

Existence of God from the Standpoint of Islam and Science

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The subject—existence of Almighty God is of fundamental importance, especially in a religion. I believe, this is a topic which can foster inter-religious amity and bring together the followers of various religions. The causes of crime and unrest in the world can be traced to the absence of faith in God in the hearts of man. Thus this subject is also closely related with the establishment of peace. Indeed, as the Holy Quran says, ‘God is the source of peace and bestower of security.’

The Quran presents the universe as an evidence of the existence of God. It says: ‘In the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alterations of the night and the day, there are indeed signs for men of understanding’. ‘And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your tongues and colours. In that surely are signs for those who possess knowledge’. ‘Are you in doubt concerning Allah, Maker of the heavens and the earth?’

These verses of the Quran clearly indicates that the study of the creation of the heavens and the earth leads to Almighty God. So, first I now present some aspects of science and views of scientists on this subject.

Religion and science

It is specially worth mentioning that after the advent of our Holy prophet,

Muslims developed science to a great extent and they were the people who believed in Almighty God and who acquired deeper knowledge of God through science. For example, the renowned Arab astronomer, Abdullah Muhammad Ibu Zabir Al Battani, who spent forty years of his life from 878 to 918 C.E. in observing and studying heavenly bodies, says, ‘The Science of the stars . . . tends to recognize God’s oneness and highest divine wisdom’¹. Later, in the 17th century of the Christian era, when scientists stated that the earth is not the centre of the universe, the European clergy opposed this idea and it was generally felt that there is a dichotomy between religion and science. But in the present age, we find that many scientists do not regard religion and science as contradictory. Many of them do believe in God.

A book entitled *The Evidence of God in an Expanding Universe* was published from U.S.A in 1959.² It consists of essays by forty famous scientists in different fields of science, who declared their affirmative views about God. Mr John Clover Monsma, the Editor of the book, writes in the Introduction:

The basic postulate of this book, its points of departure, is that science can establish by observed facts of Nature and intellectual argumentation, that a superhuman power exists. It cannot identify the power to describe it, except in very general terms. For identification and more detailed description

special revelation (the Bible) is needed. But by proceeding from the basic postulate, I feel our scientists have struck effectively at the heart of atheism.

Max Planck, the famous scientist of the 20th century, who did fundamental work in understanding the atom, and who was awarded the Nobel Prize in physics in 1920, regarded both religion and science to be the mutual helpers in leading us to Almighty God. He says, 'Religion and natural science are fighting a joint battle in an incessant, never-relaxing crusade against dogmatism and against superstition, and the rallying cry in this crusade has always been, and always will be an adherence to God.'

Dr George Earl Davis, physicist, University of Minnesota. U.S.A., writes, 'That atheism exists in scientific circles is undeniable. But the popular belief that atheism is more prevalent among scientists than among the unscientific has never been proved and is, in fact, contrary to the expressions gained at firsthand by many of the scientists themselves.'

Dr H. T. Stetson, who was the Director of Parkins Observatory, Ohio, writes: 'It is not without significance that many of the eminent men of sciences, have been devout followers of religion. Among such may be mentioned Galileo, Newton, Faraday, Kelvin and Pasteur.'³

In his remarkable book *Hamara Khuda*, Hajrat Mirza Bashir Ahmed states: 'With regard to the belief in Almighty Being, we find that many scientists believed in God. In fact there are very few among them who deny the existence of God and there are more who do not deny'. We have also found that many scientists believe in God. Dr Ravada Satyanarayana, Professor of Physics and former Vice-Chancellor of the Osmania University, and Professor Nelson Limber firmly believed in God.

The problem of the origin of the universe

We can think of three possibilities of the origin of the universe, namely (a) the universe existed from eternity, (b) the universe came into existence by chance out of nothing, (c) the universe was created by a wise Supreme Being whom we call God. We shall now give arguments to show that science supports the third view.

In the 20th century, astronomy has developed to such an extent that the age of the universe has been determined. No doubt, in the light of new observations, the estimated age may be revised in future. Nevertheless, the determination of the age of the universe on the basis of observations and the laws of nature is one of the greatest achievements. According to our present knowledge, the age of our universe is about fifteen billion years. It is obvious that if an object's age can be found, it means that the object did not exist from eternity. Hence, our universe did not exist from eternity. Our inference of the age of the universe is based on observations. We have learnt that our universe is composed of innumerable galaxies, each galaxy consisting of billions of stars like our sun. In 1929, the remarkable discovery was made by Professor Edwin Hubble from a study of the spectra of galaxies, that galaxies are varying away from each other with speeds proportional to their separation from each other. Hence, in the remote past, the galaxies were very close to one another. According to the generally accepted view, all the matter that comprises the galaxies was confined to a space some 15 billion years ago. It was exceedingly hot and dense. Then a big bang occurred and the matter got broken up into many parts, which receded from one another. From these parts the galaxies and the stars were formed. In 1965 Penzias and Wilson discovered a

radio-radiation corresponding to black body radiation of temperature of three degrees Kelvin which supports this view.

The American scientist Dr Harry L. Shipman concludes his book on black holes with the following words:

The Big Bang theory leaves one unanswered question. Who created the material that exploded as Big-Bang? For this the astronomer has no answer. We may be able to look back to the early second of the evolution of the universe, but our vision stops there. This book ends by leaving the problem of creation to the philosopher and the theologian.⁴

The Holy Quran has given this powerful argument for the existence of Almighty God: 'And that to thy Lord do (all things) ultimately go'.

It also draws attention very effectively to the existence of God by referring to the creation as follows: 'Do not the disbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were a close-up (mass) and we opened them out? And we made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?'⁵

It has been inferred from an important principle of physics, namely the law of entropy that states that our universe did not exist from eternity. According to this principle, if hot and cold bodies are in contact with each other, energy would flow from the hotter bodies to the colder bodies until, at last, the temperature would be universally uniform and there would be no more useful energy; hence life itself would cease to exist. Drawing attention to the law of entropy and big bang origin of the universe, Dr Edwin Luther Kessel has made the following illuminating comment.

If only all scientists would consider the evidence of science here described with some honesty and lack of prejudice with which they evaluate the results of their own research; if only they would let their

intellects rule their emotions, they would be compelled to acknowledge that there is a God. This is the only conclusion that will fit the facts. To study science with an open-mind will bring one to the necessity of a first cause, whom we call God.⁶

Chemistry also opposes the view that our universe existed from eternity. Dr John Cleveland Cothran, Professor of Chemistry, writes: 'Chemistry discloses that matter is ceasing to exist, some varieties exceedingly slowly, others exceedingly swiftly. Therefore, the existence of matter is not eternal. Consequently, matter must have a beginning'.⁷

The presence of radioactive elements in the universe also indicates that the universe is not eternal. Dr Donald Robert Carr writes: 'In a universe which had no beginning but had always existed, no radioactive elements would remain'.⁸

In short, astronomy, physics, chemistry and geology are all unanimous in rejecting the view that the universe had no beginning.

It may be asked: What is the view of those scientists who do not believe in God, concerning the origin of the universe? In his book entitled the *Fascinating Astronomy*, Dr V. N. Kamorov gives the following quotation from Academician Pyotr Fedoseyev, a leading Soviet philosopher:

A material philosophy does not recognize the idea of the creation of the physical world by consciousness, by a Supreme Being. If we agree that the universe being studied today originated 20 billion years ago, then it is important, from a philosophical point of view, to acknowledge the objective nature of this process as a cosmic stage in the self-evolution of matter. It is the task of concrete science to understand and describe this process in physical terms. It is possible to conceive of the existence of many universes with a complex topology. It is sensible, therefore, to distinguish between the notion

of the natural scientist, which defines the knowledge we have amassed by now, and the philosophical notion of the material world, which includes in a concealed form all the future achievements of natural science in their study of the universe.⁹

It is clear from this statement that those who deny God do not have any scientific proof in support of their view. They do so only on the basis of their philosophy. They do not know from where the earliest material came into existence and merely hope, on account of their philosophical outlook, that the science of the future will provide the answer. Even if science of the future were to discover the source of the initial material, those who believe in God would then question: What is the origin of that source?

The Quranic verse says, 'The Lord is the final cause of all causes.' Commenting on the verse the Promised Messiah has said,

If we observe carefully we find that the entire universe is bound together in a system of cause and effect. This system is the root of all knowledge. No part of creation is outside the system. Some things are the roots of others and some are branches. A cause may be Primary or may be the effect of another cause, and that in its turn may be the effect of still another cause and so on. Now, it is not possible that in this finite world this pattern of cause and effect should have no limit and should be infinite. We are compelled to acknowledge that it must terminate with some ultimate cause. The ultimate cause is God. This verse sets forth this argument very concisely and affirms that the system of cause and effect terminates in God.¹⁰

The universe did not come into existence by chance

The second possibility, namely, that the universe came into existence by chance, is also not valid since so much order,

intelligence and wisdom underlie the universe that it cannot be said that all these are accidental. In this connection first I would like to quote an illuminating passage from the commentary of the Holy Quran by Hazrat Mirza-Bashir-ud-Din Mahmood Ahmad and then give the views of the scientists. The Holy Quran says: 'Are you harder to create or the heaven that He has made'. Commenting on this verse, he says, Almighty Allah always puts forward the system of the universe as a proof of His existence and asks: Does not this magnificent system show you that the hand of a creator is working in it? Every piece of it is dependent on another. Nothing in it is independent. Scientists say that this world resulted from the combination of atoms; through the union of the atoms this wonderful universe came into existence. We agree that various atoms united just in the way so that our need here today is adequately fulfilled by an arrangement made miles and miles away. We do agree that the atoms have formed this world, but if there were no God in this world, how did it happen that the atoms united in just the right fashion so as to satisfy that need of man and in the place that is appropriate for satisfying his need. The encounters of the atoms had taken place in such a way so as to satisfy every need of man. This cannot be accidental.

So we have to admit that behind this universe some other being is working. If we see leather, we may say that it has come here by chance, but if we see boots made from that leather and the same placed on sofas and chair and stairway for decoration, we cannot say that all these are accidental. Thus a complete system cannot be called accidental. This system is so complete that no person who looks at the complete pictures can think that all this happened by chance. Thus God says that you look at the

system of the heaven and the earth which is even harder in creation than your own selves. You may say that any one thing is accidental or that two things are accidental, but how can you say that the entire system is by chance?¹¹

Let us now listen to this argument for the existence of God given by the Holy Quran, the reverberation of which is heard in the words of eminent scientists. According to Sir Issac Newton, the greatest of all scientists that the world has produced, the universe could not be explained without belief in God. He says, 'This most beautiful system of the sun, planets and comets could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful being.'¹²

At the time of Newton, the study of the laws of nature was called Natural Philosophy. According to Newton, the inference of the existence of God from the study of the universe was within the realm of Natural Philosophy. But later on, when knowledge was divided into various disciplines, the domain of the scientist was limited to the study of the material things and the problem related to them. Whether God exists or not was considered outside the precincts of science. Nevertheless, in the 20th century, scientists have expressed their views about God. Albert Einstein is one of the greatest scientists of the 20th century. Dr Infeld, who had the opportunity of working with him, says about Einstein that whenever he had a new idea, he asked himself, could God have created the world in this way? Or Is this mathematical structure worthy of God?

Enraptured by the beauty and grandeur of the universe and the profound wisdom which underlies it, Einstein said,

The most beautiful and the most profound emotion we can experience is the sensation of the mystical. It is the sower of all true science. He, to whom this emotion is a

stranger, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead. To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms of this knowledge, this feeling is at the centre of true religiousness.

He further says:

My religion consists of a humble admiration of the illimitable superior spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble minds. That deeply emotional conviction of the presence of a superior reasoning power, which is revealed in the incomprehensible universe, forms my idea of God.¹³

The origin of the universe and the origin of life are two fundamental problems of research in science. I have referred to the origin of the universe. I shall now take up the second issue, ie the origin of life. The Holy Quran asks: 'How can you disbelieve in Allah? You were without life and He gave you life.' (2:29) Let us now hear the same argument put forward by several scientists.

Edwin Canklin, the famous biologist of the Princeton University says, 'The probability of life originating from accident is comparable to the probability of the unabridged dictionary resulting from an explosion in a printing shop.'¹⁴ Supporting this view, Dr Edmond Corl Kornfeld, a research chemist, says, 'I subscribe to that statement unreservedly. It is my firm conviction that there is a God, and that He planned, created and sustains the universe'.¹⁵ In the light of his knowledge of chemistry, he argues further that 'We will admit that we must believe in a supreme creative intelligence in Nature or, as the only alternative to this, we must believe that the universe as we find it has come about as the result of chance, and chance alone. To one

who has seen marvellous complexity and yet the pervading order in organic chemistry—especially that in living system—the idea of chance is repugnant to the extreme. The more one studies the science of molecular-structure and interrelation, the more one is convinced of the necessity of a planner and designer of it all. . . . The simplest man-made mechanism requires a planner and a maker. How a mechanism, ten thousand times more involved and intricate, can be conceived of as self-constructed and self-developed is completely beyond me.¹⁶

The Promised Messiah, peace be on him, says so beautifully—‘Wonderful indeed is the manifestation of Thy power, my dear, in every direction, / No matter in which direction we look, we get a vision of Thee!’

Scientists strive to discover the laws of Nature. The very fact that laws exist shows that there is a maker of laws. Dr John Cleveland Corthren, Professor of Chemistry, University of Minnesota says, ‘The study of matter and energy consistently has shown in the past and still continues to show that the behaviour of even insensible matter is not at all haphazard but on the contrary “obeys” definite natural laws’¹⁷. . . . ‘Can any informed and reasoning intellect possibly believe that insensible matter just chanced to originate itself and all this system then chanced to impose this system upon itself, where after this system just chances to remain imposed? Surely, The answer is No.’¹⁸

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV illuminates us with his comments on science. He draws our attention to the fact that water has the property that, if its temperature is decreased, its density increases until a temperature of four degrees centigrade is reached. If the temperature is further reduced, then the density decreases instead of increasing on account of this anomalous expansion of water in the winter season when ocean is

covered with ice. Beneath the ocean there is no ice, since the density of the underlying water is greater than that of ice. Hence, even in severe winter the animals are quite safe in the ocean as water is available to them. Then he says that this peculiar property of water manifests divine wisdom and indicates that God exists. Dr Frank Allen, Professor of Biophysics, University of Manitoba, Canada, and Dr T. D. Park also have drawn attention to the properties of water in support of the view that God exists.¹⁹

Dr Irving William Knobloch, Professor of Natural Sciences, Michigan State University, says:

I believe in God . . . because, I do not think that the mere chance could account for the emergence of the first electrons and protons, or for the first atom, or for the first amino-acids or for the first protoplasm, or for the first seed, or for the first brain. I believe in God, because to me his Divine Existence is the only logical explanation for the things as they are.²⁰

If we do not accept that this universe has been created by a Supreme Being who possesses knowledge and wisdom, we will have to believe that lifeless particles are considerably more intelligent than us since through their mutual interaction and co-operation, the sun and the moon, the mountains and the oceans, could be formed; but we human beings even by collaborating with one another in this age of advanced science are yet incapable of making even a leg of an insect. Thus in short, this universe clearly points towards a mighty and all-knowing being. The Holy Quran says: ‘And if thou ask them, who created the heavens and the earth? They will, surely, say: The Mighty, the All-knowing created them’.

Wisdom in Nature

The Holy Quran emphasizes that there is no flaw in God’s creation. It says, ‘He has created seven heavens in harmony. No

incongruity can you see in the creation of the Gracious God.’ Thus it draws attention to the infallible wisdom which nature displays. This bears eloquent testimony to the fact that the universe is not an outcome of chance but is a result of creation by a Wise Being. Prof. Abdus Salam, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in physics in 1979, expressed the same conviction. So has done the Nobel laureate Prof. S. Chandrasekhar, one of the topmost astrophysicists.

Through science to the Almighty

Dr Albert Winchester, who is an expert in biology, has admitted that . . . ‘after many years of study and work in the field of science, my faith in God, rather than being shaken, has become much stronger and acquired a firmer foundation than heretofore. Science brings about an insight into majesty and omnipotence of the supreme being which grows stronger with each discovery’.²¹

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan of the Islamic Centre, Delhi, has written a nice book entitled *God Arises* (published by Maktaba AL Risala, c-29, Nizamuddin West, New Delhi, 1987) in which he has collected the evidence of science and the sayings of scientists on the existence of Almighty God. He has narrated an inspiring incident in this book. I shall relate it. Inayatullah Mashriqi had visited England in the year 1909. On a Sunday, when it was raining hard, he met Sir James Jeans, the famous astronomer of the Cambridge University going to a church with Bible clutched under his arm. Mr Inayatullah Khan expressed his astonishment that a person of such a universal fame like him was going to pray in a church!

Sir James Jeans asked Mr Inayatullah to come to his house and have tea with him in the evening. Accordingly Inayatullah went to his house. Jeans was then lost in his thoughts. He asked the visitor: ‘What was your question?’ But without waiting for an

answer, he gave an inspiring description of the creation of the celestial bodies, their motions and the astonishing order to which they adhere. His voice and movements clearly showed that he was deeply impressed by the power and majesty of God. He said, ‘You know Inayatullah Khan, when I behold God’s marvellous feats of creation, my whole being trembles in awe at His majesty. When I go to church I bow my head and say, “Lord, how great you are!” And not only my lips, but every particle of my body joins in uttering these words. I obtain incredible peace and joy from my prayer. Compared to others, I receive a thousand times more fulfilment from my prayers. So, tell me Inayatullah Khan, now do you understand why I go to church?’

Hearing this Inayatullah told Sir James Jeans that his words reminded him of a verse of the Holy Quran which he would like to quote if permitted. James replied, ‘Of course’, Mr Inayatullah Khan then quoted the following verse:

And among the mountains are streaks, white and red, of diverse hues and others raven black, and in like manner, there are men and beasts and cattle of various colours. Only those of his servants who possess knowledge fear Allah.

Sir James Jeans was deeply impressed by these words of the Holy Quran. He exclaimed:

‘What was that? It is those alone who have knowledge who fear God. Wonderful! How extraordinary! It has taken me fifty years of continuous study and observation to realise this fact. Who taught it to (Hazrat) Muhammad (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him)? Is this really in the Quran? If so, you can record my testimony that the Quran is an inspired book. Hazrat Muhammad was illiterate. He could not have learnt this immensely important fact on his own. God must have taught it to him. Incredible! How extraordinary!’ ■

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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- 4 Harry L. Shipman, *Black Holes, Quasars and the Universe*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1976, p. 288.
- 5 For an excellent comment on this verse, see Monsieur Maurice Bucaille, *The Bible, the Quran and Science*, Crescent Publishing Company, Aligarh 1980, p. 139.
- 6 *Evidence*, p. 52.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 41.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 134.
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- 14 *Evidence*, p. 174.
- 15 *Ibid.*
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 176.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 38.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 41.
- 19 Frank Allen, 'The Origin of the World—by Chance or Design?' in *Evidence*, p. 21.
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The importance of Mother's biography

What can we learn from this book? The answer is: Holy Mother's simple and pure life inspires us. Her modesty and humility overwhelm us. Her love and compassion conquer our hearts. Her struggle and suffering strengthen us to face ordeals and crisis of life. Her contentment and indifference to poverty make us ashamed when we complain about small things. Her forbearance and acceptance of various ailments such as dysentery, malaria, rheumatism, and kala-azar encourage us to endure our illness silently. Her grace and forgiveness convey her divinity to us. Her truthfulness and steadiness convince us that we can rely on her. Her presence of mind shows us how to be practical. Her unselfish service and complete self-surrender are models for our own lives.

She demonstrated the highest truths of Vedanta in her daily life; she harmoniously reconciled the contemplative life and the active life. Mother's divine life is a beacon for lost and weary souls in this world. Her life and her message help the downtrodden and the depressed as well as those who have lost hope in trying to find meaning in life. Innumerable people are receiving peace and bliss, solace and succour from her simple life and practical teachings.

Millions and millions of people in the East and the West now think of and meditate on Ramakrishna and Holy Mother daily. Every great religious personality gives shelter, rest, and peace to all. Referring to those great souls, Jules Michelet wrote in *The Bible of Humanity*: 'Man must rest, get his breath, refresh himself at the great living wells, which keep the freshness of the eternal.' ■

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