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Preface

The three essays assembled here are based on lectures delivered by the author on three different occasions. They are united in which they all concern the Holy Qur'an and the sciences of nature.

The first essay deals with the Islamic conception of knowledge. There I have tried to show Islam's recommendation for the acquisition of knowledge is not restricted to the particular teachings of Shari'ah, but it applies to any kind of knowledge which is instrumental in bringing us closer to God. All sciences, whether theological or physical, are a means for obtaining proximity to God, and, as long as they play this role, they are sacred.

In the second essay, I have tried to spell out the reasons from the desirability of the physical and natural sciences in Islamic outlook. There, we find two fundamental reasons for the significance of these sciences in Islamic world-view:

1. The role of these sciences in knowing God.

2. The role of these sciences in the stability and glorification of the Muslim Ummah.

The third essay deals with some basic problems of epistemology from the Qur'anic view-point. This is an area in which very little work is done, and here our concern is to stimulate Muslim scholars to spend more time and energy on this subject of fundamental importance.

I hope and pray these essays may be a humble aid in stimulating further research in this area, in the revival of scientific spirit in the Ummah, and in promoting scientific knowledge in the Muslim world.

Mahdi Golshani

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