

Aqeedah Corner: October 1991

The belief in the existence of Allah (SWT) is a fundamental part of the Islamic Aqeedah. Therefore it is important for all muslims to understand and substantiate their belief in the existence of the Creator. The Islamic Aqeedah requires us to submit to the will of Allah (SWT) completely and find no hardship in pleasing Him. However it is very hard to submit if the belief in Allah (SWT) is not firm in our hearts. Therefore an argument dealing with the existence of Allah (SWT) is important in two ways. Firstly, it concerns with the basis of our Aqeedah and secondly we hope it will enable us to become better muslims by recognizing the deficiencies in us, and the perfection of Allah (SWT) who is the Creator of all that exist,

Allah (SWT) says, "Verily, in the creation of heavens and earth, and in the difference between night and day are signs for those who have minds." (Al-Imran:190)

We are told in the Quran to contemplate about the universe and all that it contains in order to reach the conclusion that Allah (SWT) is indeed the Creator of all that exists. Hence we begin by observing all that is around us. We can identify three distinct forms of existence.

(i) Animals (including man)

(ii) Life (something that makes living different from non- living.)

(iii) Universe (including celestial bodies, elements that constitute the heavenly bodies and interstellar matter)

EXISTANCE OF THE CREATOR

Let us proceed to examine each of these cases separately. Our investigation should enable us to establish one of the only two possible conclusions regarding man, life and the universe. That, either man, life and the universe (all that we observe) are limited, and therefore a creation, or it is infinite and needs no creator. The term "limited" needs further explanation. First of all it is a description of essence. In other words it is an attribute or characteristic of an object. In the following essay the word "limited" is used in an all encompassing and a very general meaning. "Limited", therefore includes depending (suggesting a "need"), a measure of size, a slot in time etc...

Man (and other animals) is clearly dependent in everything he does. For example, he depends on food and water to survive, on other men/women to live in a society. Various relationships exist in a society, and each serves to fulfil a certain "need" that man has. Man is limited in size, knowledge and power. Hence it is sufficiently established that man's sustenance is beyond his control. Therefore man is limited in all aspects of his existence.

As for life, it is manifested in the living things. We cannot observe it, but we sense the effects of its presence. Hence, we know it exists, and is separate from us or the rest of matter. But life is also limited. Both in physical dimension and in time. It is manifested only in finite bodies, therefore it cannot be considered infinite. It starts with birth and ends with death.

Therefore it occupies a definite time slot.

Lastly, the universe (planets, stars, interstellar matter) is indeed a large expanse that we live in. But its immense dimensions should not mislead us to conclude it is infinite. Our observation regarding the universe suggests, quite the opposite view. We know that the planets, stars and intergalactic matter make up the universe. Moreover, these are finite objects by themselves. And since a collection of "finite" objects will always result in a larger but still finite body, likewise the universe being a larger set of finite objects, by necessity remains finite. Furthermore, simply because we fail to perceive the end of the universe does not imply it has no end! Also worth noting is the process of addition does not transform the attributes of the operands. Hence limited objects will not transform into infinite objects simply by becoming greater in number. (See preceding paragraph for the meaning of the word "limited".) An example to clarify this point is that adding more sheep to a herd will not make them horses. The result is simply a larger (but finite) herd. Therefore everything that we observe is limited. The obvious question that we should ask ourselves is who limited us and all that is in the universe? It can only be some one who is infinite in every aspect of His existence.

He should be above any prescribed limits (either of time, size, power, knowledge etc...) Therefore He cannot be a creation of anybody else. Also the possibility that He is self created is to be ruled out because it implies a contradiction. He should not depend on anything for His sustenance. For if He does, he becomes limited and therefore He is not the "infinite" that we are talking about. Hence only infinite and eternal can be the requirements of independence. Now since we already exist, then His existence becomes an inevitable necessity. Therefore what we just described were the conditions of the creator, who created all that exists in the universe. It is Allah (SWT), the Supreme, the Lord of the universe. Acknowledging the existence of Allah (SWT) is undoubtedly the only correct answer to our inquiries into the origin of the universe, man and life. Moreover when we truly accept this answer, we will find it not only intellectually convincing but also in harmony with the human nature. The instinct of worshipping in man can now be rightly satisfied. While the ignorant ones may satisfy their instinct of worshipping by whatever that meets their immediate need, the one that Allah (SWT) guides submits only to Him. And it is the submission to Allah (SWT) which raises man to his rightful place as Allah's best creation. All other form of submissions are intellectually invalid.

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