

The Creator of the Universe

Wilson: I know that the belief in God, the Creator of the Universe, is the first article in the Islamic faith, and that the denial of His existence puts a person outside the religion of Islam. But I do not know whether Islam offers any concrete evidence on the existence of the Supreme Being or whether it advises its followers to rely on the authoritative words of the Qur'an and the statements of the Prophet.

Chirri: Islam demands from its followers to believe in God, the Creator of the Universe, but it does not advise them to base such a belief on the statement of any religious book or any authoritative words, not even the word of the Holy Qur'an or of the holy Prophet. Our belief in a holy book, such as the Qur'an, or in a holy prophet, such as Muhammad, must be preceded by our belief in God.

A religious book is holy because it is introduced by a man whom we consider a prophet. Prophethood is conceivable only if there is God, because a prophet is a messenger of God. Our belief in God, therefore, must come before our belief in a religious book or a prophet, not vice versa. No religious book is believed by all people, and no prophet is universally recognized. Therefore, it would be futile to rely on an authoritative statement of a prophet or a holy book when dealing with an atheist who disclaims all heavenly revelations and denies the whole concept of God.

Wilson: Should I understand from your statement that Islam offers for substantiating the existence of God some universal evidence which may be considered even by those who are not committed to any religion, such as the atheists and the agnostics? If this is what you mean, what is that evidence?

Chirri: When our belief in God precedes any other religious belief, the evidence which produces such a belief must be universal and available to every rational being, whether committed or uncommitted to a particular religion.

The Holy Qur'an offers the universe as evidence on the existence of its Creator. The material world, its celestial bodies, the earth, and the other planets, are viewed by Islam to be the main evidence of the Creator of matter and energy. The material world is observable by the atheist as well as by the believer, by the illiterate as well as by the philosopher. One may reflect on the formation of the heavenly bodies and the existence of the matter and energy without being committed to any particular religion or

recognizing any religious book.

Wilson: But why should a person consider the existence of the material world as evidence of the existence of the creator of matter? Is it not probable that matter existed without a creator? Suppose someone views that matter or energy is infinitely old, and that it never was preceded by non-existence. Would you be able to disprove his views?

Chirri: It is very hard to accept the idea that matter is infinitely old.

When one says that matter or energy is infinitely old, one assumes that the material out of which the billions of stars were built, existed simultaneously. When we are aware that each star contains billions of tons of materials, and that the balance of the raw material is much more than the material which is contained in the stars and planets, we realize the improbability of such an idea. We cannot conceive that all these quantities of materials existed at once and that nothing of it was preceded by non-existence.

To say that only a portion of the material is infinitely old, and that the other portions came to existence at a later stage, is to admit the need of a creator, because the inanimate material does not increase by self-reproduction. Only living beings are capable of multiplying by self-reproduction. To allow any gradual increase in the material quantity is to admit the need of a creator.

Wilson: I may agree with you that matter and energy must have been preceded by non-existence. But this is not very obvious to every human being. Does the teaching of Islam suggest the consideration of anything in the nature that was undoubtedly preceded by non-existence?

Chirri: Yes, there is something which we all know, and it was born after the existence of the earth, namely: life. Our scientists state that earth was too hot (and some of them say it was too cold) for any kind of life to exist on it. It took the earth millions of years to become a suitable place for life. Life, therefore, is, undoubtedly, a newborn.

Science, however, tells us that life does not originate from non-living being. Pasteur's experiment, which took place in the 19th century, is still standing. Through his sterilized soup, he proved beyond any doubt that life does not originate from inanimate material. The scientists of today are still unable to disprove his conclusion.

The earth, along with its atmosphere, at the time of its formation was sterile and unproductive. Transforming the inanimate materials, such as carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, calcium, and iron into a living being could not, therefore, be done through a natural process. It must have been done miraculously. This means that the existence of life on this planet is a shining evidence on the existence of an Intelligent, Supernatural Designer.

Wilson: You have made it very clear. As a matter of fact, the scientists for several decades have tried ceaselessly to unseal the secret of life and to explain its commencement on this planet. But their

intensified efforts so far did not produce any substantial knowledge in this field. The presence of life on this planet is, no doubt, a great wonder that could not happen without a supernatural cause. Man has unsealed many secrets in the universe, advanced in his scientific and technical knowledge, and even landed on the moon; but in spite of all this, he is still unable to produce a leaf of a plant or a seed of an apple.

Wilson: Now I would like to ask you if the Qur'an cites the existence of life on our planet in substantiating the existence of God?

Chirri: Yes, the Holy Qur'an does cite the transformation of the inanimate earth elements into living being as a sign of God's existence:

"...and a sign to them is the dead earth: We made it alive and brought forth from it grain so they eat of it and We made therein gardens of date-palms and grapes, and We made springs to flow forth therein." 36:33-34

Wilson: So far, you have answered many important questions about the existence of God, but there is one more important question you have not dealt with: Why can we not see God?

Chirri: From our previous discussions, it became clear that the Creator of the universe must be Absolute and Unlimited. He encompasses the whole universe. He is Omnipresent and never absent from anywhere. With His Omnipresence, His visibility is not going to make us believe in Him or know Him. His visibility would be very destructive to us. Before we know Him with His Omnipresence, we would perish. His visibility would be blinding to every human being.

Suppose that the air (which exists only in a very limited space) is visible. It would have a color, and we would not be able to see anything but the air because it fills the atmosphere. Should this be the case, we would not be able to acquire our food or water, nor would we be able to find roads or shelters. If the visibility of the air which exists only in the atmosphere of our little planet would be so blinding and destructive, what would be the case of the visibility of the Creator who encompasses the universe? When we think of this, we realize how fortunate we are not to be able to see God, our Creator.

Wilson: If the Almighty is Invisible, how can we be sure of His existence? How would an atheist believe in a God whom he cannot see?

Chirri: In order to believe in something, you do not necessarily have to see it. You believe in electricity, yet you cannot see it. You believe in it only because you see its products such as light, heat, etc. If this is sufficient to make you a believer in the existence of electricity, the great universe should be sufficient to every human being to believe in the existence of its Creator.

Wilson: Give me an example other than electricity.

Chirri: Your very existence is a great evidence on the existence of Adam and Eve, or let us say the first

two human beings. You did not see Adam and Eve, but you believe that they existed.

To make it more clear: You came through your parents. Your parents came through their parents, and your grandparents came through their parents, and so on. You may continue going back until you reach Adam and Eve. If you deny the existence of the first two human beings, you would be eliminating the first generation of their children. By eliminating the first generation, you eliminate the second and what is beyond it. Finally, you have to eliminate your own parents. Then you have to eliminate yourself. But you say to yourself: I cannot do that because I am here. Then you have to say: Adam and Eve were there.

Wilson: You have made the matter clear. We have to believe in God. But how can we believe that He had no beginning while everything other than Him had a beginning?

Chirri: The Creator of the universe cannot be preceded by non-existence; otherwise, He would need another god to create Him; and that god, if he is preceded by non-existence, would need another god and so on. Thus, we would have an endless chain of gods without reaching a causeless cause to be the source of the existence of the universe. Then we have to deny the existence of the universe. We would also have to deny ourselves because we are a part of the universe.

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