

The Rationality of Faith: Examining Arguments for the Existence of God in the Light of Islamic Teachings

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Abstract

A theist believes there is a God, an atheist believes there is no God, an agnostic is unsure if there is a God or not. This study focuses on the Islamic perspective, aiming to explore the rationality of faith by examining arguments for the existence of God within the context of Islamic teachings. The research delves into the rich tapestry of Islamic thought, drawing from the Holy Qur'an, Hadith (traditions of the Prophet Muhammad), and the works of prominent Islamic scholars such as Imam Ghazali and Allama Iqbal. Through a comprehensive analysis, the study evaluates various arguments, such as teleological, cosmological, personal spiritual experiences, and moral arguments, as they appear in Islamic thought. These arguments are scrutinized through the lens of reason, logic, and critical thinking while acknowledging the intrinsic interplay between faith and reason in Islamic tradition. The research identifies the significance of faith as a powerful force in human nature, not immune to challenges and doubts. To address these concerns, the study explores how Islamic teachings embrace both intellectual and experiential aspects, providing a harmonious integration of intellect, emotions, and spirituality in the pursuit of faith. Furthermore, the study examines some common challenges to faith in the modern scientific age considering the role of revelation and natural theology in bolstering

the rational foundations of faith. It also investigates the concept of personal experience and intuitive encounters with the divine, acknowledging their importance in strengthening one's belief in God. By examining arguments within the context of Islamic teachings, this study contributes to the broader discourse on faith's rationality, offering valuable insights into the intellectual and spiritual dimensions of the human journey in seeking a connection with the divine.

Keywords: Faith, Moral Law, Existence of God, Cosmology, Teleology, Spiritual Experience

Introduction

Human nature is not immune to alteration by misguided doctrines and philosophies that contradict our healthy instincts, even ideas that claim a basis in theism. In the modern world, there are several challenges that can potentially affect a person's faith in God. These challenges may vary depending on individual perspectives and experiences. Here are four common challenges to faith in the modern world:

Scientism and Scientific advancements: As science continues to make remarkable progress in explaining the natural world, some individuals may find it difficult to reconcile religious beliefs with some scientific discoveries and explanations. The perceived conflict between certain religious teachings and scientific theories such as evolution,¹ can lead to doubts about the existence or relevance of God. Scientism² has also brought a big challenge to traditional faith.

Secularism and skepticism: Many individuals are becoming increasingly secular with a growing emphasis on rationality and skepticism.³ This shift is creating an environment where religious beliefs are questioned or seen as outdated. People may face pressure to conform to prevailing secular norms, leading to doubts or a diminished sense of religious conviction.

Suffering and the problem of evil: The existence of suffering and evil in the world poses a profound challenge to the belief in an all-powerful and benevolent God. When individuals witness or experience intense pain, tragedy, or injustice, they may question why a loving God would allow such

events to occur. This is an old age challenge and often referred to as the problem of evil.

Moral and ethical dilemmas: Modern ethical dilemmas, such as advances in reproductive technologies, end-of-life decisions, or contentious social issues can clash with traditional religious teachings. As people grapple with these complex moral questions, they may find it difficult to align their personal convictions with the teachings of their faith, leading to doubts or internal conflicts.

We can navigate and deal with these challenges, either by engaging in philosophical and theological discussions, seeking guidance from Holy Scriptures especially the Holy Qur'an, or developing a more personal and nuanced understanding of our faith.

Arguments for the Existence of God

In the pursuit of faith, the engagement with arguments can indeed hold value, yet it cannot singularly encompass the vast complexity of this profound journey. Each person's faith is deeply woven with their unique life experiences, social context, innermost feelings, and transcendent encounters. It is a realm where reason and logic may not be the sole guiding lights, but rather, the heart and soul play more crucial roles. Recognizing this diversity, a comprehensive approach to faith development emerges from embracing a harmonious integration of senses, intellect, emotions, and spirituality.

The development of faith occurs through three distinct pathways: scientific consciousness, philosophical investigation, and personal experiences. The Holy Qur'an adeptly incorporates all these types of arguments to foster faith in God. It encompasses heart-based appeals, tapping into intuitive experiences; mind and sense-based appeals, delving into philosophical and scientific aspects; and traditional appeals, drawing upon historical foundations from past prophets and their traditions. By adopting such a comprehensive approach, the Holy Qur'an provides a rich and multifaceted path for individuals seeking to strengthen their faith.

Exploring arguments for the existence of God can help individuals navigate doubt and skepticism. This process can lead to a more robust and mature faith that has wrestled with and addressed doubts and uncertainties particularly in the modern world. These arguments can stimulate intellectual

curiosity and mental engagement. They offer an opportunity to explore philosophical, theological, and metaphysical concepts, encouraging critical thinking and reasoning skills. Engaging with these arguments allows individuals to delve deeper into their beliefs and provides a basis for thoughtful reflection and dialogue. By examining different philosophical or theological arguments, individuals can enhance their confidence in their faith, providing a sense of validation and reassurance.

Here are prominent ways of presenting arguments for the existence of God in the framework of Islamic teachings:

1. The Cosmological Argument

The cosmological argument, both philosophical and theological, endeavors to prove God's existence through an exploration of the universe's origins. A classic tool employed by philosophers and theologians, this argument highlights the notion of a Creator. It draws inference from concepts such as motion, contingency, change, and causation. Essentially, the argument contends that the universe's past cannot stretch infinitely, implying a commencement point – an initial occurrence that aligns with the modern concept of the Big Bang.

The argument begins by observing that everything in the universe has a cause or an explanation for its existence. This is based on the principle of causality, which suggests that every event has a preceding cause. If we trace the chain of causation backward in time, we are faced with the question of what caused the first cause. This leads to a problem of infinite regress - a never-ending chain of causes that does not provide a satisfactory explanation for the existence of the universe.

To avoid an infinite regress, the cosmological argument posits the existence of a first cause or an uncaused cause that initiated the chain of causation. This first cause is argued to be necessary to set everything else in motion. The first cause is seen as a necessary being, one that must exist by its very nature and does not rely on anything else for its existence. It is argued that this necessary being is what we refer to as God.

While the Qur'an does not present the cosmological argument in the same structured way as in philosophy, it does present argument for the existence of a Creator or God who brought the universe into existence. For example,

following verses apply cosmological argument: A verse in Surah al-Anbiya says:

أَوَلَمْ يَرِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّ السَّمُوتِ وَالْأَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ أَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ⁴
“Have those who disbelieved not considered that the heavens and the earth were a joined entity, and We separated them and made from water every living thing? Then will they not believe?”

Two verses in Surah al-Tur present cosmological argument more logically:

أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمْ الْخَالِقُونَ أَمْ خَلَقُوا السَّمُوتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بَلْ لَا يُوقِنُونَ⁵
“Have they been created without a Creator? Or, are they their own creators? Or, have they created the heavens and the earth? The fact is that they lack faith.”

In these verses the Qur'an mentions four possibilities to explain how something was created or came into existence. Let us break down the argument:

- Created by nothing: “or were they created by nothing?”
- Self-created: “or were they the creators of themselves?”
- Created by something created: “or did they create the heavens and the Earth?”, which implies a created thing being ultimately created by something else created.
- Created by something uncreated: “Rather, they are not certain”, implying that the denial of God is baseless, and therefore the statement implies that there is an uncreated creator.

Following verses also underscore that it is Allah who created this universe:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ وَهُوَ أَهْوَنُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَهُ الْمَثَلُ الْأَعْلَىٰ فِي السَّمُوتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ⁶

“It is He Who creates in the first instance, and it is He Who will repeat the creation, and that is easier for Him. His is the loftiest attribute in the heavens and the earth. He is Almighty, the most Wise.”

اللَّهُ يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ⁷

“Allah begins creation; then He will repeat it; then to Him you will be returned.”

فَاطِرُ السَّمُوتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَمِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ أَزْوَاجًا ۚ يَذُرُّكُمْ فِيهِ ۚ لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ ۚ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ⁸

"[He is] Creator of the heavens and the earth. He has made for from yourselves mates, and among the cattle, mates; He multiplies you thereby. There is nothing like Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing."

An important verse further clarifies:

بَدِيعُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ صَاحِبَةٌ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ
ذَٰلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَاعْبُدُوهُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْأَبْصَارَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ⁹

"He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth. How can He have a son when He has had no mate? And He has created everything, and He has full knowledge of all things. (6:102) Such is Allah, your Lord. There is no god but He - the Creator of all things. Serve Him alone - for it is He Who is the guardian of everything. No visual perception can encompass Him, even though He encompasses all visual perception. He is the All-Subtle, the All-Aware."

The cosmological argument seeks to establish the existence of a Creator based on the logical inference from the observation of causation within the universe. It has been debated and refined by theologians and philosophers over centuries and continues to be a subject of discussion within the realm of philosophy of religion.

2. The Teleological Argument

In teleological argument the existence of God is established through the design, order, complexity, and purpose observed in the natural world. This argument states that the intricate and organized nature of the universe implies the existence of an Intelligent Mind. Teleology, derived from the Greek words "telos" (end) and "logos" (study of), refers to the doctrine of design and purpose in the natural world.

The teleological argument goes on to say that the universe appears to be finely tuned with a specific set of physical constants, laws, and initial conditions that allow for the emergence of life. If any of these factors were even slightly different, life as we know it might not exist. This apparent fine-tuning suggests that some intelligence designed the universe with the purpose of supporting life.

Proponents of the teleological argument often use the analogy of a watch and a watchmaker. This argument became popular in the 18th century when the

philosopher William Paley compared the natural world to a watch. Paley says: *"Just as watches are set in motion by watchmakers, after which they operate according to their pre-established mechanisms, so also was the world begun by God as the Creator, after which it – and all its parts have operated according to their pre-established natural laws."*¹⁰

Paley's comparison suggests that just as watches are crafted by watchmakers and then follow predetermined mechanisms, the world was initiated by God as its Creator, and since then, all its components have adhered to established natural laws. This analogy, however, falls short when applied to the relationship between the Creator and the creation. Unlike a watch, which operates independently once created, the Creator God continues to play an active role as the Master of the universe. The human race, in particular, occupies a distinct position, having been uniquely designed and brought into existence. As such, they cannot be governed solely by pre-established laws and defined mechanisms.

Human beings possess emotional, psychological, moral, and spiritual needs that set them apart from inanimate objects like watches. These unique qualities necessitate a direct involvement and active relationship with their Creator. While natural laws govern the physical aspects of the universe, humans require a deeper connection with the divine to fulfill their purpose and find meaning in their existence. This direct interaction with their Creator is essential for humans to lead fulfilling lives and align their actions with higher principles.

Holy Qur'an states that to *Him alone belong the creation and the command:*

أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ¹¹

"Lo! His is the creation and His is the command. Blessed is Allah, the Lord of the universe."

The teleological argument is not new. The Holy Qur'an had already presented a similar argument long before the 18th-century Western debates on analogy and theology. For instance, following verses illustrate the teleological argument:

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا. وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْعَفُورُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا مَّا تَرَى فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِن تَفَوتٍ فَأَرْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَى مِن فُطُورٍ ثُمَّ أَرْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنقَلِبْ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ¹²

"[He] Who created death and life that He might try you as to which of you is better indeed. He is the Mightiest, the Most Forgiving [He] who has created the seven heavens one above another, you can see no fault in the creations of the Most Beneficent. Then look again: "Can you see any rifts?" Then look again and yet again, your sight will return to you in a state of humiliation and worn out."

Following verses explain that the universe is a purposeful creation:

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا بَطْلًا ذَلِكَ ظَنُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنَ النَّارِ¹³

"And We did not create heaven and the earth and that between them aimlessly. That is the assumption of those who disbelieve (that the universe is aimless), so woe to those who disbelieve from the Fire."

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لْعِبِينَ¹⁴

"And We did not create heaven and the earth and that between them in play."

Let us read more important verses on the same subject:



15

عَذَابَاتِ النَّارِ،

from the punishment of the Fire."

أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ¹⁶

"Did you imagine that We created you without any purpose, and that you will not be brought back to Us?"

The Qur'an persistently draws attention to the signs (*āyāt*) in the nature that demonstrate the grand design and purpose. We are called to engage in thoughtful reflection upon all of these signs and the process of creation as a means of recognizing the meaning and purpose to attain conviction and faith:

أَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ مَّا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ بِلِقَائِ رَبِّهِمْ لَكَافِرُونَ¹⁷

“Have they not thought about their own selves? God did not create the heavens and earth and everything between them without a serious purpose and an appointed time, yet many people deny that they will meet their Lord.”

أَفَلَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَى الْإِبِلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ وَإِلَى السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ رُفِعَتْ وَإِلَى الْجِبَالِ كَيْفَ نُصِبَتْ وَإِلَى الْأَرْضِ كَيْفَ سُطِحَتْ¹⁸

“Do (these unbelievers) not observe the camels: how they were created? And the sky: how it was raised high? And the mountains: how they were fixed? And the earth: how it was spread out?”

We can infer from these verses that the existence of God is not implied merely by the order in the world but also by the surprising magnificence, beauty, and perfection of that order. The universe is an awe-inspiring place to start our journey to believe in the existence of God. Most of us, unfortunately, don't pause often enough to consider its remarkable mystery and complexity to develop cosmological and teleological understanding. The universe consists of galaxies; each galaxy is thousands of light years across; and there are estimated to be a hundred billion galaxies with a billion trillion stars. When one considers these facts, as well as the nature of life, it is hard not to be impressed, indeed almost overwhelmed, by the enormity, majesty, and mystery of our universe. This is true no matter what one's worldview is. Pondering upon the nature of the universe rarely fails to provoke wonder, awe, and curiosity in the minds of human beings. Such a perfect world could not be either the outcome of impersonal natural processes or without a meaning. Only the Intelligent Creator could have produced such a flawless masterpiece.

3. Argument from Objective Moral Law

The nature of morality has long been a subject of philosophical inquiry, yielding a multitude of perspectives and theories. One prominent ongoing debate revolves around the question of whether moral law is objective or subjective. The proponents of objective moral law theory argue that there exists a moral law which governs human behavior, defining what is right or wrong, good or evil. This objective moral law is seen as universally applicable and binding, giving individuals a sense of moral duty beyond mere personal preference. In this sense, objective moral law becomes a signpost pointing

towards the existence of a higher being, who is the source and foundation of moral values and obligations.

In this view, God's existence is intricately intertwined with the objectivity and universality of morality, lending a profound significance to the philosophical exploration of moral theory.

"If God does not exist, then everything is permitted." is the famous affirmation by the character Ivan Karamazov in the novel 'The Brother Karamazov' by a Russian philosopher novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821–1881).¹⁹ Of course, if you give up on God, it seems a lot harder to establish an absolute and objective morality. When moral values derive from society, government, or one's own self they, of necessity, may change as the laws and morals of society change.

Unlike the first cause and design arguments, the moral argument is not based primarily on scientific evidence. Rather, it is based on the premise that there is an inherent sense of morality within individuals, a feeling of "oughtness" that guides their actions. This understanding of right and wrong is believed to originate from God. It is seen as a genuine law, inherent in each person and preexisting in their consciousness. Holy Qur'an explains in the following

verses:

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا ۖ فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا²⁰

"And by the soul and by Him Who perfectly proportioned it and imbued it with its evil and its piety."

The argument states that all people have an instinctive sense of what is right and wrong. Even remote tribes which have limited contact with the outside world still have a sense of morality. The argument claims that because all people have this sense of what is right and wrong, such a sense must have come from someone or something outside ourselves.

Emmanuel Kant, a famous German philosopher, also believed in the existence of an objective and universal moral law, which he called the Categorical Imperative. According to Kant, morality must be grounded in reason, and moral law is based on pure practical reason. In his *"Critique of Practical Reason"*, Kant puts this by saying that there are two things that fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and reverence: *'the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me'*.²¹

Theistic view is that morality is somehow dependent upon the existence of God, and that moral obligation consists in obedience to God's commands. It includes the claim that morality is ultimately based on the commands or character of God, and that the morally right action is the one that God commands or requires. The specific content of these divine commands varies according to the particular religion and the particular views of the individual divine command theorist, but all versions of the theory hold in common the claim that morality and moral obligations ultimately depend on God.

The following verses explain some moral acts as the commandments of Allah but Allah does not force but exhorts us to do them. He guides us toward the right path but we are free to make our choice and are responsible for our choices.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُم لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ²²

"Surely Allah enjoins justice, kindness and the doing of good to kith and kin, and forbids all that is shameful, evil and oppressive. He exhorts you so that you may be mindful."

قُلْ تَعَالَوْا أَتْلُ مَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّي عَلَيْكُمْ أَلَّا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَ بِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَ لَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ مِنْ إِمْلَاقٍ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكُمْ وَإِيَّاهُمْ وَ لَا تَقْرَبُوا الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَ مَا بَطْنٌ وَ لَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكُمْ وَصَّاكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ وَ لَا تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَ أُوفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَ الْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ لَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا وَ إِذَا قُلْتُمْ فَاعْدِلُوا وَ لَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ وَ بَعْدِ اللَّهُ أَوْفُوا ذَلِكُمْ وَصَّاكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ وَ أَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَ لَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ذَلِكُمْ وَصَّاكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ²³

"Say to them (O Muhammad!): 'Come, let me recite what your Lord has laid down to you that you associate nothing with Him; and do good to your parents; and do not slay your children out of fear of poverty. We provide you and will likewise provide them with sustenance; and do not even draw to things shameful be they open or secret; and do not slay the soul sanctified by Allah except in just cause; this He has enjoined upon you so that you may understand. And do not even draw near to the property of the orphan in his minority except in the best manner; and give full measures and weight with justice; We do not burden anyone beyond his capacity; When you speak, be just, even though it concerns a near of kin; and fulfil the covenant of Allah. That is what He has enjoined upon you so that you may take heed. This is

My way -that which is straight: follow it, then, and do not follow other paths lest they scatter you from His path. This is what He has enjoined upon you, so that you may beware."

To uphold this binding nature of morality, the existence of God becomes a necessary condition. Without the divine foundation, moral values would lose their firm footing and devolve into subjective matters of personal preference. The weight of obligation would diminish, and moral principles would lack the strength and authority that comes from a higher, timeless source. The essence of the moral argument is that the religious worldview offers a better, more plausible overall explanatory account of the justification of this objective moral order than the secularist worldview. It emphasizes the necessity of a realm of ultimate justice and posits that belief in God is essential to maintain rationality in upholding objective moral values. Without God, there would be no sufficient foundation for objective morality, and the sense of moral obligation and the universal nature of moral values would be challenging to explain.

4. The Innate Religious Belief Argument

The Innate Religious Belief argument concludes that belief in God or a higher power is an inherent and natural aspect of human psyche. Proponents of this argument postulate that humans are predisposed to believe in the divine and to seek meaning and connection with a higher power. This concept is based on the observation that religious beliefs and practices are present in nearly all human societies throughout history, indicating a universal aspect of human culture.

Several researchers and scholars from various fields, including anthropology, psychology, and cognitive science, have put forth theories to support the existence of this religious instinct. Here are two key points that contribute to this perspective:

Agency Detection: Humans have a natural tendency to attribute agency or intention to events or phenomena in their environment. This means that when faced with unexplained or significant events, individuals may instinctively seek a cause or explanation, often attributing it to a higher power or supernatural force.

Intuitive Teleology: Humans tend to see purpose and intention in natural events and phenomena. For example, when witnessing the complexity and orderliness of the natural world, individuals may intuitively perceive it as being designed or created for a purpose, leading to beliefs in a higher power or creator.

The argument goes on to say that all human beings are born with a natural disposition towards belief in God, which is referred to as *fitrah* in Arabic. Human beings can sense the existence of higher power or God by pure instinct and innate nature even without any other source of knowledge. In Islamic teachings, this is because God took a primordial covenant with every person before the world was created that they would recognize their Lord.

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَى شَهِدْنَا أَنْ تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ²⁴

“And ‘remember’ when your Lord took out the offspring from the loins of the Children of Adam and made them bear witness about themselves, He said, ‘Am I not your Lord?’ and they replied, ‘Yes, we bear witness.’ So you cannot say on the Day of Resurrection, ‘We were not aware of this.’” he primordial covenant results in the innate impulse within people to seek out the higher power that they can sense, as they have done in some form or another throughout all of recorded history, to the point that some scientists today argue that belief in God or a higher power is hardwired into our genes. God implanted a direct awareness of himself in every soul. We only lose touch with this awareness through sin or ignorance. An important verse explains this innate tendency in human nature is these words:

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ²⁵

“So [Prophet Muhammad] as a man of pure faith, stand firm and true in your devotion to the religion. This is the natural disposition God instilled in mankind—there is no altering God’s creation—and this is the right religion, though most people do not realize it.”

Certain extraordinary circumstances can trigger an instinctive turn towards faith in God. These situations demonstrate that when faced with intense emotions, existential threats, or profound experiences, people may naturally

rely on their innate faith as a source of comfort and understanding. Some examples of such situations are as under:

Near-Death Experiences: When individuals find themselves in life-threatening situations or near-death experiences, their instinctive response may be to seek divine intervention or pray for help without much time for deliberate thinking. During catastrophic events like earthquakes, tsunamis, or hurricanes, people may instinctively turn to their faith as a source of comfort and guidance, without engaging in rational analysis.

Miraculous Recoveries: Witnessing or experiencing seemingly miraculous recoveries from serious illnesses or injuries can reinforce a strong sense of divine intervention, leading individuals to focus on God without questioning.

Extraordinary Coincidences: Experiencing extraordinary coincidences that seem beyond explanation might lead individuals to attribute these events to divine intervention, fostering a deep connection with God.

Sudden Insight or Revelation: A profound revelation or sudden insight about the nature of existence and spirituality may trigger an immediate shift in focus towards God without the need for analytical contemplation.

Let us now read few verses from the Holy Qur'an on the subject:

وَإِذَا مَسَّ النَّاسَ ضُرٌّ دَعَوْا رَبَّهُمْ مُنِيبِينَ إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ إِذَا آذَاهُمْ مِنْهُ رَحْمَةٌ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ يُشْرِكُونَ
لِيَكْفُرُوا بِمَا آتَيْنَاهُمْ فَتَمَتَّعُوا فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ²⁶

"When something bad happens to people, they cry to their Lord and turn to Him for help, but no sooner does He let them taste His blessing then-lo and behold! - some of them ascribe partners to their Lord, showing no gratitude for what We have given them."

فَإِذَا رَكِبُوا فِي الْفُلِّ دَعَوْا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ فَلَمَّا نَجَّيْنَاهُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ إِذَا هُمْ يُشْرِكُونَ²⁷
"Whenever they go on board a ship, they call on God, and dedicate their faith to Him alone, but once He has delivered them safely back to land, see how they ascribe partners to Him."

قُلْ مَنْ يُنَجِّيكُمْ مِنَ ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ تَدْعُونَهُ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً لَّئِنْ أَنْجَيْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ
قُلِ اللَّهُ يُنَجِّيكُمْ مِنْهَا وَمِنْ كُلِّ كَرْبٍ ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ تُشْرِكُونَ²⁸

"Say (O Prophet!), 'Who is it that saves you from the dark depths of land and sea when you humbly and secretly call to Him (and say), 'If He rescues us from this, we should truly be thankful'? Say, 'God rescues you from this and every distress; yet you still worship others besides Him.'"

5. Personal Spiritual Experiences

The 'personal spiritual encounters' with the divine can be a strong and profound evidence for the existence of a higher power. These experiences may vary widely and can include feelings of deep connection, inner peace, transcendence, mystical encounters, and a sense of purpose or meaning in life. The proponents of spiritual experience argue that these encounters are so profound and transformative that they cannot be easily dismissed as mere psychological or neurological phenomena. They believe that such experiences provide a direct and intimate connection with a higher reality and serve as a form of direct communication with the divine.

Islamic thinkers such as Imam Ghazali and Allam Iqbal while acknowledging the importance of logical investigation and intellectual pursuit of the knowledge of God, recognize the limits of rational inquiry and argue that rationalistic approaches alone are insufficient to attain true knowledge of God.

Imam Ghazali critiqued the philosophical arguments of his time and their approach to understanding God's existence through reason alone. He argued that reason and rationality alone could not provide definitive proof of God's existence. Instead, Ghazali emphasized the importance of direct personal experience (mystical knowledge or "Ma'rifah") as a means of knowing and understanding the divine reality. Direct experiential knowledge of God surpasses the limitations of human intellect. This experiential knowledge brings about a level of certainty (*yaqin*) that surpasses mere intellectual speculation.²⁹

In Islam, spiritual experiences hold significant value and are regarded as a means of deepening one's connection with the Divine. However, the Islamic perspective on the authenticity and objectivity of spiritual experiences is grounded in certain principles and teachings. It is important to note that every spiritual experience may not be authentic. Islam encourages a balanced approach between reason (*Aql*) and spirituality (*Qalb*). While spiritual experiences can provide a deeper connection with the divine, they should not lead one to abandon rational thinking and critical analysis. Islamic teachings encourage believers to use their intellect to seek knowledge and comprehend the world around them.

Personal experience of God refers to an individual's subjective encounter or interaction with God. It is an intensely personal and often profound experience that is difficult to quantify or measure objectively. People who claim to have had a personal experience of God often describe it as a deeply spiritual or transcendent moment that provides a sense of connection, meaning, and purpose in their lives.

Islamic tradition suggests testing and verifying spiritual experiences by comparing them with the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith. Spiritual experiences should not contradict or supersede the principles outlined in the Qur'an. If an experience contradicts established Islamic principles, it is not considered valid. It encourages Muslims to seek knowledge from true sources and avoid falling into delusion or becoming influenced by falsehoods.

Skeptics argue that personal spiritual experiences are products of human psychology and brain function, rather than evidence of any external divine entity. They highlight that such experiences can be influenced by cultural, social, and psychological factors, and may not necessarily reflect the objective reality of a deity or God.

It's crucial to approach discussions about personal spiritual experiences with respect and empathy for the diversity of human experiences and beliefs. While these experiences hold profound significance for those who undergo them, they remain subjective and not universally compelling as objective evidence for the existence of God unless there are irrefutable proofs.

When an individual genuinely connects with the divine through personal spiritual experiences, it becomes a direct validation of God's existence. The transformative power of such experiences, coupled with the enhancement of personal virtues and moral values, is important evidence of the reality of God's presence in one's life.

Conclusion

Faith in Allah is not about turning off the brain and merely relying on emotions. It is a well-informed, rational, and practical state of trust based on the revealed knowledge, religious experience, deep thinking, intuitive reflection, inductive inference, and keen observation. The existence of God is manifestly self-evident and belief in God is deeply ingrained in the human nature on one side, it is also explicitly proved, on the other hand, through a

study of nature and physical phenomena by employing the systematic scientific, logical, and philosophical inquiries.

God is not the sort of thing one can be moderately interested in. After all, if God does *not* exist, there's no reason to be interested in Him at all. If God exists, then this is of paramount interest how to be properly related to His Great Being for the ultimate bliss, fulfillment, and salvation. If God does not exist, then we are probably here by chance and without any significant purpose. If God exists, then the universe may have a purpose and our own existence may not cease at physical death.

References

¹The theory of evolution is a scientific explanation for how species of living organisms have changed and diversified over time. It proposes that all living things share common ancestors and that the diversity of life on Earth has resulted from gradual changes in populations over countless generations. This theory is primarily associated with the process of natural selection, where certain traits in a population become more or less common based on their advantages or disadvantages in the struggle for survival and reproduction. The proponent most famously associated with the theory of evolution is Charles Darwin. Darwin, an English naturalist, developed his theory primarily through observations and research during his voyage on HMS Beagle in the 1830s. He published his groundbreaking work "On the Origin of Species" in 1859.

² Scientism is a term used to describe an excessive reliance on or belief in the methods and findings of science as the only valid or authoritative way to understand and explain the world. It's a worldview that holds that science is not just one way of knowing among others, but the only reliable and legitimate source of knowledge about reality and truth. In extreme cases, proponents of scientism might dismiss other forms of knowledge, such as philosophy, revelation, art, ethics, and even personal experience, as inferior or irrelevant compared to scientific knowledge.

³ Skepticism is a philosophical outlook that involves questioning and doubting the truth, validity, or reliability of various beliefs and claims, particularly those that are commonly accepted or taken for granted. Skeptics aim to critically examine ideas, evidence, and arguments before accepting them as true, often seeking empirical evidence and rational justification for beliefs.

⁴ Al-Qur'ān, 21:30

⁵ Al-Qur'ān, 52:35-36

⁶ Al-Qur'ān, 30:27

⁷ Al-Qur'ān, 30:11

⁸ Al-Qur'ān, 42:11

⁹ Al-Qur'ān, 6:101-103

¹⁰James K. A. Smith, Amos Yong, *Science and the Spirit: A Pentecostal Engagement with the Sciences*, Indiana University Press 2010) 54

¹¹ Al-Qur'ān, 7:54

¹² Al-Qur'ān, 67:2-4

¹³ Al-Qur'ān, 38:27

¹⁴ Al-Qur'ân, 21:16

¹⁵ Al-Qur'ân, 3:190-191

¹⁶ Al-Qur'ân, 23:115

¹⁷ Al-Qur'ân, 30:8

¹⁸ Al-Qur'ân, 88:17-20

¹⁹ <https://medium.com/the-philosophy-hub/if-god-does-not-exist-is-everything-permitted> Accessed September 16, 2023

²⁰ Al-Qur'ân, 91-7-8

²¹ Emmanuel Kant: Critique of Practical Reason, Translated by Lewis White Beck, (A Liberal Arts Press Book, The Bobbs-Merrill Company, INC. A Subsidiary of Howard W SAMS. Co Publishers, New York 1956) 162

²² Al-Qur'ân, 16:90

²³ Al-Qur'ân, 6:151-153

²⁴ Al-Qur'ân, 7:172

²⁵ Al-Qur'ân, 30:30

²⁶ Al-Qur'ân, 30:33-34

²⁷ Al-Qur'ân, 29:65

²⁸ Al-Qur'ân, 6:63-64

²⁹ Imam Abu Hamid Al-Gazâlî, El-Münkız Mine'd-Dalal (Dalaletten Hidayete), Tr. trans. Onur Şenyurt (İstanbul: Ehil Yayınları, 2017), 26-31