

In Search of God: A Scientific Review

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Abstract:

This article is about the in quest of God, which is in the context of monotheism and search for the eternal Deity as well as a long journey to believe in God. We have a universe which is before us. We see it, feel it, experience it and so are forced to believe in its existence. Even when a man rejects the godhead, he still believes in the universe. But when and how did it come into being? Explaining its existence as the creation of God is no final answer--so it is generally held--since the very next question which simply arises is if God made the universe, then who made God? The universe itself does not have the ability to create anything. It can neither increase nor decrease by itself. We choose not between the universe with God and the universe without God, but between God and a non-existent universe. Since a non-existent universe is unconceivable, we must perforce opt for the concept of the universe with God.

Introduction:

All of us wonder and think many times whether God exists and whether has any one seen Him! Generally no single person has explicitly confessed to my knowledge that he has seen the God and he has a specific appearance, shape or figure etc. Every one believes that He is God as our minds have been so programmed to believe so, from our childhood. "No vision can grasp Him, but His grasp is over all vision; He is subtle well-aware."ⁱ We pray and worship Him as it gives us happiness and leads us to think and act in a positive manner and also a good character.

Natural instinct of a man is always in quest of a God. Sometimes we feel frustration and try to negate God, sometimes in bewilderment and confusion we call everything God and sometimes in the diversity of creature we find unity. Someone tries to get Him in the natures, in the deeds of mankind, in the fruits and flowers of trees and someone seeks Him in the midst of solitude and air-space. The signs of God in nature are interpreted in the Holy Qur'an: "It is He who sends down water from the sky. From it you drink and from it come the shrubs among which you graze your herds. And by it He makes crops grow for you and olives and dates and grapes and fruit of every kind. Therein is certainly a sign in that for people who reflect. He has made the night and the day subservient to you, and the sun, the moon and the stars, all subject to His command. Therein are certainly signs in that for people who use their intellect. And also, the things of varying colors He has created for you in the earth. There is certainly a sign in that for people who pay heed. It is He who made the sea subservient to you so that you can eat fresh flesh from it and bring out from it ornaments to wear. And you see the ships cleaving through it so that you can seek His bounty, and so that perhaps you may show thanks. He cast firmly embedded mountains on the earth so it would not move under you, and rivers, pathways, and landmarks so that perhaps you might be guided. And they are guided by the stars. Is He Who creates like him who does not create? O will you not pay heed?"ⁱⁱⁱ

Whether someone finds God or not and whether someone's investigation makes one a believer or a nonbeliever, man's search for the Deity is universal and eternal. After being enormous signs of God, there is no a little bit scope to be a nonbeliever. In this context the Holy Qur'an says: "Say: Praise be to God. He will show you His Signs and you will recognize them. Your Lord is not heedless of anything you do."ⁱⁱⁱ

Emergence of the Universe and the Signs of God:

Sometimes, we think how did the universe exist here? If we ponder deeply, then it will be more safe and sound on the way of long journey to believe in God. Scientists believe that our universe began with one enormous explosion of energy and light, which we now call the Big Bang. This was the singular start to everything that exists. Further it was something outside of time, outside of space, and outside of matter that caused all of this to come into existence. The understanding that our universe began, and did not always exist, brings enormous challenges to scientists. Later 1920's astronomer Edwin Hubble saw through his telescope that galaxies (some millions of light years away) were hurtling away from each other at fantastic speeds. This was not caused by some force thrusting them away from each other. Rather, they were still moving as a result of a primeval explosion, all from one point of origin. "In this point of origin, all the mass in the universe was compressed into a single point of infinite density...smaller than a single atom."^{iv} Then in a cosmic explosion- - Big Bang- - universe came into being. Steven Weinberg, a Nobel laureate in Physics, gives further information, "At about one hundredth of a second, the earliest time about which we can speak with any confidence, the temperature of the universe was about a hundred thousand million degrees Centigrade. This is much hotter than in the center of

even the hottest star, so hot, in fact, that none of the components of ordinary matter, molecules, or atoms, or even the nuclei of atoms, could have held together.”^v

In modern era, The Big Bang theory indicates that in the beginning all the objects in the universe were of one piece and then were parted. This fact, which is discovered by the Big Bang Theory was , stated in the Holy Qur’an fourteen centuries ago , when people had a very limited knowledge about the universe. In this context the Holy Qur’an says,

“Have not those who disbelieve known that the heavens and the earth were joined together as one united piece, then We parted them? And we have made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe? And We have placed on the earth firm mountains, lest it should shake with them, and We placed therein broad highways for them to pass through, that they may be guided.

And We have made the heaven a roof, safe and well guarded. Yet they turn away from its signs (i.e. sun, moon, clouds, winds, etc.)”^{vi}

As stated in the verses , everything , even the ‘heavens and the earth’ that were not yet created , were created with a Big Bang out of a single point , and shaped the present universe by being parted from each other. When we compare the statements in the verse with the Big Bang theory, we see that they fully agree with each other. However, The Big Bang was introduced as a scientific theory only in the twentieth century. The expansion of the universe is one of the most important pieces of evidence that the universe was created out of nothing. Although this fact was not discovered by science until the twentieth century, the almighty has informed us of this reality in the Holy Qur’an, He says: “And the heaven We constructed with strength, and indeed, We are (its) expander.”^{vii}

Dispute of Causation - Uncausation and the Indications of God:

Everything that starts to exist must have a cause, without cause nothing can emerge. Though, there are different views regarding uncausation. Recently, the world renowned physicist, Stephen Hawking in his new book *‘The Grand Design’* argues that the universe did self create due to the law of gravity, “Because there is a law like gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing...”^{viii} But his view on nothing, as previously mentioned, is not really nothingness but is space filled with the quantum vacuum, which is part of the universe. In essence, Hawking shows that, the universe can create itself, but it has to already exist for it to do that! Concerning the law of gravity, well that is just a mathematical equation that describes nature. This law is part of the universe, which can also be described as a force of attraction between material objects. Therefore, how can this force exist before matter, in other words the universe? To assert that the universe created itself would be absurd and self refuting, because in order for something to create itself it would need to exist before it existed! Physicist Victor Stenger also says, the universe may be “uncaused” and may have “emerged from nothing.”^{ix} Philosopher Bertrand Russell also denounces causation; He said, “The universe is just here, and that’s all.”^x On the other hand, there are different views regarding causation. Causation is must necessary, because everything that begins to exist must have a cause, without cause nothing can emerge. An instantaneous starting of something or a sudden beginning of somebody never can be existed without cause. Even one of the most skeptical philosophers of the world David Hume never denied causation. In 1754, He wrote, “I have never asserted so absurd a proportion as that anything might arise without cause.”^{xi} Since something cannot come from nothing, and self creation is absurd, including the unreasonableness of the aforementioned explanation, then the universe being created or brought into existence by an uncaused entity is the best explanation. This concept is intuitive but also agrees with reality: whatever begins to exist has a cause or a creator. Modern science’s greatest advancements came from people who believe that, God created everything and ordered it in a rational way, for mankind’s discovery and benefit, and for God’s glory that we might recognize his power and majesty as we observed his mighty deeds of creation.

P.C.W. Davies also said, “What caused the big bang? . . . One might consider some supernatural force, some agency beyond space and time as being responsible for the big bang, or one might prefer to regard the big bang as an event without a cause. It seems to me that we don’t have too much choice. Either...something outside of the physical world...or...an event without a cause.”^{xii} The Holy Qur’an says: “Say, Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth? Say, it is Allah (one God)”^{xiii} This cause or creator must be uncaused due to the absurdity of an infinite regress, in other words an indefinite chain of causes. To illustrate this better, if the cause of the universe had a cause and that cause had a cause and He is one creator, for whom all of the causes are created. All things are created through Him and He is before all things, as well as He will be after all things. The Holy Qur’an confirms the uncreatedness of the creator or God, “He neither begets nor is born.”^{xiv} The cause or creator for the universe must be a single cause for several reasons. In the context of the cause for the universe we have no evidence to claim multiplicity, in other words more than one. The Holy Qur’an affirms the Oneness of the creator, “Say: He is God, (Who is) One.”^{xv}

However, some philosophers and scientists claim: why doesn’t the cause be the universe itself? Why can’t the cause stop at the universe? Well, the problem with these claims is that they would imply that the

universe created itself, which we have already discussed, is absurd. Additionally, we have good reasons to postulate a cause for the universe because the universe began to exist, and what begins to exist has a cause. The cause or creator must also be transcendent, this means that the cause of the universe must exist outside of and apart from the universe. Since this being exists apart from the universe it must be non-physical or immaterial, if it was material then it would be part of the universe. This is confirmed in the Holy Qur'an, "There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the seeing."^{xvi} This cause must have the power to create the universe, without this ability nothing could be created. The Holy Qur'an testifies to God's power, "Certainly, God has power over all things."^{xvii} This cause must have a will, because it wouldn't be able to create the universe without one. What this means is that it must have a will so the power to create could be acted on. The Holy Qur'an refers to God as having a will in many places, for instance, "And God guides whom He wills to a straight path."^{xviii}

Created or brought into being by a creator or an eternal existence:

Rationally, the universe couldn't have created itself because that would mean impossibility. It would mean that something can exist and not exist at the same time, how a father and his son can't come of at the same time. We are experienced that, the universe couldn't have come out of nothing, because out of nothing, nothing comes. This is an indisputable philosophical opinion, as P. J. Zwart in his publication *About Time* explains, "If there is anything we find inconceivable it is that something could arise from nothing."^{xix}

A noteworthy point to raise here is that, nothingness should not be misconstrued as the nothingness that some physicists talk about. The term nothingness in this context refers to the absence of anything physical, in other words there is no pre-existing 'stuff'. In light of the beginning of the universe, there was absolutely nothing before it began to exist, which is why physicists have explained the universe as having a space-time boundary.

However, nothingness as defined by some physicists relates to the quantum vacuum. This is misleading because the quantum is something. In quantum theory the vacuum is a field of energy pervading the whole of the universe. In the words of John Polkinghorne, a philosopher of science, the quantum vacuum, "...is not 'nothing'; it is a structured and highly active entity."^{xx} So, in the perspective of some physicists' definition, the universe could not have come from absolutely nothing, as the quantum vacuum is something. It is a sea of fluctuating energy, which is still part of the cosmos and it did not pre-exist the universe. This point leads us adequately to the previous possible explanation of causation. In this regard the Holy Qur'an affirms that, "Were they created by nothing? Or were they themselves the creators? Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Nay, but they have no firm Belief."^{xxi}

The Qur'anic History of 'search for God and a Long Journey on the Way of a One Creator' :

This type of mental and psychological storm and struggle are always remaining dormant in our mind, how it was in the mind of Prophet Abraham (A.). Search for God and a long journey to faith in God of Prophet Abraham is clearly narrated in the Holy Quran. The Holy Qur'an says:

"And when Ibrahim (Abraham) said to his father, Azar: do you take idols as gods? I do see you and your people in manifest error.

Thus did we show Ibrahim (Abraham) the kingdom of the heavens and the earth that he be one of those who have faith with certainty?

When the night covered him over with darkness, he saw a star. He said, this is my Lord. But when it set, he said, I love not those that set.

When he saw the moon rising up, he said, this is my Lord. But when the moon set, he said, unless my Lord guides me, I shall surely be among the people who went astray.

When he saw the sun rising up, he said, this is my Lord; this is the greatest. But when the sun also set, he said, O my people! I dissociate myself completely from your practice of ascribing divinity to any but God.

I do turn my face wholeheartedly towards Him who created the heavens and the earth and I am not among those who ascribe divinity to any but Him."^{xxii}

These verses indicate that Abraham has already realized that the worship of idols practiced by his father and his people was wrong. Idols and Figures made by men by their own hands unable to benefit or harm anyone, could not be fit objects for worship by man. But what about the heavenly bodies which are neither made by men nor are capable of benefiting or harming anyone? These verses also tell us how Abraham rejected the worship of those as well as found certainty of faith in the one true God.

Verses 74-79 have been traditionally understood as a recounting of either an argument between Abraham or his people or of his own thoughts that led him to the one true God. The latter is clearly a sounder interpretation in view of God's word in the Holy verse: "And in this wise did We show Abraham the dominion of the heavens and the earth that he (i.e. Abraham) may have certainty of faith"^{xxiii} And Abraham's own words in verse: "Unless my Lord guides me, I shall certainly be among the lost."^{xxiv} But even as a recounting of Abraham's own thoughts, the passage should not be understood in a literal way. A literal understanding of the passage will oblige us to attribute extreme naiveté to Abraham, since the main argument would then seem to be

that the stars, the moon and the sun cannot be true gods since they set, but even in those days, people, especially those of Abraham's stature, must have known that the setting of the heavenly bodies does not mean that they cease to exist or to shine, an observation which takes away all seriousness from the argument. Moreover, the profound experience of realization of God just does not happen during the course of a single night by looking at the setting of three heavenly bodies, nor can such an observation of the heavenly bodies be described as showing to Abraham the dominion of the heavens and the earth.

The recounting of Abraham's thoughts should be understood in a parabolic way. Abraham becomes a typical seeker of truth and his journey to faith a typical journey, which is represented as a parable. Understood as a parable, every detail in the passage begins to assume significance. The night that engulfed Abraham represents a stage of spiritual darkness in which a seeker is lost in doubt and confusion. All seekers of truth must pass through such a stage. Even the last and the greatest of the prophets, Muhammad, passed through it, as the following Qur'anic passages show: "And (God) found you (O Muhammad) lost and He then showed you the way."^{xxv}

"(Earlier, O Muhammad!) You did not know what the book is and what the faith is."^{xxvi} In the case of Abraham, we can imagine how lost he must have felt, as in darkness, after he had rejected the worship of idols and cut himself off from the religion of his father and his people and had not yet found anything to fill the vacuum.

In general terms, the star, the moon and the sun and their setting mean that all phenomena in the universe are of temporary nature and a seeker reaches his main destination when he learns to look past these temporary phenomena towards the transforming and creative agent behind them. But we can elaborate this in view of the details of the parable. After the night covers a seeker, illumination sooner or later does come to him, provided his love is true. However, before the seeker sees the real light, he sees some partial lights which he mistakes for the real one. The star, the moon and the sun represent such partial and deceptive lights on the way. The exact nature of these may be different for different persons, which is the reason why the parabolic language is used: to cover a variety of situations. The following is one meaningful interpretation.

The star represents the partial reality that is known through the senses. There is a tendency in man to view this reality as final, to say that there is nothing except what he can see, hear, smell, etc., and what he sees, hears, smells, etc., is exactly as he sees, hears, smells, etc. The world of my senses is the reality that is responsible for bringing me about and sustaining me, in short, this reality is my Lord. The setting of the star means the inadequacy of the knowledge primarily acquired on the basis of the senses, the discovery that things are rarely as they appear to be. It also means that the part of reality which is known through the senses necessarily exists for a temporary period and must inevitably pass away. This does not satisfy a true seeker. He loves not those that set. The ultimate reality he is searching cannot be temporary: it must be eternal.

Gradually, man's intellect develops and he learns to make better and better use of reasoning and analytical thinking. This is like the rising of the moon. With this brighter light, man's knowledge expands tremendously. He can correct many deceptive impressions created by the senses. For example, he can see a round earth behind the appearances of a flat earth. He can measure distances between, and sizes of, far-off heavenly bodies that to the senses appear so small and so near. On the basis of relatively few observations, he can erect far-reaching theories. It appears to him that human intellect is the very key to the understanding of reality. Some theory or philosophy becomes for him the final and absolute truth. He feels that he has found the equivalent of a God. But the moon also sets. A true seeker sooner or later realizes that the human intellect can provide no secure foundation for knowledge. Every picture of reality built by the intellect must sooner or later pass away through the process of revision. At this stage, a seeker gets concerned. He had two sources of knowledge within him: his senses and his intellect. Both have failed him. He has nothing left within him to depend on. He turns to the very reality he is seeking and seeks for help. He then undergoes a spiritual experience. He sees the brightest light of all, which like the sun, seems to illuminate everything. The seeker thinks that this must be it. But, unfortunately, this is not it. The illumination does not last. The sun, too, sets. This is followed by the final stage in which man realizes that the ultimate reality is a transcendental reality.

But, despite its transcendence, man is very vividly aware in this stage of the purposeful presence and creative power of this ultimate reality. He experiences it as a person and wholeheartedly devotes himself to Him so much, so that, he can stand in His name before the entire nation. This is the stage of that certain faith to which God intended to lead Abraham by showing the dominion of the heavens and the earth. It is noteworthy that, in the Qur'anic history, Abraham does not concern himself with the question of whether he has a Lord, but only with the question of Who is his Lord. This is because there has to be a reality which is ultimately and completely responsible for bringing man into existence and sustaining him; even an atheist assumes such a reality, which for him is something like the Natural Process. Thus, the real question is not whether such a reality exists but rather what its nature is.

Conclusion

Does God exist? We have never seen God. We have never talked with God. That is why the Atheists believe God does not exist. They think, it is just a fantasy or a made up thing! Though, believe in God is the most significant thing in faith. If someone does not believe that God exists then he is in deep astray. Well, a lot of people argue whether God does exist. But if there is no God to this great universe then how does it function so perfectly and accurately? How does everything in it happen without a power behind it all? How can the stars and the planets stay up in the skies without anything to hold them? So, Richard Feynman, a Nobel Prize winner for quantum electrodynamics, he said, "Why nature is mathematical is a mystery...The fact that there are rules at all is a kind of miracle."^{xxvii} That means there is a One miraculous power and He is One God; Who is the behind of all these functions. Knowing God is absolutely central to the meaning of human life, for it is only in the context of intimate, personal relationship with Him that we experience eternal life. At the same time, there is no assignment more disheartening, no task more demanding, no challenge more overwhelming, than that of seeking to understand the being, nature, character, and attributes of the eternal Creator, who is Himself the ultimate source of all truth and the cause of all power. At last, we can decide that, a creator for the universe exists, that is one, He has a will and He is powerful, uncaused, immaterial and eternal.

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