A Momentous Journey from Nothing to Everything

An independent review of Amir Naseri's All-and-Nought

By: Richard Howells

A journey through a book is always pleasant to me. Not just because it gives me entertainment, yet it is helpful to teach me over different unknown issues as well. Perhaps the most important benefit of reading a book like All-and-Nought is the excellent opportunity to gather practical understanding of a subject that I have never been into. The kind of knowledge earned in first hand experienced that cannot be found on any other book or any other place. Although it's demanding considerable mental effort and skill, yet it still feels like a journey you set off without knowing where you are about to reach. The reason I liken this book to a journey is that I found the pure thrill of a journey within it, one of those journeys we all longed for in our youths. But sometimes the journey doesn't go as our clichés do, and you have to undergo different unexpected situation during a journey.

Possibly the most important feature of All-and-Nought is that it is capable to attract many readers from all walks of life, and this is unprecedented in its kind. All-and-Nought is a theory not only doesn't contradict any of the previous ones, rather, uses all to strategize its own: both followers of different religions, as well as forerunner of modern sciences, and even those who are from neither of these two areas and their conceptions of life are based solely on modern philosophy.

Although many have tried to find a new way to prove the legitimacy of religions in the past, and the use of modern science is the most valid support of them all, yet none of them have been able to establish themselves in the form of a verifiable theory, and eventually almost all of them lost in the realm of pseudoscience. For the same reason, they lost the support of audiences from field of science and collapsed to the same level that the reasoning of religions has never gone beyond.

Apart from the content, the procedure chosen by All-and-Nought for reasoning and reaching the core concept is fascinating. My personal experience in reading this book is like I was moving in a direction that I didn't know where it would go, and this somewhat doubled the excitement of getting to know a new theory. Of course, it might be better to expand the subject a little bit more since sometimes in some chapters it feels like the expansive data is massive so in order to enter a new chapter, the previous one must be read more than once. Let alone, comprehending a book like this, is beyond the knowledge of an individual so for the same reason, reports were compiled to understand some of the concepts so that the reader could more easily

trust the scientific documentation of the book. These reports are given in the appendices of the book. Maybe these appendices would be better to read prior the book itself as a prerequisite. As it's mentioned, the amount of information given in the book is too dense and this is for all I know, the main feature that renders the book less acceptable since it can overshadow the basic notion, and hinder its understanding. However, the advantage of the new version compared to the previous one is the presence of analytic reports and some additional explanations that make the reader get along with more confidence.

All-and-Nought is certainly a completely developed academic theory: wise, logical expression which is the result of thinking about a phenomenon, associated with processes such as study, observation or research and its purpose is to explain how a phenomenon works. The theory is a validated explanation of nature derived from the scientific methods and meets all the criteria required by modern science. Scientific tests are able to empirically reject or refute them. And like any other academic theory, it is held up by the most authoritative, accurate, and comprehensive scientific achievements. Especially since the theory deals with issues that are usually considered unprovable by the public. Then it goes one more step further than scientific hypothesis - logical conjectures that can be tested experimentally - and it can be expected that in the future it'll sit at the level of scientific law - descriptive reports on how nature functions in a particular area and under certain conditions. All-and-Nought provides a reasonable and comprehensible framework for observing a phenomenon that was previously considered unmeasurable but can now be tested to determine its accuracy.

It is no exaggeration to say that I have spent the last few months seriously studying this theory: many theorists in the past have tried to explain the same subject, which at best, they turned out to be hollow claims with no measurable quantities so make them far more difficult to accept than to reject and in many cases it is not even clear whether they are theories or hypotheses, and sometimes they have even tarnished the validity of the concept of "theory" and provoked remonstrance from scholars.

All-and-Nought is based on scientific methods and sticks to this strategy from the beginning to the end and meets all the required criteria by appealing to the findings of modern science and at all stages it allows the reader to be able to examine and evaluate in order to accept or reject science-wise. The first step involves trying to understand the causes as well as the nature of existence, and then researching its structural causes and factors. In the end, the book explains why these cannot be seen independently of each other, and this has been basically the problem of previous

thinkers that failed to see the subject in a big picture. But in any case, what confirms or refutes theories are the hypotheses that are formed around them and get tested independently. Any confirmation or refutation of that hypothesis leads to the confirmation or rejection of that theory. So we have to be patient with All-and-Nought and leave the final judgment to those who involved in the relevant fields. As we know, the power of any theory is related to the variety of phenomena it can explain; which is measured by the ability of that theory to predict those phenomena. For this reason, I am personally eager to witness post-theory discourses of All-and-Nought.

Among the seven criteria for evaluating an academic theory, "logical consistency" is the most prominent feature of this book. The "scope" has also been expanded to an acceptable level. "Testability" and "test of time" are two more components that gave this theory a plausible capacity. But when it comes to "heurism" and "parsimony" we witness two components that one is extremely strong and the other extremely weak. The heuristic side of All-and-Nought is wonderful: the amount of research and new thinking stimulated by the book is ample. Timely and relevant references to scientific theories and evidence from other theories from other scientists in various fields have increased the consistency of the book. So I can say firmly, this theory has a good heurism. Parsimony however, has a small presence in this book and when looking for the best explanation, it's not always the simplest one. The complexity of given explanations can be defined in many places, based on the context and on the factors involved. In general, however, the complexity of All-and-Nought comes from the number of assumptions that are required for a given subject to make sense, with the simplest explanation being the one that requires the fewest assumptions.

As a matter of fact, since parsimonious explanations are simpler, they tend to generalize better across a wide range of situations. This means that a parsimonious explanation will generally be better able to explain a wider range of phenomena than a less parsimonious one, since a parsimonious explanation doesn't rely on as many assumptions that are specific to the situation at hand. Hence, the importance of observing the principle of parsimony in the theory of All-and-Nought is felt more than others, and unfortunately in some chapters, the author has not been able to establish a proper balance in its implementation.

Non-parsimonious explanation in some chapters is over-fitted to the particular data, points which were gathered in this specific situations, meaning that while it does explain those data points, it doesn't accurately capture the general, underlying phenomenon that is responsible for them, which is what it's meant to capture. For this reason, we see in parts of the book comprehension becomes too confusing than

it's really needed. From the other hand, we also see in other parts an overly-parsimonious explanation is under-fitted, meaning that it's so simple that it fails to accurately capture the underlying phenomenon. Overall, this illustrates the importance of choosing parsimonious explanations, which accurately capture the phenomenon at hand in a generalizable manner contrasted with non-parsimonious explanations, which are over-fitted to particular data and once again, fail to accurately capture the underlying phenomenon, and with overly-parsimonious explanations, which are so simplified that they also fail to properly capture the underlying phenomenon. Perhaps the most important objection to the presentation of the theory in All-and-Nought is the heterogeneous way of retelling: the complexity and simplicity of which do not correspond to the subject matter, and therefore compels the reader to do a lot of - and sometimes unnecessary - side studies. Perhaps if this point were taken into account and the author, by eliminating unnecessary complexities, chose a simpler expression for his book, he could gather a wider range of audiences around. But apart from the way it is presented, All-and-Nought theory has strong constraints and the subject is appearing in regular instalments through chapters of the book and link to one another in sequential order and in the end does not leave any question unanswered.

Equanimity, All-and-Nought may be flawed as a book, but as a theory has a lot to say that can't be ignored. I am sure that with the entry of philosophers and thinkers into the campaign of this theory, religion will no longer be just an issue of worshiping a superhuman controlling power, whatsoever.

It is time to turn away from the old view toward religion, which was a socio-cultural system and a set of behaviours, beliefs, and practices, etc. that link humanity to supernatural elements. Almost all religions, with their sacred traditions, seek to give meaning to life or get engaged in ontology. They tend to present principles for a better lifestyle and the nature of mankind and the universe. But All-and-Nought includes the category of religion in scientific formats from a completely different angle: in All-and-Nought salvation can be calculated, measured and achieved and creation is not something happens beyond the human realm. All-and-Nought proves how religion is confused with faith, and how religion differs from personal belief, which has a public aspect. Also, All-and-Nought explains how religion can be a kernel of one's identity and meanwhile, not to be a part of an organized system of beliefs and rituals cantered on a supernatural being. In All-and-Nought, belonging to a religion is often more than just sharing a belief and participating in some rituals and provides a plausible explanation on how almost all religions follow the same mechanism. While religions

try to justify their orders and beliefs by reasoning and rational argument, All-and-Nought makes it clear that religion is not a separate attachment to humanity, rather, a part of the mechanism of existence, and whether we like it or not, we live with it like other scientific standards, and it just has to be discovered. The problem for mankind for centuries has been to look for it in the wrong place. By this argument, religions are no longer transcendental phenomena, meaning that no part of them will be independent of reason and based on beliefs derived from tribal imitation. In the common belief of religions, creators go beyond the current laws of nature, created this world and rule over it. Yet All-and-Nought proves that creation is also an inseparable intertwined part of this universe, so the mechanism of worship and the process of attaining salvation is not what we used to think until now. In principle, despite the multiplicity and diversity of religions and intrinsic differences between them, they all are brought about by a same mechanism that it can be explained and even measured. All-and-Nought has also succeeded in solving one of the oldest historical problems of religion, namely "conflict with science". The claim of having a unique truth, fear of punishment, sectarianism, unusual customs, confliction with followers of other religions, etc. are all completely ruled out in All-and-Nought.

All-and-Nought believes that the main problem of religions is in the way they present: the acquisition of beliefs through what we were taught as children, and thus the unquestionability of what we inadvertently inherited, so makes the point that it doesn't matter what your belief system is, because the established processes are all the same, and therefore it is not the inherent truth or correctness of the teachings that give rise to the beliefs, rather the calculation of salvation. All-and-Nought can even involve atheists since they believe that unlike science, that finds unknown mysteries a challenge to find answers, religion only sanctifies the unknown" yet in All-and-Nought the sanctification of the unknown, is never an issue. Now the realm of science and religion are no longer separated, despite the fact that there are strong bilateral relations and interdependencies between them. Although religion may set the goals, but it is science that helps us to achieve those goals. As Albert Einstein said once, science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.