered problems such as self-inclusion, sophistry, doubt in the existence of the essence of religion, lack of distinction between certain and doubtful knowledge, etc. as the most important is shortcomings of this theory.

Keywords: *Contraction and Expansion; Religious knowledge; Human knowledge; Abdolkarim Soroush*

Problem Solving

The brief trade between religious knowledge and non-religious knowledge is not hidden from any rational person because no one can claim that he has reached a correct understanding of religion without the help of sciences such as literature, logic, hadith studies, rijal or the principles of jurisprudence.

But what brings us to the point of contention is the extent of the interaction between religious and non-religious knowledge and the extent to which they are borrowed from each other, and what we seek in this article is to discover the relevance of this knowledge and the potential impact of non-religious thought. In the evolution of religious thought. In this regard, some have thought that this interaction is maximal and a small change in one corner of human knowledge will cause a change in the other corner.

The theory of the "evolution of religious knowledge" is of the same fabric. This theory, which is known in the critique market as the "theoretical Contraction and Expansion of Shari'a", was first written

by Dr. Abdolkarim Soroush, but the principles of this theory go back to before him. However, its new format has been developed by him. In the following, we have tried to study and critique this theory with regard to the thoughts of Mr. Soroush.

Background of Contraction Theory

Theory of contraction and expansion, many years ago in the minds of philosophers such as Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965), the eminent Christian scholar, Benedetto Croce (1866-1953), the main representative of idealism in Italy, Alfred Firmin Luizi (1857–1940) and Ernest Troeltsch (1875-1962) When the conflict between experimental achievements and scientific research and the appearances of the Bible harassed a large number of Christian and Jewish scholars and They were tired of solving this dilemma. This conflict was seen in the fluidity of understanding of religion - the same relativity - and the constancy of the essence and truth of religion. Albert Schweitzer in explaining one of the pillars of this theory (religion and religious knowledge are two things and religion is fixed but religious knowledge is variable) is writing:

"It may be desirable for religious truth to be expressed independently of any connection with any particular period ... but this is not the case. We must accept the obvious fact that religious truth varies from age to age. It is variable." (Mohammad Rezaei, 1379, pp. 108-113)

Via John McQuire (1900-1970), author of *Twentieth-Century Religious Thought*, comments on Alfred Louise's words, where he has a scathing critique of Harnack (German scholar)'s interpretation of Christianity:

"Louise often writes as if there is an absolute and eternal truth or fixed. It is a kind of Platonic substance that is so-called placed in the heavens, so that what changes and evolves is only our understanding and expression. (Or the way we understand and express it) is from this truth". (McQuire, 1996, p. 373). Or Ernest Troeltsch says about the fundamental events of Christianity: "They can not be considered certain. They should only be presented as probabilities, and they are constantly exposed to criticism and in a sense, they need constant trimming. Therefore, such knowledge, they wear the clothes of being human." (Mohammad Rezaei, *ibid.*) Or that the basis of another pillar of this theory of the relevance of human knowledge can be traced back to Hegel's words, and there are other examples that all suggest that this theory is rooted in the words of Western philosophers and Somehow all the pillars of this theory are derived from the same philosophy.

Explain the Theory of Expansion Bill

Dr. Soroush has based the theory of knowledge Contraction and Expansion on three pillars. Some of these issues are related to the news of the evolution of religious thought and others to the encouragement of the lost at sea to swim and the development of religious knowledge with extra-religious sciences. He writes in the book of theoretical contraction and expansion: "Our previous letter had three pillars: description, explanation and recommendation; that is, firstly, it announced the evolution of religious thought (description); and secondly, it tried to open its head and give the reason for it". "Thirdly, by learning from the two previous officials, he encouraged the lost at the edge of the sea to swim and advised them to perfect their religious knowledge" (Soroush, 2003, p. 201). But the point to consider is that these three pillars have a premise from which several other pillars can be born. Some researchers write about this:

"The truth is that the theory of contraction and expansion exceeds three principles and expands to ten pillars, and perhaps the source of some ambiguity is the non-expansion of that contraction and the lack of elaboration..."

The Pillars of the Theory of Sharia Theory Collection and Expansion

- 1) Religion is distinct from religious knowledge.
- 2) The rules of religion are different from the rules of religious knowledge
- 3) Religious knowledge is human knowledge.
- 4) Humanities have a general relationship with each other.
- 5) Religious knowledge, as a human knowledge, is related to extra-religious knowledge.
- 6) Non-religious human knowledge is evolving.
- 7) Religious knowledge is subject to change, expansion and expansion as a result of change in other human knowledge.
- 8) Religious knowledge is relative.
- 9) Religious knowledge is complete.
- 10) Religious knowledge is modern. "(Khosropanah, 1389,p. 154)

In the following, we have tried to consider the mentioned view based on these ten alleged elements.

A) Distinguish religion from religious knowledge

Dr. Soroush distinguishes between the truth of religion and understanding of religion and claims: "... Human knowledge (including religious knowledge) is neither the property nor the understanding of an individual, but is divided among many people and is not a fixed thing, but because the stream is flowing and not the same law, which indicates it. Now we have to ask Separating between the Shari'a and understanding it, will it forever fascinate and occupy us only with an understanding of the Shari'a ... "(Soroush, *ibid.*) This difference correctly is also referred to as the difference between a Truth and understanding.

B) Distinguishing the rules of religion from the rules of religious knowledge

In many cases of his book, he acknowledges the silence, steadfastness, holiness, purity, perfection and truth of religion, and in contrast to the speaker, the variable and unholy, impure, the imperfection of religious knowledge:

"What changes is the understanding of the law by men, and what remains constant is the law itself" (*Ibid.*, P. 181).

"Shari'ah, although it is silent, but the tongue is not closed, and when it speaks, it speaks its own words; not the words of others, and it does not speak the same to everyone, and until there is no question, it does not give a definite answer to the unasked question." (Ibid., P. 334)

The designer of the theory of contraction and expansion has insisted on the distinction between religion and the understanding of religion and their different rules, including evolution, change, sanctity, evolution, silence, and so on.

There is no denying that there is a difference between religion and understanding of religion in general, but between two religious knowledge, but the argument is that the transcendental claim of this idea also affects the author himself and the possibility of change in the same. It currents itself and therefore turns it into a pest of "self-incrimination", because the monopoly of the difference between religious and non-religious understanding does not follow any rule, and the same logic that governs the distinction between religious knowledge and the essence of religion is knowledge. Non-religious also spreads and infects his skirt. "One researcher," says one researcher.

"The most important problem of believing in evolution and flow in all human knowledge is the problem of self-incarnation, and it wraps itself around the neck of this theory like a rope and makes it lifeless; that is, if all human knowledge is in evolution, the claims of contraction and expansion. "As part of human knowledge, they will be in transition." (Nikzad, 2001, p. 36)

C) Humanity of religious knowledge

Soroush claims that religious knowledge is human knowledge. Human knowledge is interconnected and all of them are evolving; As a result, religious knowledge is transformed by its connection with human knowledge.

D) The general relationship between human knowledge and the relationship between religious knowledge and extra-religious knowledge

Also, according to the theorist, not only are all human sciences evolving, but because these teachings are interrelated, any kind of interpretation in a branch of science also transforms other knowledge:

"Those who have thought that only in limited obstacles, parts of science, philosophy and mysticism, come into contact or conflict with some of the teachings of Shari'a, have neglected the precise understanding of all books and traditions on the basis of advance. "

There are assumptions that oblige the acceptance of the Book and the Sunnah and make our expectations of them ... and hence we say that all religious knowledge sits in the midst of all human knowledge." (Soroush, ibid., P. 360)"Religious understandings are based on extra-religious understandings." (Ibid., P. 370)

E) the evolution of non-religious human knowledge; Evolution of religious knowledge due to contraction and expansion in other human knowledge:

These two pillars are expressed at least in the following words: "A little turbulence in a corner of the ocean of human knowledge will not stop rippling until it is all turbulent." (Ibid., P. 168)

"It must be acknowledged that in all knowledge, including religious knowledge, the evolution of understanding will occur continuously, whether in necessity or not." (Ibid., P. 149) But the claim of connection and trade between the sciences in the aforesaid form can not be a correct claim because first we must see what is meant by this connection? If this means that all religious knowledge is related to all non-religious knowledge, we will find with a little reflection that this is not the case, except in relation to religious thought with some sciences, such as logic, rijal, hadith studies, literature, and so on.

Moreover, the generality of this relationship can be fragile from other points of view, because: First, the rule of causality requires that influence be effected on the basis of a disciplined criterion, so it cannot be accepted that every knowledge affects or implies another knowledge without any criteria. Is affected.

Second, thinking is nothing but a search for thought motivated to find the right answer to the unknown, or to explain and interpret information and to correct and supplement it, whenever any knowledge can solve any unknown, or to interpret or correct any knowledge. It no longer makes sense to think, because in this case, without the need for examination and selection, one can reach anywhere and take the sweet fruit of knowledge from the tree of one's mental reserves, while the flow of knowledge and Thinking is different.

Thirdly, the science of logic and epistemology becomes relevant and necessary when there are limits and criteria that govern human thought, and only on the basis of those criteria can something be proved or disproved, or explained and completed, when there are no criteria and limits, and any knowledge can affect any knowledge, whether direct or indirect, logic and epistemology will be null and void. (Rabbani, 1998, p. 45)

F) The relativity of religious knowledge

Dr. Soroush uses the relativity of religious understanding as the relativity of a result in an analogy; In this sense, every result is nourished by its premise, and any change in that premise leads to a change in the result, and the stability of the result is also a consequence of the stability of the premise, and therefore the relativity of the result does not contradict its stability. (Soroush, *ibid.*, P. 485) In criticizing this pillar, it is enough that the end of this claim is falling into the horrible valley of sophistry and atheism, and as it was pointed out, it is necessary to deny Mr. Soroush's own opinion. "[According to this theory], no understanding of religion and about religion can be damaged, neither the understanding that considers religion and religiosity as the cause of ignorance and fear and causes misery, is wrong, nor the understanding that considers it as the result of reason and nature and "It is the cause of installment, justice and happiness ... neither the understanding that considers religious knowledge to be variable can be violated, nor the understanding that considers religious knowledge to be variable in part and fixed in part is wrong ..." (Moalemi, 1383, p. 227)

G) The modernity of religious knowledge

He considers religious understanding to be variable in every age and says: "Religious scholars in every field adapt their understanding of religion to the accepted teachings of their time. No scholar can go to religious texts with an empty mind and without perspective and opinion, and approach the understanding of the Shari'a." It is neither possible nor desirable ... "(Soroush, *ibid.*, P. 487) Here are a few points to note about the claim that religious understanding is modern: Since some mental presuppositions are imposed and the audience imposes its intention on the speaker with these presuppositions, and on the other hand, modern sciences also follow these presuppositions. Especially the humanities that benefit from various non-experimental and metaphysical schools. Now, if

we want to use modern sciences as comparative and imposed presuppositions and look at religious understanding in the way of modern sciences and adapt religious meaning to scientific theory, we must attribute various and contradictory religious knowledge to the Qur'an and Sunnah. It is then that at once Marxist Islam (poor and influenced by Marx's sociology) and capitalist Islam (poor and influenced by Max Weber's sociology) and Freudian Islam (poor and influenced by Freud's psychology) and ... show themselves in front of us. they do. (Khosropanah, *ibid.*, P. 176) And according to some thinkers, if it is said that all human understanding, whether about the Shari'a or the Shari'a, is modern and relative, how can we comment and accept that the principle of religion is right and Absolute and pure and perfect and fixed and holy? (Javadi Amoli, 1372, p. 52)

Finally, in the continuation of the critiques, it is necessary to pay attention to the general point that: There is no doubt that the mass of religious knowledge is the product of the questions of the questioners, but its totality is not without flaws, because this evolution is acceptable in matters of religious suspicion, but never in certain propositions of religion. Such a claim can be made. According to the author of the book *Basics of Knowledge*, such influences belong to the field of suspected religious knowledge. In the realm of certain religious knowledge, at least at a level of meaning that everyone understands and does not attribute to properties, such an effect cannot be found. Moreover, words give knowledge to the audience who is aware of the situation between word and meaning, not to the ignorant audience who can speak religion with their mental presuppositions. In the end, it is not without merit to pay attention to the critiques of some researchers in this regard: "The theory of silent law is one of the most fundamental mistakes that the author of the articles of contraction and expansion has made in understanding religious teachings ... when we say that the law is fixed, it means that the word of God and his saints is fixed. But the word It is not debatable as a word or sound that occurs outside, but the words are certainly used as expressions of the intended meanings and meanings, and it is certain that the word in itself without presuppositions related to the content of the word signifies the meaning. Contrary to what Mr. Soroush has said that "expressions are hungry for meanings, not conceiving them", the truth is that expressions are conceiving meanings ... The speaker cannot be considered silent in any sense. "His speech has become a tool of meaning and purpose, and by doing so, he has been removed from silence, and so is the Shari'a, because the meaning of the Shari'a is the words of God and His saints." (Larijani, 1991, p. 100)

Result

The theory of the evolution of religious knowledge or the contraction and expansion of the Shari'a can be described, explained and recommended from the point of view of its designer in three pillars, which can be elaborated in ten pillars with a little reflection. Problems such as self-destruction and self-inclusion of the theory, Irregularity in its development, sophistry, doubt in the existence of a religion essence, etc. are among the most important shortcomings of this theory. What is one of the other shortcomings of this theory should be sought in the lack of distinction between certain and doubtful knowledge; Because in the realm of certain religious knowledge, such an effect can not be found, at least on a level of meaning that everyone.

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