

God In The Quran - A Metaphysical Study

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The present work is a thesis written based on the subject of the existence of God. The work explains the existence of God, the attributes of God from philosophical point of view and the point of view of the Quran.

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Translator's Note

The present book is a metaphysical study, dealing with different philosophical arguments for the existence of God, with special reference to the concept of God in the Qur'an. The author believes that the metaphysical teachings of the Qur'an constitute the most important part of the knowledge.

The study is based on the original sources. The author quoted from the different texts to enable the reader to compare the different views. The book is divided into six chapters including introduction. After elaborating the main thrust of his treatise, he embarks upon discussing about the term metaphysics and metaphysical issues with reference to the various philosophical arguments on the existent of God. He proceeds to expound the doctrine of monotheism i.e. Tawhid (unity of God) in the Qur'an. He discusses the issue of the Names and Attributes of God in the Qur'an and other Scriptures.

In translation of this book, I am deeply obliged to professor Waheed Akhtar, Head of Department of Philosophy, Aligarh Muslim University who encouraged me to undertake this work. Thanks to Mr. Shahyar Saadat who is the translator of a section of this book. I extend my thanks to Dr. Ali Athar for his valuable suggestions in betterment of this translation. I am obliged to IPO the publisher of this book for

publishing this authoritative and thought-provoking book.

Ali Naqi Baqirshahi

Introduction

The metaphysical issues of the Qur'an constitute the most important part of knowledge and this treasury of divine revelation is accessible to the seekers.

The Qur'an's metaphysical teachings are, in fact, the substratum of understanding Islam. Thus, studying them is essential for correct understanding of Islam. It has been for this reason that during the past fourteen centuries of history of Islam some of the most illustrious Muslim scholars have devoted themselves to the investigation and study of these teachings and have left many invaluable books on these matters.

Unfortunately, not all the studies that have been made and the books that have been written, were have been fully free from prejudice and personal bias in one way or another. Sometimes, we come across the works of some venerable and great scholars who have worked in this field, but certain prejudices and narrow mindedness affected their works. This, of course, reduces the validity of their works and weakens the trait of "pure and search for the truth" which should be the hallmark of all truly scholarly endeavours.

1. A New Objective Approach

All those who are aware of the deficiencies in the works written, hitherto concerning Qur'anic teachings, feel the need to understand the teachings of Islam, as portrayed by the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* in a wholly new method, that is, completely scholarly, objective, as well as free of any prejudice.

As a matter of fact, to carry out a scientific, objective, and unprejudiced research in the natural sciences is somewhat an easy task. However, a free research in these fields, also has suffered considerable setback in the past, but at present enjoying favorable atmosphere and have surmounted notwithstanding. Now, the fact is that a researcher who attempt to carry out an objective and investigative study of such matters may face with the question as: Is it possible, in religious studies, to use a completely investigative and objective method totally free form any subjective opinions or personal predilection?

The basic precondition for an objective research is that a researcher must be free from all kinds of predilections either personal, social, or political consideration, or of any other kind that may affect his understanding of the matter. The question is that is such freedom practically possible in the field of

religion? If an investigator belongs to a particular religion, would it not be inevitable that evidence proving the validity of that religion would attract him more strongly than the evidence which goes against it? What, anyhow, is the solution to this problem? Should we entrust the task of investigating such enterprise to those who do not believe in any religion? Such an approach may yield fruit in regard to certain minor issues, but it is not fruitful regarding the major issues of religion especially, the central question of a religion.

Not being committed to either side may result in an automatic tendency towards the other position. If a person does not believe in the existence of God, the truth of revelation, and the mission of the prophets, especially, that of the Prophet Muhammad (S), would tilt toward a position.

In our view, in the matter of religious studies, if there is any hope, it must be in those individuals who are not swayed by inclination. It is only these sorts of people who are apt to learning and prepared to exchange their views, if they are confronted with evidence which proves that the truth is something other than what they have believed until now. Such people believe that deep and unshakable conviction is something that only those beliefs based on clear and irrefutable evidence deserve. Such individuals, always, put their reliance on reasoning, and are ready to face any challenge, as long as they hold views firmly backed by evidence and reason.

2. A Step In This Direction

The book, being presented to the seekers, is intended to be a step towards the objective inquiry into the metaphysical issues of the Qur'an. The author does not claim that this step is a perfect one, free of any faults or shortcomings. he believes that an investigation of this kind should be carried out on Islam. Indeed, the author would thank God and consider it a remarkable success if his effort proved to be a new step towards an understanding of the real teachings of the Qur'an and opens a new inquiry into the realization of this ideal.

I hope that while treading on the path of metaphysical studies, a path full of ups and downs, we shall all be blessed with the guidance of God and be protected from any deviation.

Sayyid Muhammad Husayni Beheshti

Tehran

Shahriwar 27, 1352

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Chapter 1: From Natural Science to Metaphysics

1. The First Step On The Path Of Knowledge

There are certain scholars who are of the view that man's effort to gain knowledge began with an effort to understand nature. Of course, this effort was, at first, quite limited and shallow. It consisted of identifying qualities such as color, form, smell, taste, coldness, warmth and roughness in the objects and creatures with which man came into contact. This primeval form of human knowledge was not much different from the sort of knowledge that many other animals attain about their living environment.

The advantage of man over the other animals has always been that his esteem for knowledge did not stop at this basic level and he has constantly tried to increase his understanding and knowledge. Extensive historical experience shows that mankind has been ambitious in its pursuit of ever greater knowledge about the world and that it has refused to limit its efforts in this regard.

One of the most perplexing questions about human existence is: What is the motive behind man's limitless esteem for knowledge? Whether such esteem is one of the innate urges of mankind, a hunger that has yet to be fully satiated and perhaps will never be completely satisfied? or is it that esteem for knowledge and understanding is not an inherent urge of man but rather a tool by which he hopes to satisfy his instinctive and fundamental needs and desires?

It is not easy to give a clear and definitive answer to such questions, and we are not about to touch them in our present discussion. Whatever his motivations may be for seeking knowledge and wisdom, one thing is quite clear that is, having taken each step, man has prepared the next one on the path of learning and he has never stopped his struggles and efforts in his search for attaining deeper knowledge and understanding¹.

2. Scientific Knowledge Of Nature

After gaining superficial and simple knowledge of his environment, man set upon gaining deeper insight into the natural world. He made an effort to gain knowledge of the inner structure of natural objects, their relationships to one another, and the causes of their emergence and decay.

The invaluable information that man gained in his endeavor proved to be of much use to him, as enabling him to improve his standard of living. Having attained these tangible results, man was motivated to expand and intensify his understanding of nature. This comprehension got more deeper, more fruitful and more widespread, giving birth to the various branches of the natural sciences.

3. Knowledge Of "Form And Number"

Let us assume that man had become familiar with form and number in the early stages of his study of nature. Of course, his understanding of form and number was rooted in nature. In other words, he became acquainted with "concrete form" and "concrete number" not with "abstract form" and "abstract number".

Such simple familiarity with "concrete form and number" was very fruitful to man, to the extent that he reached that stage of intellectual development where he was able to form a single universal judgement from many notions of experience with regard to like objects, isolating the various qualities and characteristics of each object and forming a separate and independent concept for each of them. He also formed distinct concepts for form and number. These concepts were independent of all objects. In other words, they were abstracts. Thanks to his mental vigor and intellectual creativity, man created "mathematical numbers" and "geometric form" in his own mind, which opened a new inquiry into the intellectual exploration of nature, as a result, several researchers became interested in them and began to study them.

These researchers carried out the same calculations that people used in their everyday affairs on "mathematical form and number" and gradually discovered certain nexuses between numbers and forms, the nexuses which were unknown to them up to that time.

The discovery of these relationships also led man towards gaining a better understanding of nature and developing interest in extensive research into the nature of these relationships. As a result, a new field of study came to the fore which was later called "Mathematics".

4. Knowledge Of The Principles Of Nature

Scientific investigation into natural phenomenon and the causes of their coming into being, gradually, drew the attention of some researchers to a new problem. In their research, they had discovered that every natural phenomenon comes into being due to a number of causes. At the same time, every one of these causes is itself a natural phenomenon, the causes of their occurrence must also be discovered. If the causes of the emergence of these phenomena are nothing but a series of natural phenomenon, then we must look for the causes of their coming into being as well.

These thinkers were, thus, led into asking themselves: Does this chain of natural cause and effect continue indefinitely, or does it end at a point which is the origin and principle of all beings? And if this chain of cause and effect ends at a certain point, what is that principle and where is it?

The posing of such question was led to the creation of new branch of knowledge, the aim of which was to understand the principles of nature.

5. Metaphysics

Aristotle (384–322 B.C), the great Greek philosopher, wrote an extensive treatise on understanding the principles of nature. These works constitute a considerable segment of his entire scientific and philosophical works, In the classified collection of his philosophical and scientific works this section immediately follows the section on natural sciences. In his book *Al-first*, Ibn Nadim (438.H) writes that the arrangement of the books are as follows: logic, physics, theology², ethics³.

Is this arrangement made by Aristotle himself or by those who published his books after his death? *Moien Persian Dictionary* has this to say on this matter: "Aristotle placed this section of learning after the natural sciences (physics) and called it Metaphysics"⁴

But in *The German Dictionary, Brockhaus*, it is held that the arrangement in question is the work of Aristotle's publishers as he says: Metaphysics pertains to the ultimate causes of objects which are beyond observation and experience. Etiologically, metaphysics means after physics, so the publishers of Aristotle's books placed this section of his writings after the works on physics (natural science)⁵.

In any case, in the collections of philosophical works which have been left behind by the Peripatetics, that is, the Aristotelians, the section dealing with the "knowledge of the principles of nature" follows the section dealing with "understanding nature" that is, the natural sciences.

In his book, *Shifa*, Ibn-Sina (980–1036 AD) says: "This is the sixth art, in the seventh art we shall consider the life of plants, and in the eighth art we shall deal with the condition of the animals. At that point we shall end our study of natural science. Then we shall deal with the science of mathematics, in four arts.

These will be followed by theology. we shall conclude the book with a brief discussion of ethics⁶.

Ibn-Sina set out to discuss "Mathematics" after natural sciences. This is to be followed by "theology", that is, "the knowledge of the principles of nature". But in the published text of *Shifa*, the Aristotelian arrangement has been adhered to, and the section dealing with "theology" immediately follows the section on "natural sciences". The section of Mathematics is not included in this text at all.

¹. Nahjul-Balaghah, 2:241.

². Theology is a part of metaphysics.

³. Ibn Nadim, *Al-Fehrest*, p. 361.

⁴. Moien, *Farhang-e Moien (Persian)*.

⁵. Encyclopedia of Brockhaus.

⁶. Ibn Sina, *Shifa*, p. 277.

Chapter 2: Metaphysical Issues

1. Aristotle's Metaphysics

In a section of his *Metaphysics*, Aristotle begins with an examination of the views of his predecessors regarding the principles of natural phenomenon and their first causes. In his book (*Alpha minor*), Aristotle points out that gaining knowledge of reality is not an easy task.

To examine reality is something which is, on one hand, easy and, on the other, difficult. Proof of this statement is the fact that neither has anyone been completely successful in comprehending reality nor has reality been completely hidden from everyone, when we consider every one of the people who have spoken about nature, we see that some of them have totally failed to attain any knowledge of the truth while others have succeeded in knowing a little part of it. If, however, we were to add up all these bits and pieces of understanding, it would add up to a considerable sum. Thus, gaining knowledge of the truth is in this sense, easy (and accessible to all). It is with reference to this fact that we usually say: "Everybody know the door of this house".

The cause of its difficulty, however, is that it has not been possible so far for the whole truth to be recognized or a large part of it to be fully understood. There are, may be, two causes¹ behind it. Nevertheless, the difficulty has its origins in our own selves². So, it is not related to the realities of the external world, for in comparison with that segment of nature which is perfectly clear and unclouded, our reason³ is like the eyes of a bat before the sun⁴.

Aristotle goes on to say that in any case we are in debt to our predecessors for our intellectual development. This is so because they were either pioneers of learning and science or they acted to preserve the fruits of the research and scientific efforts of themselves and others and passed them on to us. We must therefore always be grateful to them and honor them and their works. In his book, *Alpha Minor*, Aristotle says: The chain of cause and effect must have a starting point. At this starting point we must have something which is a cause without being an effect of another cause.

In the third book, *Beta*, Aristotle deals with the views which are opposed to his own idea.

In the fourth book, *Gamma*, he provides us with logical arguments needed for this discussion, specially discussing the contradiction in detail.

In the fifth book, *Delta*, he explains the meaning of the terms to be used in the discussion which is to follow so that there shall be no misunderstanding regarding the meaning of each special term, and nothing other than what he intends should be understood by them.

In the sixth book of his *Metaphysics*, *Epsilon*, Aristotle discusses actual being, mental being, and

accidental being.

In the seventh and the eighth book, he discusses matters such as substance, accident, principles and sense datum substances.

In the ninth book, *Theta*, he considers such matters as unity and multiplicity and the problems related to them. And in the tenth book, he treats the question of movement and discusses the concepts of finite and infinite.

In the eleventh book, *Kappa*, he restates some particular portions of the third, the fourth and the sixth book in relation to certain topics in the natural sciences so as to prepare the mind of the reader for the main discussion which is to follow in the next discourse, that is, the twelfth book.

In the twelfth book, the subject of discussion is the first principle or the cause of the causes.

In the thirteenth and the fourteenth book he critically examines his predecessor's views regarding the principles of nature.

With this brief reference to the content of the fourteen book it becomes clear that amongst all the subjects treated by Aristotle in his books, the most fundamental one is the question of the first cause of all being which is God. God is the point where the long chain of cause and effect originates from and is caused by⁵.

This first cause is an imperceptible substance and the origin of the existence of all other substances either perceptible or imperceptible. Aristotle repeatedly speaks of the value and high station of that section of philosophy which aims to deal with the first principle and the first cause. In one place he calls it "the holiest⁶ and the worthiest of the sciences⁷."

[2. Originology, The Fundamental Problem Of Metaphysics](#)

2. Originology (the Enquiry into the Ultimate Origin of Things) the Fundamental Problem of Metaphysics

Following the previous discussion, we can conclude that the fundamental problem of metaphysics according to Aristotle and Ibn Sina (Avicenna), is to find out the origin of the world. All other problems are subsidiary.

[3. Is Eschatology A Metaphysical Issue?](#)

No discussion of eschatology is to be found in Aristotle's Metaphysics. Furthermore, in other philosophical texts inspired or based upon the philosophy of Aristotle, fundamental problems relating to the hereafter, are treated in domain of psychology which is part of natural science. These fundamental

issues include the problem of the immaterialness and the everlastingness of the soul. Such problems are not touched in sections dealing with metaphysics. For example, in his book *Shifa*, Ibn Sina has discussed these problems in the sixth art and related it to natural science. Sadr ul-Muta'allihin (Mullah Sadra) (died. 1630 AD) in his introduction to his book *Al Mabda' va Al Maad* (origin and end) clearly states that eschatology is related to 'physics' (that is, natural sciences):

"I deemed better that this book should cover two worthy arts which are fundamental, and the result of two great sciences. i.e.:

1- Theology (*Rububiyyat*) and the separate substances (*Mufiiraqat*), which affiliated to general ontology and philosophy, which together are called *ethologia*⁸.

2- psychology, which is related to physics (natural science). These two are the bases of learning and wisdom, and being ignorant of them is harmful to man in the day of resurrection⁹".

Thus, in Mullah Sadra's view also, eschatology is not affiliated to metaphysics. We shall take up the question of how acceptable is this view. We shall devote a separate section to this issue. Now, let us continue with our discussion of, and investigation into, the question of the ultimate origin and the cause of being.

¹. It is either related to the shortcoming of perceiver or is concerned perception.

². That is, short coming of our perceptive faculty in comprehending the truth.

³. According to the text by man's intellect is the same intellectual ability of man.

⁴. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, p. 3-4.

⁵. Aristotle has referred many times to this point. For example, in the first section and the first and second book as well as the twelfth book.

⁶. Ross (tran), *Metaphysics*, p. 983.

⁷. Regarding this matter Ibn Sina makes the following statement in his book *Shifa* as follows:

'...and that is the first philosophy that deals with the most universal realities viz. being and unity. And that is a wisdom which in reality, is the highest learning about the worthiest subject. This is because such knowledge is the most valuable form of knowledge. It is certain knowledge the worthiest of things i.e. God and the causes secondary to the divine essence. In reality, therefore, this is the knowledge of the most fundamental cause of the existence of the world and knowledge of God. And the way that the divine science is defined, that is: 'knowledge of those realities whose existences are independent of matter, 'is well suited to it. (*Shifa*, *Divinities*, 10 and 11).

Somewhere else he says:

"...this science is also called 'the Divine Science' since the ultimate result of this science is knowledge of the Almighty... therefore it appears that this science is the highest and the most perfect stage of learning and its fundamental aim is to gain knowledge of a being which is entirely divorced from nature. (*Shifa*, *Divinities*, 15 and 16).

⁸. The Arabic version of theology means, "knowing God" or knowledge related to God (*Lahut*).

⁹. Mullah Sadra, *Al-Mabda wal-Ma'ad*, p. 4.

Chapter 3: Originology

Originology (The Enquiry Into The Ultimate Origin Of Things)

1. Proving The God's Existence

In philosophical and *kalamī* books, the section of theology usually begins with the issue of "proving the existence of the artificer of the world". In revealed scriptures, however, there is no such topic or problem. In such books, we, rarely, run into any discussion which is directly related to the issue of the proof of God's existence, it is as if, existence of God is simply taken for granted.

In his book *Reason and Revelation in Islam* A.J. Arbery, says:

"Greece at the time of Plato was the center of statements pertaining to the existence of God along with their proofs and arguments. This was first time in the West that men sought to enquire about their God. None of the authors of the Old Testament ever dealt with God's existence as a complex problem about which there could be any doubt for the Semite spirit found God in revelation itself. Moreover, what has just been said about Old Testament is, with only minor differences, applicable to the New testament as well¹.

An insight into that part of the Avesta which is available with us shows that taking for granted the existence of God is not peculiar to Semite people and their religious books. In the Aryan religious text also, the existence of God is taken for granted which does not require proof or logical demonstration.

In the Upanishads which are amongst the Hindu holy books, we sometimes run into statements which seem to put into question the existence of God and that of the first cause. Statements such as:

What is the cause? What is Brahma? Where have we come from? How do we live, and what is the base our existence?

In joy or sickness under whose will, are we?

O you who are learned about spiritual sphere, do we live in the different stages²?

However, such statements as seen above, seem to address themselves more to the "Who-ness" of the first cause pantheistically, rather than to the question of What-ness or His Being (ontological questions). Moreover, the Upanishads is mostly a book of philosophy and mysticism which enjoys a special position among the Hindus, and is like a revealed scripture. Indeed, Hindu religion itself is full of philosophical and mystical teachings quite similar to those Islamic mysticism (*Tasawwuf*) and other philosophical-mystical schools of thought.

The Hindu religion is enriched by the intellectual activity and contribution of numerous Hindu Sages. So, through the combination of all these teachings and rituals a religion has been formed called Hinduism: However, in the structure of this religion mystical and philosophical elements are more prominent than other revealed religions.

2. The Proof Of God's Existence In The Qur'an

According to many of the verses of the Qur'an, some of which we shall quote here, the environment in which this divine book was revealed, the existence of a Creator was accepted and even the idol worshiping Arabs did not deny the existence of the artificer of this universe:

وَلَيْنَ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ فَأَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ

“If you ask them, ‘Who created the heavens and the earth, and disposed the sun and the moon?’ They will surely say, ‘Allah.’ Then where do they stray?” (29:61).

And:

وَلَيْنَ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ نَزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوْتِهَا لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ ۗ قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ۗ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ

“And if you ask them, ‘Who sends down water from the sky, with which He revives the earth after its death?’ They will surely say, ‘Allah.’ Say, ‘All praise belongs to Allah!’ But most of them do not apply reason” (29:63).

And:

وَلَيْنَ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ خَلَقَهُنَّ الْعَزِيزُ الْعَلِيمُ

“If you ask them, ‘Who created the heavens and the earth?’ they will surely say, ‘The All-mighty, the All-knowing created them.’” (43:9)

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ مَهْدًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ فِيهَا سُبُلًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

He, who made the earth a cradle for you and made in it ways for you, so that you may be guided [to your destinations] (43: 10).

وَالَّذِي نَزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً بِقَدَرٍ فَأَنْشَرْنَا بِهِ بَلْدَةً مَيْتًا ۗ كَذَلِكَ تُخْرَجُونَ

And who sent down water from the sky in a measured manner, and We revived with it a dead country. (Likewise, you [too] shall be raised [from the dead].) (43: 11).

وَالَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا وَجَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنَ الْفُلْكِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ مَا تَرْكَبُونَ

And He who created pairs of all things and made for you the ships and the cattle what you ride on” (43: 12).

In several other verses of the Qur'an the idol worshipping Arabs are also confessing to the existence of God. One example is the following verse:

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ هَؤُلَاءِ شُفَعَاؤُنَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ قُلْ أَتَنْبِئُونَ اللَّهَ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

“They worship besides Allah that which neither causes them any harm, nor brings them any benefit, and they say, ‘These are our intercessors with Allah.’ Say, ‘Will you inform Allah about something He does not know in the heavens or on the earth?’ Immaculate is He and exalted above [having] any partners that they ascribe [to Him]!” (10: 18).

It is clear that the belief of the polytheists in the intermediary role of the idols between themselves and God signify their belief in the existence of God the Creator.

3. Can There Be Any Doubt In The God's Existence?

In the tenth verse of the chapter Ibrahim in the Qur'an, there is a sentence that says: "... is there any doubt about the God Who made the heavens and the earth?"

In religious discussions, it is repeatedly observed that some people have interpreted this verse to mean that the Qur'an denounce any doubt about the God's existence and consider the existence of God as self-evident for all those who contemplate the mystery of the creation the heaven and the earth. Some important interpreters of the Qur'an however oppose with this interpretation. To shed light upon this issue, we would like to first quote verses 9 to 12 of this chapter:

أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَبَأُ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ وَثَمُودَ وَالَّذِينَ مِن بَعْدِهِمْ لَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلَّا اللَّهُ جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَرَدُّوا أَيْدِيَهُمْ فِي أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَقَالُوا إِنَّا كَفَرْنَا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ وَإِنَّا لَفِي شَكٍّ مِّمَّا تَدْعُونَنَا إِلَيْهِ مُرِيبٍ

"Has there not come to you the account of those who were before you —the people of Noah, ^عd and Tham^عd, and those who were after them, whom no one knows [well] except Allah? Their apostles came to them with clear arguments, but they thrust their hands into their mouths and said, 'Surely, we deny that which you are sent with and most surely we are in serious doubts concerning that to which you invite us (14:9).

قَالَتْ رُسُلُهُمْ أَفِي اللَّهِ شَكٌّ فَاطِرِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَدْعُوكُمْ لِيَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ مِنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُؤَخِّرَكُمْ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى قَالُوا إِنَّ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا تُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَصُدُّونَا عَمَّا كَانَ يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا فَأْتُونَا بِسُلْطَانٍ مُّبِينٍ

Their apostles said, 'Is there any doubt about Allah, the originator of the heavens and the earth?! He calls you to forgive you a part of your sins, and grants you respite until a specified time. They said, 'You are nothing but humans like us who desire to bar us from what our fathers used to worship; bring us therefore a manifest authority.' (14: 10)

قَالَتْ لَهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ إِنْ نَحْنُ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَمُنُّ عَلَىٰ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَمَا كَانَ لَنَا أَنْ نَأْتِيَكُم بِسُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَعَلَىٰ اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

Their apostles said to them, 'Indeed we are just human beings like yourselves; but Allah favours whomever of His servants that He wishes. We may not bring you an authority except by Allah's permission, and in Allah let all the faithful put their trust. (43: 11).

وَمَا لَنَا أَلَّا نَتَوَكَّلَ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَقَدْ هَدَانَا سُبُلَنَا وَلَنْصَبِرَنَّ عَلَىٰ مَا آذَيْتُمُونَا وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ

And why should we not put our trust in Allah, seeing that He has guided us in our ways? Surely, we will put up patiently with whatever torment you may inflict upon us, and in Allah let all the trusting put their trust." (14: 12).

The people of *Nuh*, ^عd, and *Tham^عd* and other people who succeeded them argued with the Prophets of God who had come to save them regarding the contents of their messages and had declared openly that they did not believe the purport of the invitation being made by these Prophets. Did contain the message of these prophets with the existence of God, or did the idol-worshippers of these tribes accept the existence of the Creator and consider the idols as His visible manifestations who could provide for their needs and act as intermediary between them and their Creator?

In his book *Al-Mizan*, Allamah Tabatabai, supports the second view and clearly states that the dispute between these tribes and the Prophets, was about the oneness of God, prophethood, and the Day of Resurrection, rather than God's existence. From what Tabarsi says in *Majma al-Bayan* and what Sayyid Qutb says in *Fi Zalal al-Qur'an*, and from what others have said, one must conclude that they also

believed that the argument to have been concerned with the matters like unity of God, His complete control and power over this world, the prophethood of certain chosen people, divine reward and punishment of God in this world and the next, et cetera, not the question of God's very existence. In any case, the text of the statement of the Prophets is:

"... Could there be any doubt about the existence of God who created the heavens and the earth?"

This kind of questioning, automatically carries some doubt about the very existence of God. This is, especially, true with the addition of such qualities as such: the creator of the heavens and the earth, in which the Qur'anic word *Fatir* meaning "creatio ex nihilo" is used and this indicates that the issue under discussion pertains to the God's existence rather than His Oneness, In *Al-Mizan*, 'Allamah Tabatabai refers to this phrase as evidence to support his own view. He further said: "if the phrase has been as:

خَالِقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

Which means "the Creator of the heaven and the earth". Such maxim pertains to the God's existence but since the idol-worshippers do not deny the creator of this world, but are opposed to the oneness of God, thus, the phrase:

فَاطِرِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

Meaning "the Originator of the heavens and the earth" is used so that it should be related to the problem of the unity and the oneness of God³.

In our view however, the phrase

فَاطِرِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

Is even more appropriate for proving the God's existence than the phrase.

خَالِقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

Idol-worshippers do not deny the existence of God, but only do not believe that the affairs of the world are controlled by Him and worship is due to Him alone". Even supposing that such a thing can be true in the case of the idol-worshippers of Arabia at the time of the prophet Muhammad (S), can it also be true in case of all idol-worshippers in all ages so that we can refer to them to understand such verse which is related to *Ād*, *Thamūd* and other people of the past?

Moreover, does believing in the creator of the universe relate to the oneness of God rather than God's existence? So, we should accept that this verse is also related to the God's existence. Nevertheless, the idea that this verse of the Qur'an considers any doubt in the existence of God to be doubted in something self-evident, is not entirely justified. For by using the phrase:

فَاطِرِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

What is being emphasized and pointed out is the God's existence not to the self-evidentness of His existence. Moreover, according to some of the verses of the Qur'an doubt about the God's existence has not been completely ruled out in this divine book. For example, the chapter, *The Mountain*, is one of the chapters of the Qur'an revealed in Mecca before the Hijrah. This chapter first concerns itself with the question of Day of Resurrection which is extensively treated in verses 1–28. From verse 29 through verse 34, question regarding the prophethood of the Messenger of Islam (S) is raised. Then the discussion is expanded and possible doubt about the existence of God is brought up and the following verse is sent:

أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمُ الْخَالِقُونَ

"Were they created from nothing? Or are they [their own] creators?" (52:35).

أَمْ خَلَقُوا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بَلْ لَا يُوقِنُونَ

"Did they create the heavens and the earth? Rather they have no certainty!" (52:36).

The question will arise in the following verses whether man has access to the treasure of God's grace, or man himself is the source of power? Or has man access to the fountainhead of divine revelation?

(Verses 37 to 46)

Then in verse 43 the issue of the existence of a god other than the Creator is brought up and it is said:

أَمْ لَهُمْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

"Do they have any god other than Allah? Glory be to Allah of any partners that they may ascribe [to Him]!" (52:43).

Considering the order and the subject matter of this chapter which we have already mentioned, it seems that the verses 35 and 36 raise this question that in the creation of the world and of the human race, God has not had a hand and that all this has come into existence by itself.

Then, to solve this problem, it has used the "Socratic method" and by confronting man with a number of thought-provoking questions, awakening his innate reason by paying close attention to these questions so he should be able to discover the correct answers. The order in which these questions are presented is as follows:

1. Could human beings have come into being without any Creator?
2. Could they have been their own creators?
3. If man is his own creator, how are we to account for the creation of the heaven and the earth that existed before man?

It seems that by posing such deep and thought-provoking questions, the Qur'an is trying to awaken the natural logic of man, so that in answer to the first question man would say:

"No. If human beings are creatures, they certainly must have a Creator."

And in answer to the second question they would say:

"And if they are creatures they can never be their own creators." That is, not only human beings, but all other creatures also cannot be their own creators because a being whose existence originates from itself, has always been and always will be, cannot be called a 'creature'. Thus, we cannot say it is both creature and creator".

While their answer to the third question would be the following confession:

"Although man is very creative, and the maker of numerous wonderful, complex and beautiful things such as missiles, paintings, sculptures, cars, airplanes, and computers, he is clearly aware of the fact that he has had nothing to do with the creation of the heavens and the earth." Is it not therefore laughable that becoming enamoured by his limited power he should immediately hasten to claim that he is God and say: "If there is a creator in the world it is no other than man?"

Of course, there are other theories and speculations about the subject under discussion but the Qur'an has chosen not to discuss them. The point that we wanted to make, however, is that putting the existence of God into question is quite clear from the foregoing verses.

4. The Story Of The Prophet Ibrahim (A), Is This Story Related To The God's Existence?

In the verses 75 to 80 of the chapter *An'am*, *Ibrahim* is quoted as saying:

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ آزَرَ أَتَتَّخِذُ أَصْنَامًا آلِهَةً إِنِّي أَرَاكَ وَقَوْمَكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

(Remember) when Ibrahim said unto his father Azar: 'Do you take idols for gods? Indeed, I see

you and your people in manifest error.’ (6:74).

وَكَذَلِكَ نُرِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ مَلَكُوتَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلِيَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُوقِنِينَ

Thus, did We show Abraham the dominions of the heavens and the earth, that he might be of those who possess certitude. (6:75).

فَلَمَّا جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ اللَّيْلُ رَأَى كَوْكَبًا قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ لَا أُحِبُّ الْآفِلِينَ

When night darkened over him, he saw a star and said, ‘This is my Lord!’ But when it set, he said, ‘I do not like those who set.’ (6:76).

فَلَمَّا رَأَى الْقَمَرَ بَازِعًا قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ لَئِن لَّمْ يَهْدِنِي رَبِّي لَأَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الضَّالِّينَ

Then, when he saw the moon rising, he said, ‘This is my Lord!’ But when it set, he said, ‘Had my Lord not guided me, I would surely have been among the astray lot.’ (6:77).

فَلَمَّا رَأَى الشَّمْسَ بَازِعَةً قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي هَذَا أَكْبَرُ فَلَمَّا أَفَلَتْ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ

Then, when he saw the sun rising, he said, ‘This is my Lord! This is bigger!’ But when it set, he said, ‘O my people, indeed I disown what you take as [His] partners.’ (6:78).

إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

Indeed, I have turned my face toward Him who originated the heavens and the earth, as a hanīf, and I am not one of the polytheists.’ (6:79).

This story is not directly related to the issue of God's existence and is in fact concerned with the issue of the oneness of God; Oneness regarding the creation of the world and controlling its affairs, and oneness in worship.

Besides this, however, the point is that *Ibrahim*, in his investigation and consideration of the things of this world with the purpose of judging whether they are qualified to be God or not, has concluded that a thing which changes and has an end signify the existence of another entity that is self-sufficient and which has created it. Godhood, *Ibrahim* concluded, must be the property of that creator which rules, not the property of the creature which obeys.

Sadrul-Muta'allihin (Mullah Sadra) has related this interpretation to a logical argument of the proof of the God's existence based upon laws of the natural sciences, and has said: "In order to attain this end (proving the existence of God), naturalists have a special method. They have said that the heavenly bodies move and their moving is an obvious thing. This movement is neither a natural movement (the sort of movement the origin of which is itself and the gravity which exists between it and its original place) nor is it a compelling movement (the kind of movement which is against the natural tendency of the moving object and which is caused by the influence upon it of another object).

"There is only one explanation, therefore, for this movement and that explanation is that it is caused by something divine, something which is completely separate from matter that possesses infinite power and does not cause movement in order to perfect itself. If such a divine cause is necessary being in itself, then it is God. If, on the other hand, it is not necessary being in itself then it must be an effect of a necessary being which is God. Otherwise, we would have a vicious circle.

This is the path taken by the leader of the Peripatetics (Aristotle) in two chapters of his first book which is called "*The First Teaching*"; one in natural audition of physics and the other in theology and it is the same sort of reasoning that is set forth in the Holy Qur'an in the form of a story about *Ibrahim*, the Friend of God, (may God's grace be upon him, our Prophet (S), and his family).

As soon as Ibrahim saw the movement of the heavenly bodies, the way that objects on the earth were affected by changes in the heavenly planets, the way these planets changed their location, the differences of size and brightness between them, he realized that the creator of these planets, the one who has endowed them with brightness and caused them to move, can be neither matter nor material, and therefore he said: I shall turn to Him Who has created the heavens and the earth and I shall turn away from everything but Him; I am not one of the polytheists⁴.

In our view, identifying the said verses with the sort of reasoning mentioned by Mullah Sadra with the sort of characteristics he mentions for it does not seem appropriate.

As it is clearly understandable from the different parts of the verses in question, especially, from their final conclusions, *وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ*, 'and I am not of the polytheists', the subject of the verses is monotheism not proof of the existence of God. Of course, they do indirectly relate to the argument about the proof of God's existence but only in so far as the need of the changeable objects to the eternal is concerned without involving the astronomical movements and the complicated formulas.

5. Is Knowledge Of The God's Existence Something Innate?

In theological discussions the following point is repeatedly made: If knowledge of God is not completely self-evident, it is at least an innate thing. In this regard, usually the verse 30 of the chapter Rome is mentioned which says:

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

“So, set your heart on the religion as a people of pure faith, the origination of Allah according to which He originated mankind. There is on altering (the laws of) Allah’s creation. That is the most upright religion, but most people do not know” (30:30).

6. What Is Meant By Innate?

In his book, *Al-Mabda wa Al-Malid*, Sadr ul-Muta’alihin (Mullah Sadra) has this to say about this matter:

"...As it has been said before, (the comprehension of) the necessary Being is an innate thing because when human beings confront terrifying and difficult events they instinctively put their trust upon God and automatically turn to that Being which is the Source of all causes and which eases all difficulties. This is why, we see that most mystics prove the existence of God and His control over the affairs of this world by referring to their states of mind and awareness that observe in confronting with such terrifying events as drowning or fire".

Sadr ul-Muta’alihin (Mullah Sadra) refers to several verses of the Qur’an in connection with this discussion in which man’s gravitation to God and his taking refuge in Him during the times of wretchedness are spoken. One such verse is the following:

فَإِذَا رَكِبُوا فِي الْفُلِكِ دَعَوْا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ فَلَمَّا نَجَّاهُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ إِذَا هُمْ يُشْرِكُونَ

“When they board the ship, they invoke Allah putting exclusive faith in Him, but when He delivers them to land, behold, they ascribe partners [to Him]” (29:65).

He also mentions verses 22 and 23 of the chapter *Yunus* and verse 32 of the chapter *Luqman* which are about the same topic.

Careful scrutiny of these verses leads one to believe, however, that none of them is related to proving the existence of God through human nature. Note carefully the aforementioned verse, this verse is intended to draw man’s attention to the baselessness of polytheism and the inability of man-made gods in helping him during the times of danger. Thus, if this verse speaks of something innate, it does not refer to "the existence of the Almighty Lord", it is about the Oneness of God and the baselessness of polytheism.

This verse is calling on the polytheists who believe in God as the Creator but at the same time worship other gods, keeping in to motivate their senses in order to realize this obvious truth that these gods are impotent. One sign of this obvious truth is that clear innate reaction that even polytheists show when

confronted by dangerous and life-threatening situations in that critical situation, they pray only to God the Creator. Why should it be then that when they are safely delivered from these dangers they forget this truth, go to the temples and prostrate themselves before the idols and seek help from them?

The verses 23,24, and 33 of the chapter *Luqman* also refers to man's heedlessness of God and admonishes man not to be so ungrateful and sinful during the times of comfort and abundance for God may take away all the blessings He has bestowed on man and thus punish him for his sins and for his ingratitude.

The verse 30 of the chapter *Rum*, which considers religion to have a divine nature is also primarily concerned with the issue of monotheism and the testimony of human nature to the baselessness of polytheism⁵.

7. A Covenant Between Man And God (World Of Pre-Existence)

The verses 172 and 173 of the chapter *Araf* speak of a covenant between man and God which some scholars relate to the innate nature of belief in God and His oneness.

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ شَهِدْنَا أَن تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ

"And (remember) when your Lord took from the Children of Adam, from their loins, their descendants and made them bear witness over themselves, [He said to them,] 'Am I not your Lord?' They said, 'Yes indeed! We bear witness.' [This,] lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, 'Indeed we were unaware of this' (7: 172).

أَوْ تَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا أَشْرَكَ آبَاؤُنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا ذُرِّيَّةً مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ أَفَتُهْلِكُنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ

Or lest you should say, 'Our fathers ascribed partners [to Allah] before [us] and we were descendants after them. Will You then destroy us because of what the falsifiers have done? (7: 173).

This verse tells us about a dialogue between all men and God in which they spoke with God and bear testimony that He is their Creator and Controller of this World. This testimony is to dispel any excuse that human beings may set forth in the Day of Judgement. They could not say then that they were unaware, uninformed, and under the influence of their ancestors.

8. The Scene Of This Covenant

In the books of tradition and exegesis, we encounter various opinions about this matter.

In numerous traditions attributed to the Holy Prophet (S), his companions, the early interpreters of the Qur'an, and our Imams, the view has been expressed that in the distant past, God gathered all human beings who are from the lineage of Adam in the form of minute particles and in such state of being, they bear witness that He is the Lord, so that with this confession there should be left no excuse for any human being anytime in any place⁶.

In this view, especial attention has been made to "*Dhariyyah*" (atomic) which is a derivative of the word "*Dharrih*" (atom), and the scene and the stage (pre-existence), where all human beings were present in an atomic form and bore witness that God is the Creator and the Lord of the universe, is called the "*Alam Adh-Dhar*" (world of pre-existence).

To make the subject more comprehensible to the general public, some modern commentators have used the example of genetics⁷. According to these commentators, every human being is intrinsically and instinctively aware of the existence of God that He is one. According to this view, man is born with the natural propensity, or to use the terms in the natural sciences, with the genetic makeup, necessary for coming into possession of such knowledge.

These genes are passed on from one generation to another, making the new generation also receptive to knowledge of God. Those who hold this view also believe that this genetic propensity that exists in scattered form in all human beings existed in a highly concentrated form in the primitive man.

However, Hassan Basrī (21–110 AH) and many other commentators, especially the Mu'tazilites, argue that they see no evidence in this verse to indicate the existence of an "atomic" world in which all human beings in the form of minute particles gathered in one spot to make such a pact with their Creator. What this verse is pointing to, they say, is that there is innate understanding within man, which he is born with and which tells him that a Supreme Being must exist.

This fundamental and almost unconscious understanding flows into conscious and clear knowledge of God when the human being reaches the stage of emotional and intellectual maturity and awareness, so that in answer to this hypothetical question from God that "Was I not your God?" This answer will come from the inner being of man every day, "Yes, you are our Lord". Therefore, this Qur'anic verse is not a description of a particular scene from the primordial past.

On the contrary, it describes a scene in not too distant past of each and every human being when he or she was experiencing his or her first stage of growth and awareness. This stage of innate awareness and knowledge in the history of the human soul was followed by other stages in which the factor of environmental influence entered the scene and in many cases caused a weakening of the innate

awareness of God inherent in all human beings⁸.

9. Another View About The World Of Pre-Existence ('Alam Adh-Dhar)

In his Al-Mizan, vol. 8, pages 329 to 336, Allamah Tabatabai expresses another view about the scene in which the covenant between man and God took place. In his view, all human beings and all other creatures that came into existence in a gradual manner, were altogether in the presence of God Who is beyond time and place. To put it in another way, the gradual passing away of time and the notion of yesterday, today and tomorrow, is a reality experienced by us and other beings like us, who exist in time.

At this moment we face a certain thing, a moment later, we are a moment away from it. A moment after that, there is two moments distance between us and that thing. Tomorrow the distance between us is one day, and next year the distance is one-year long. This passage however, that increases our distance from the past and shortens our distance from the future, is inconsequential when it comes to God.

Today, we are neither closer nor farther away from God than we were yesterday because God's existence is not subject to the dimensions of time and space. Spatial and temporal distance between us and God is, therefore, a meaningless notion.

Keeping in mind the point just mentioned, one realizes that all creatures who exist in the continuum of time are in fact at the presence of God at the same time. It is as if all the descendants of Adam, generation after generation are together at the presence of God, and bear witness to His Being. This mass confirmation and testimony is unambiguous evidence that God exists and is the Creator and Lord of the universe.

What happens with man however, is that, falling into the river of time and the event and changes of the world, he becomes so involved, engrossed and fascinated with the changing scenery of the temporal world, that he forgets about that direct knowledge and experience of his Lord and Creator that he once possessed.

This forgetfulness is something similar to "forgetting one's self" which has been discussed by many philosophical schools of both past and present including Existentialism, as one of the most painful afflictions that man suffers in this world just as "life and its problems" damages the self-awareness of some people, to the extent, sometimes, that they forget their "own selves" completely, in the same way it also damages their "God consciousness", sometimes with such success that they become totally blind and ignorant of God even though He is manifest right in front of their eyes.

Through all the ups and downs of his life God was company to man whose heart was sealed, unable to perceive Him, the man walked around calling out: O God, O God

What was just recounted is a brief summary of the argument presented in *Al-Mizan*. In this discourse, Allamah Tabatabai discusses in detail and answers many questions which may be raised about "the covenant between man and God", and the relevance of the Qur'anic verse. His discussion is most fruitful and illuminating.

However, despite all the explanations offered by Allamah Tabatabai, it still seems that the relevancy of this Qur'anic verse to the idea of a primordial pact is based, more than anything else, on one's interpretation of its meaning. What can be said with certainty about this Qur'anic verse is that it briefly refers to a stage in man's existence in which human beings confessed that God was their Creator.

This confession was not strong enough to keep all people for all times on the righteous path of worshipping the one God, but it did have the effect of keeping their soul and conscience always ready and prepared to seek knowledge of God so that on the day of judgement none should be able to fall back on the excuse that "we were completely ignorant of this matter. This innate readiness to seek God is strong enough that it enables every human being to break away from the superstitious beliefs held by his parents and ancestors and to tread on the path of righteousness.

In other words, such a man could not say "my forefathers have always been polytheists and I merely followed in their footsteps. "But as far as the particular characteristics of this stage (where the pact was made) are concerned, no other details can be found in the Holy Qur'an.

10. Man's Passionate Quest For God – Another Definition For Human Nature

There is another relationship between man and God which could be regarded as: "*Fitrat Allah*" (divine nature). This relationship consists of the love of the Absolute, Absolute existent, Absolute perfection, Absolute goodness, and so on, that can be found in all normal individuals in the form, at least, of a simple inclination.

It is this inclination that makes him to remember God and pulls him towards God. And it is this very same tendency that in some people it reaches such an intensity and strength that it turns them into self-less and all sacrificing lovers and devotees of the Beloved. According to these thinkers, love of perfection and an inclination towards Absolute perfection exists even in those who deny the existence of God although they may be completely unaware of it.

Man is unaware of many powerful urges and desires which is recognized by the experimental sciences and is also the subject matter of the one of the most fruitful branches of modern human sciences, namely psychoanalysis. It should, therefore, be appropriate if the clearest and the most precise concepts developed by this science are used to study the various mystical states in order to discover scientifically, the principles underlying and governing them.

This would free us from relying on amateurish and unsophisticated appraisals and explanations of the subject which are mostly shallow and based on personal preferences and prejudices.

In any case, in the view of mystics, if men were to pay more attention to the innate love of, and desire for, perfection, and strengthen it through meditations, ascetic exercises, prayers and various forms of worships, they would finally be able to reach the stage where they would find God and know Him through immediate knowledge. This state of immediate knowledge and experience of God is such that it leaves no room for doubt and is identical with Absolute certainty. The mystics believe that the only sure path for gaining knowledge of God is this very path which begins with searching for God and leads, if pursued to its ultimate end, to God-realization. As in the Qur'an when it says to the Prophet (S).

فَاصْدَعْ بِمَا تُؤْمَرُ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

“So, proclaim what you have been commanded, and turn away from the polytheists.” (15:94).

إِنَّا كَفَيْنَاكَ الْمُسْتَهْزِئِينَ

“Indeed, We will suffice you against the deriders” (15:95).

الَّذِينَ يَجْعَلُونَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ ۖ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ

“Those who set up besides Allah another god. Soon they will know!” (15:96).

وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ يَضِيقُ صَدْرُكَ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ

“Certainly, We know that you become upset because of what they say.” (15:97).

فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَكُنْ مِنَ السَّاجِدِينَ

“So celebrate the praise of your Lord and be among those who prostrate” (15:98).

وَاعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ

“And worship your Lord until certainty1 comes to you. ” (15:99).

Thus, we could say that engaging in prayer, meditation, and worship is a method for attaining certainty⁹.

The intuitive knowledge and certainty attained by the mystics is similar to the knowledge and certainty one attains through empirical objects.

In the case of empirical knowledge, the best way to free ourselves from all doubts is to verify it by experiment, similarly the best way to eradicate any doubts about the God's existence is immediate experience. This immediate knowledge of God's is not gained through the physical eye but rather through the intuitive "inner eye", (*Basirah*) of the soul.

It is through this inner, intuitive knowledge that a mystic realizes that his beloved is real truth and not a fantastic figment of an overheated imagination.

11. Knowledge Of God Is Based On Clear And Simple Intuition

One of the significances of this approach is that to know God man does not need to involve in complicated arguments. Therefore, wherever the Qur'an talks about this matter it does not exceed this extent and focus the attention of man to his most basic and primordial perceptions and ask man to recognize and accept the undeniable and necessary knowledge of such approach.

In many cases, the Qur'an not even makes this much argumentation and contents itself with any illusionary and baseless nature of some atheistic idea or tendency, later encouraging man to deepen and expand his quest for God and base this quest on far stronger foundations. One example of such an approach is the case of naturalists (*Dahriyyah*)¹⁰.

12. Discovering The God's Existence Through Reflection Upon His Signs

In many of its verses the Holy Qur'an invites the wise¹¹, the thoughtful¹², and the vigilant¹³ to meditate deeply upon the world and its wonders and even upon the normal natural events and their causes, to gain knowledge of the All-powerful, All-knowing, Wise and Merciful Creator.

These verses are mostly intended to awaken man and draw his attention to the issues that arise after pouring the existence of the Creator, such as: Peerlessness, infinite Knowledge and Power, Sagacity, Kindness, and other attributes, especially the Power to resurrect man after his death, giving him an eternal life during which he would be either rewarded or punished in accordance with the kind of life he led on the earth.

In all these Qur'anic verses, however, to realize the metaphysical realities, man is asked to pay close attention to things of the world and to draw conclusions about these signs through the application of intuitive inner perceptions and judgements, thus attaining useful and reliable knowledge about the world beyond the senses.

With reference to the foregoing discussion, this question may arise as: if the whole universe and every individual part of it, from atom to galaxy and from mineral to man, are clear signs pointing to the Wisdom, Power, Will, Unity, Compassion, and other attributes of the Creator of the universe, would it not follow that the same universe is a clear and undisputable proof of the existence of the Creator Himself?

If the answer to the aforesaid question is affirmative, we must conclude that although the Qur'an did not set forth straightforward arguments to prove the existence of God because of the intellectual atmosphere of the people at that time. It used a method which could be equally fruitful in probing the existence of God and gaining clear and certain knowledge about the fundamental issue of His existence.

What these Qur'anic arguments rely on is that every created thing that we find in the world needs, ultimately, a self-sufficient Creator who has the wisdom and the capacity to have created the myriads of different beings. The innate need and dependence of all these creatures clearly indicates the necessity for the existence of that fully self-sufficient and independent Being

And the transitory-ness of every one of them indicates the necessity for the existence of a self-reliant and unchanging reality on which they are based. Maybe verses fifteen to seventeen of the chapter *Fatir* of the Holy Qur'an are related to this complete need of man for God and the conclusion that one must draw from it:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ

“O mankind! You are the ones who stand in need of Allah, and Allah - He is the All-sufficient, the All-laudable.” (35: 15).

إِنْ يَشَأْ يُذْهِبْكُمْ وَيَأْتِ بِخَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ

“If He wishes, He will take you away, and bring about a new creation” (35: 16).

وَمَا ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ بِعَزِيزٍ

“And that is not a hard thing for Allah” (35: 17).

It could be said then that in discussing the Attributes of God the Qur'an sets forth an approach and a method which could also be used in dealing with the question of God's very existence.

13. The Proof Of God's Existence In Aristotle's Philosophy

In his *Metaphysics* Aristotle¹⁴ repeatedly emphasizes the point that his aim is to discover the fundamental cause of things and the principle of nature using a method as befits a philosopher, a man of thought and investigation, and a free thinker.

In other words, he is looking for the original cause or the first cause, and he is not going to take the path of those who have faith in some dogmas which lack logical background. For example, in his book (Beta) he says:

"...But those who think like Epicurus and all others who have spoken of divine objects, they have contented themselves with convincing themselves and have never aimed to convince us. They did not bother to do this because they considered the primary causes to be the gods themselves"¹⁵.

"...It is therefore not necessary to carefully examine the view of those individuals whose philosophy is more like decorative ideas and phrases. What is appropriate for us to discuss and argue is the idea of those individuals whose statements are based on logic..."¹⁶.

Aristotle's quest for the ultimate origin of things is based on the general law of causation, that is, "the need of every effect for a cause". In his view, if everything in the world was a natural object and possessed movement then the existence of a thing which would serve as the originator of nature and movement would be unnecessary since there would be nothing in the universe except nature and moving substance.

In such a world, our knowledge would have been limited to the natural sciences and we would have no such thing as "metaphysics", "...If there should be no other substance except natural substances, physics (natural science) would be the First philosophy ..." ¹⁷

However, in his search for an understanding of the real nature of things and the universe, Aristotle reaches the conclusion that the world is not limited to moving natural substances; thus, in another part of his *Metaphysics*, he speaks of "mortal" and "immortal" substances and attempts to discover their origins by asking, "do mortal and immortal things have the same origin or is it that each group has particular origin of its own"¹⁸?

Aristotle continues his investigations and finally reaches the conclusion that all things emanate from the same Self-existent substance which is Alive, Knowledgeable and Powerful. A thing which although unmoving is the cause of all movement¹⁹.

14. The Proof Of God's Existence In Ibn Sina (Avicenna)'S

Philosophy

In the fourth section of what was probably his last philosophical work, *Isharat wa Tanbihat*, Ibn Sina sets forth a new argument for proving the existence of the Creator. This is the way he begins his discussion:

"The Namat (section) four on existence and its causes".

Thus, instead of speaking of "the principles of nature", he speaks of "existence" and its causes.

Regarding the proof for the first cause and the origin of existence he says:

"The being is either necessary (*wajib*) or contingent (*Mumkin*). A contingent being must have been come into existence by some external factor.

If this external factor is necessary being in itself, then it is the origin and the creator, and if it is contingent then it must be the effect of something other than itself. If this chain of contingent beings extends infinitely without reaching a starting point, a point of origin and a necessary existence, none of the supposed beings in this infinite chain would have any reality.

For actualization of any link of this chain is depended on the actualization of the preceding link, and even if such presupposition were to continue infinitely it would still not be able to emerge from the realm of assumption and possess any certitude".[20](#)

To make clear Ibn Sina argument, we will give the following example:

Suppose a big rock has fallen across a road, thus blocking it. It is obvious that the rock will not move all by itself. The first passer who comes along finds the road blocked and says to himself: "if another person had come along, together we could have dislodged the rock and cleared the road".

A second passer appears but hearing the suggestion of the first man, he answers that if another man were to come along then all three of us would move the rock together.

A third passer reaches the spot, but says that if a fourth individual comes and helps then we could dislodge the rock.

The fourth person comes and waits for the arrival of the fifth person, and so on and infinitum. Would the stone ever be moved under such circumstances? Of course not. The rock would be moved only when someone comes and will to act without waiting for the arrival of any other person. In such situation, either he alone, or the whole group together, shall act, and remove the rock, and reopen the road.

In the chain of cause and effect also, as long as we have not reached a cause which has a reality of its own, independent any other things, none of the links in the chain can have any reality.

In other words, we must reach a Being which possesses Independent existence or Necessary existence.

Existence begins at this point, and as it moves down the chain of causes and effect, gives each link its beings and its reality. It is in the shadow of Its unconditional being therefore that everything else attains existence.

Thus, Ibn Sina discovered necessary being and God, not through studying the principles and origins of nature, but through careful examination of contingency and necessity, the contingent and the necessary, and the ultimate dependence of the contingent being upon the necessary.

After proving the existence of the Creator, Ibn Sina goes on to prove the Oneness, Power, Knowledge, and other attributes of the Creator through an examination of the question of the contingent and the necessary being. Then he says:

Take care and see how our proof of the existence of the Origin, His²¹ Purity and Perfection, was in need of no other contemplation²² except that of "existence" itself, and there was no need to contemplate over His creatures. Although such examination would have led us to Him, but our approach is worthier, since we first contemplate being itself so that it may clearly set forth its own reality.

And then will be the cause of the realness of the things which emanate from it in later stages. The following verse of the points to this matter:

"Soon we shall show our signs to them both in the world and within themselves, so that it may become clear to them that He is the Truth" (41:53).

This explanation is for one group. Then the Qur'an says:

"Is it not enough that your God is the proof of all things?" (41:53).

This explanation relates to another group, the truthful ones "*(Siddiqin)*" who consider God to be the proof of other things, not the other things to be proofs for God²³.

Explaining the words of Ibn Sina, Nasir al-Din-Tusi (597-672) says:

"Theologians consider the coming into existence of objects and their qualities as proofs for the existence of the Creator, and through examining and observing creatures it is possible to gain knowledge of the Attributes of God.

Natural philosophers consider the existence of movement to be the proof of the existence of a mover, and believe that since the chain of such movers could not stretch back infinitely, we must finally reach a mover which is itself unmoved. Thus, they discover the first cause.

The metaphysicians however, by examining 'existence' itself, and the fact that 'existence' must be either contingent or necessary, prove the existence of necessary existent, Then, by examining the logical implications of contingency and necessity, they discover the attributes of necessary existent. And

through a contemplation of these attributes, they discover the process by which all creatures come into existence, emanating from necessary existent.

Ibn Sina says (in what was just quoted above) that this method is better than the earlier one for it is both stronger and worthier. This is so because the best argument that can lead man to certainty is the one in which we discover the effect through the cause, while the reverse case that is, to assume the effect as the proof of the cause—does not lead one to absolute certainty in some cases.

This is so, for example, in cases where the only way for knowing the cause is through the effect: This was made clear in the section on argumentation. From these words of God's that,

سُنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْآفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

"Soon We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in their own souls until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth. Is it not sufficient that your Lord is witness to all things?" (41:53).

Ibn Sina has taken two aspects of this saying of God and related them to the two aforesaid methods. These two aspects are: 1. Considering the signs existing in the world and within man as proofs for the existence of God. And 2. Taking God as evidence for the existence of everything else. Moreover, since he favours the second method, he has called it the method of "*Siddiq*" because "*Siddiq*" is one who always searches for the truth²⁴.

After Ibn Sina, his "necessity and contingency argument" became the most popular argument for proving the existence of God, so in shorter books on philosophy and theology, only this argument is being referred. In his most famous book, in the section dealing with proof of the God's existence, Nasir al-Din Tusi has referred only to this argument as said:

"The third point concerns the proof of the existence of God, His Attributes and Effects which consist of the following chapters, chapter one deals with the existence of God. A thing is either necessary existent which in this case does not require proof contingent which should depend on necessary existent: otherwise we would face with vicious circle or infinite chain of causation both of which are impossible²⁵."

In his book, *Kashful-Murad-fi-Sharh-he Tajrid al-Itiqad*, Allamah Hilli says²⁶:

"Proof of the existence of Necessary being is as follows: Undoubtedly, we discover that certainly there is a reality. This reality, upon which we cannot doubt, is either²⁷ being Necessary in which case there is no need for further discussion²⁸, or it is not being Necessary which means that it is being contingent and in need of a cause that would be the source of its existence. Now this cause is itself either being Necessary, which would mean again that there is no need for further discussion or it is being contingent which means that it needs a cause; and we will end up with either a vicious circle or an infinite chain of causation which we have already said that both are false"²⁹.

In the method used by Ibn Sina, Nasir al-Din Tusi, Allamah Hilli, and others, there is the talk of circle and infinite chains of causation; and if someone do not consider these two alternatives as impossible, then the whole argument, about the strength and clarity of which so much has been said, would be worthless.

15. The Proof Of The Existence In The Philosophy Of Sadr Ul-Muta'allihin (Mullah Sadra)

In his *Asfar*, Sadr ul-Muta'allihin holds that the argument of the *Siddiqin* (truthful ones) is the best argument in proof of the God's existence, but he sets it forth in such a manner that, as he himself says, would not involve vicious circle or infinite chains of causation. So, Sadr ul-Muta'allihin's approach would be a turning point in the inquiry into the original cause of things, let us consider it with ease:

Knowing that there are numerous ways to gain knowledge of God because He has numerous aspects and virtues which allow every individual to follow his own particular path to Him³⁰. Nevertheless, it is also true that some of these approaches are worthier, stronger, and clearer than others. The best argument and proof is that in which its middle term³¹ is actually nothing other than Necessary being itself. In other words, to know Him³² and it is the path of the *Siddiqin* (truthful ones) who take God as the proof and witness to His own existence³³. Then, from proving His Essence, they move to the knowledge of His Attributes; and from knowledge of His Attributes to the knowledge of His Acts.

Others, such as *Mutakallimun* (theologians) and naturalists, try to gain knowledge of God and His Attributes by studying other things such as the possibility of quiddity, emergence of creatures, and the movement of physical objects. These are proofs of the existence of God and His Attributes; but the first method is stronger and worthier.

The following verse of the Qur'an refers to all of these paths:

سُرِّيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ ۗ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

"Soon We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in their own souls until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth. Is it not sufficient that your Lord is witness to all things?" (41:53)

The gnostic philosophers reflect upon existence itself and come to know that reality is nothing but God, and He is the essence of everything. Then, by carefully examining existence, conclude that existence is automatically Necessary being that existence IS automatically Necessary Existent. And contingency, need, and cause cannot be related to the essence and reality of existence itself, but must be related to shortcomings and defects laying outside this essence and reality.

Then, by reflecting upon the implications and concomitants of contingency and necessity, they discover

the oneness of God's Essence and His Attributes; and by cognition of His Attributes they comprehend the nature of His Acts and Effects. And this is the way of the Prophets, as it is said in the Qur'an:

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ ۚ عَلَىٰ بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي

“Say: This is my way: I call to Allah, I and those who follow me being certain” (12: 108).

Following his elaborate explanation of the argument of truthful ones (*Siddiqin*); that is, gaining knowledge about God through perfect knowledge of existence, Sadrul-Muta'allihin opens a new chapter in which he discusses the other arguments set forth by philosophy and Kalam to prove the God's existence.

More than any other argument, he discusses that of "necessity and contingency" which he sets forth along the same lines used by Ibn Sina, Nasir al-Din Tusi and Allamah Hilli. He says:

"... this approach is the one closest to that of the truthful ones (*Siddiqin*) but it is not identical with *Siddiqin* what is paid attention to is the reality of existence³⁴ while in this path it is the concept of existence".

Sadr ul-Muta'allihin sets forth two fundamental advantages for his version of the truthful-ones' argument (*Burhane Siddiqin*) and the gaining of knowledge about the Creator through full comprehension of existence. These advantages are:

- (1)- That he has relied on actual existence itself and our immediate knowledge of it, and not on the concept of existence; and
- (2)- That in this approach there is no room for vicious circle and infinite chain of causation.

16. Being And The Concept Of Existence

What do we understand from the word "existence" (*wujud*) and its corollaries in other languages? And how has this concept entered our mind? These questions have been subject of discussion in Islamic philosophy for many centuries, and issues related to them have been considered as some of the most important sections of philosophy.

One may imagine that all of these discussions are useless explanations of the obvious issue. He gradually realizes, however, that the issues of the reality of existence, the unity of existence, unity and multiplicity, reality and appearance, etc. are some of the most fundamental problems of philosophy. However, they seem to be simple but they are deep and complex issues³⁵.

As an example of a modern encounter with such issues, let us examine the critical comment of an Iranian scholar on this regard³⁶.

In his book, *Philosophy*, Shariat Madari has made a critical comment over a section of Allamah Tabatabai's book, *The Principles of Philosophy and the Method of Realism*³⁷.

In his criticism he states that the discussions dealing with the analytical understanding of existence and the philosophical conclusions of such understanding, to be a kind of language game as he says:

"Mr. Tabatabai considers existence to be identical with reality and the existence of reality to be self-evident"³⁸. Shariat Madari furthers his discussion and, says that, how some questions born in mind regarding existence and reality as follows:

Which is self-evident? The being (*mawjud*) or 'existence' (*wujud*)? Do men consider stones, trees, animals, and other human beings as self-evident realities, or their existence³⁹?

Dose the idea that we cannot apprehend the reality of existence but at the same time since we know its actuality therefore existence-in-itself is self-evident to us?

As it has already been pointed out, why is the apprehension of existence a self-evident? I may assume my own existence as self-evident just as I consider that of other objects as self-evident. But if I analyze myself and separate the element of "existence" from the other aspects of myself and replace the "being" (*mawjud*) with "existence", then I could not say that I have comprehended existence and its meaning in a self-evident manner. It may be said that What seems self-evident is being (*mawjud*) not existence (*wujud*). further he says:

"But to sit and submerge oneself in the concept of existence and play language game, not only limits philosophical activity, but also prevents us from apprehending the realities kept away from the living philosophical issues of the day"⁴⁰.

It can be clearly seen, therefore that the problem of existence, its concept, the level of its authenticity, is still a genuine problem in contemporary philosophical thought. In order to carry on our discussion with clear understanding of the matter, we should first answer the following questions:

1. Is analysis and synthesis, in general sense, a proper method for gaining new knowledge about the world and the realities within it?
2. Are the mental perceptions, that is, concepts that we have from the existing realities in the world, are themselves also real (actual) validity in representing those realities?
3. Are words, whether referring to real or imaginary things, constitute a set of facts or not? (This is of course in the light of the expansive definition accorded to reality even in the scientific usage of today).
4. If mental concepts and the words used to describe them, seen in a wider perspective, are themselves realities. Is the scholarly and realistic study of them, a scientific activity which may bear useful results? Or is it that such an undertaking in whatever form of shape, is nothing but playing language game?

With a profound insight into what is today called as social sciences one may discover that most of the subjects dealt with are merely words and their combinations, mental concepts and meaning, their relationships with each other or with man's living environment, the origin and development of words, their meaning, or other human phenomenon are as real as the letters, words and their meanings.

When we appreciate sociology and its illuminating investigations, and take resort to the results of its inquiries to help us choose the best course of action in many aspects of our lives, and consider it as a mature science bearing fruitful results, then why should we be surprised that scientific analysis of a word, a mental perception, or other such phenomenon, may lead us to worthwhile and precise philosophical results?

When through the discipline of linguistics and analytical philosophy we examine the origin and development of words and languages; their relationships with biological, internal, or environmental factors such as: beliefs, emotional attachments, economics, politics, social classes, cultures, and so on, thus discovering hundreds of secrets concerning man's life on this planet, and then go on to gain practical benefit from these discoveries by improving man's life in various ways, then why we cannot look on the precise and exact research that has been carried out on the notion of existence, its meaning, and the external reality from which this concept is derived.

Now, keeping in mind all that has just been said, let us return to the discussion of the notion 'existence' and its meaning and try to clarify the issues involved in the light of the question raised by Dr. Shariat Madari, with the hope that we shall remain safe from the danger of falling into illusion and language game.

Let us first set out what we clearly know of this matter:

1. Suppose that there is a drinking glass on the table in front of you. Now I ask you: is there any water in the glass? you look at the glass more carefully, or, to make sure, shake it, and say: "There is water in the glass", or, "there is no water in the glass".
2. Okay, now suppose there is a stove in the corner of the room where you are sitting. I ask you: "Is there any fire in the stove?" you approach the stove and examine its contents with care and declare: "There is fire in the stove", or there is no fire in the stove".

Now consider these two statements: 1. There is water in the glass, and 2. There is fire in the stove. These two statements consist of different words each of which has a distinct meaning of its own; such as: in, glass, stove. water, and is.

Undoubtedly, by using every one of these words, you are expressing a definite mental perception which you can clearly distinguish from other mental perceptions. For example: in as opposed to on or besides, glass or stove as opposed to their objects, water or fire as opposed to other things, and is as opposed to is not, etc.

4. The mental perception that you express by the word in is a clear one for you and you can easily distinguish it from, on, and so on. The same can be said about the mental perceptions expressed by the words, or, so that if nothing else, you at least never mistake them for one another. This is also the case for the mental perceptions represented by the words fire and water. When you are handed a glass of water to drink, you do not show the least hesitation in using the word water to describe the contents of the glass, and if someone were to know a few pieces of wood on the fire and they started to burn, you again would not hesitate in labeling it as fire. Moreover, this is true, not only of you, but all other normal, healthy human beings.

5. Now what about the word "is"? Have you used this word in order to express a mental perception also? What about other, related words such as existence, or being in the sense of something which is existent? Do these also correspond to some mental perception existing in your mind, or not?

To facilitate the discussion, let us use the terms existence (*wujud*) and being (*mawjud*)⁴¹. The question is: Is the word existent in the two sentences: water is existent in the glass, and fire is existent in the stove, a meaningless utterance? Or is it that it has a specific meaning just as all the other words used in the two sentences? Now, if the term existent does have a specific meaning of its own, what is it, and how is it applied equally to both water and fire? Does the fact that the term existent is applied to both fire and water equally signify that they have a "word in common" or that they have a "meaning in common?"

It would perhaps be better to illustrate what we mean by having "Word in common" or "meaning in common" by bringing a few examples from ordinary life.

Suppose a baby boy is born in your family and you name him Parvez. Suppose also that another baby boy is born to another family hundreds of miles away, in another city and another family, and they, without knowing anything about your son and his name, also name their son Parvez. In this manner, there develops an automatic bond between your son and the other boy, and this bond is nothing other than having a name in common.

Moreover, their having the same name is the result, simply, of their parents having the same taste.

Now, does having the same name signify having anything else in common also? Usually not. It is simply a question of taste. You happen to like the name Parvez and call your son by it; the parents of that other boy also happen to like the name Parvez and choose it for their son. Moreover, you may like the name Parvez for one reason and the other parents may like for entirely different reasons. In any case, having the name Parvez in common does not signify the existence of any other common characteristics between these two boys. This is an example, then, of having a "word in common".

Suppose again that you have in front of you a white snowball and white chalk. The reason for your labeling both of these objects as white is not that someone has arbitrarily chosen to call them "white". It is, rather, an indication that these two objects share a particular quality with each other. In other words, the word white shows that these two objects have a "meaning in common" to put it another way, these

two objects are of the same colour; and this colour is the "meaning" that they have in common. Furthermore, the sharing of this common "meaning" is the cause of their both being called white.

This is why, when dealing with objects which have a "word in common", every new entry into the group must be accomplished by objects that have "meaning in common" no such fresh naming process is necessary.

About fourteen centuries ago a boy was born into the Sasanite family whom they name Parvez. If, from that particular date, no other family had chosen to call any of its male children Parvez, this name would have remained the exclusive property of the Sasanit king, Khosrow Parvez⁴².

If, on the other hand, hundreds of boys were born to other families and all of these boys possessed physical and psychological characteristics very similar to those of Khosrow Parvez but their parents had chosen to call them by some other name, then none of those similarities could justify these boys being automatically called Parvez.

However, the minute a boy is born who bears no resemblance to Khosrow Parvez by everyone. This, of course, is by no means true of the word white. Having labeled snow as white because of its colour and the fact that it reflects almost one hundred percent of the light to which it is exposed, we automatically label as white whatever object happens to possess the same qualities without needing any fresh naming process. This is so because the word white represents a common mental perception of such objects as chalk, snow, and so on.

Now that having a "word in common" and having a "meaning in common" have been clearly distinguished from one another, we can go back to our discussion of the existent and repeat the two statements: "There is fire in the stove". And: "there is water in the glass".

So, we see that the quality of being or "is-ness" is attributed to both fire and water, and they are both existent. So, the word existent is something that they share with each other, unlike the words fire or water which can apply to only one of them. Now the question is this: Is the fact that fire and water have "is-ness" in common between them signify that these two things have word in common, or a meaning in common?

If having "is-ness" in common means that these two objects have a "word in common", then to call any of them an existent thing requires a separate naming process. Now is this the case? If, on the other hand, having in common the word "is" between the water in the glass and the fire in the stove means that they have a "meaning in common", then separate naming processes would be unnecessary.

This would mean however that we must have a mental perception corresponding to the word "is" that applies to the water in the glass and the fire in the stove equally. The question to be answered next is: What is this common perception and where does it come from?

Existential philosophy begins its analysis with an attempt to understand this mental perception and its objective source and hold the view that through an analysis of the concept of existence and discovery of the reason for its development in our minds, new avenues for gaining knowledge about the real nature of this world are opened to us. Therefore, this philosophy begins its work by asking, is existence common in word or meaning?

The answer that the Existential philosophers give to this question is based on their meticulous investigation and analysis, that is, that existence is common in meaning vocal word. In other words, the term existence and all its synonyms in other languages, refer to a single mental perception, concept and meaning which is that essential and concrete perception experienced in every encounter with reality.

This shows us that existence itself is a single reality residing with fire and water both, since if existence was not a single fact which both fire and water shared, it would not have given rise to a single perception derived from both fire and water.

Sadrul-Muta'allihin (Mullah Sadra) is of the view however, that there is no need for us to traverse such a long and complicated path to comprehend the universality and uniqueness of the reality of existence. It is enough for any realistic (mystic), alert, and insightful individual to consider the first perception he has of the actual world to realize the reality of existence itself.

What man perceives in his encounter with a particular fact is, first of all, the very existence of that fact. It is only afterwards that the quiddity of the object in question is determined. And what is meant by quiddity here is that essence and sum of qualities which man perceives in this particular object but fails to find, either wholly or partly, in other objects.

The interesting point here is that in every confrontation with actual reality, man's knowledge of its existence, actuality, and reality, is both clear and certain unless one is entangled in sophistic temptations, while one's apprehension of the quiddity of an object may involve uncertainty.

For example, when you see something a few kilometers away, you have no doubt about its existence and your apprehension of its reality is clear and certain, while your knowledge of its quiddity is still unclear, and you must wait until you get closer, or look at it through binoculars, before gaining a more or less clear perception of its quiddity.

17. Our Knowledge Of (Wujud) Is Only Possible Through Immediate Knowledge (Ilm-E-Huduri)

When we come upon a tree we perceive its existence. Alongside this perception, we also more or less apprehend its identity. The apprehension of the identity of the tree must always be accompanied however, by an either perfect or imperfect picture of the tree being registered by our minds. This picture informs us of the identity of the tree and represents ours and other people's knowledge of it.

The relationship of this mental picture with the tree in question is like that of a picture of a tree taken by a camera and the actual tree itself, or, between the tree and a picture of it drawn carefully by hand. Whenever this mental picture appears in your mind it will more or less inform you of the identity of the object to which it refers, but it cannot automatically inform you of its existence and actuality unless it reestablishes the relationship of "direct apprehension" between you and the tree.

And it would be through this relationship then that you would recall the past existence of the tree. If this relationship is not reestablished and the memory of the tree is not revived in our mind, you will automatically doubt the existence of such a tree and will ask: "Does this tree exist?"

We can conclude from this that the picture does not automatically indicate the existence of the object it is supposed to represent, and our knowledge of objects is attained only through direct apprehension and immediate knowledge.

Now that these points have been clarified let us return to the position set forth by Sadrul-Muta'allihin. He says that the first thing we apprehend is existence itself, on the condition that we should not have befuddled our minds with pseudo-philosophical disputes.

Meditating upon our knowledge of existence gained through direct apprehension, we can easily discover the fact that non-being can never enter the essence of being. In other words, existence always is and can never become non-existence. This is why, being is always necessary existence (because non-being can never enter into it).

Another point revealed here, and that is, in our first encounter with reality what we perceive is "the necessary", and our apprehension of "the contingent" is gained only after we have perceived the existence of things which have, by the virtue of being, emerged out of nothingness and taken on recognizable shapes called things: things which are signs, manifestations, and reflections of existence.

And if this being did not exist, all of these things would become void and insubstantial, the aforementioned discussion shows that in Sadrul-Muta'allihin's method of seeking for the original cause there is no need to submerge ourselves in the concept of existence or rely on the invalidity of circular causation or infinite chain of causation.

After an extensive discussion of contingent being and its relationship with the necessary being and after answering all questions and problems raised in this regard, Sadr ul-Muta'allihin (Mullah Sadra) says:

...Therefore, the existence of Necessary being is proven by this argument, just as its uniqueness is also proven, since existence is a reality in the essence of which there is no room for deficiency or shortfall. And its limitless and infinite nature does not lend itself to either duality or plurality. Moreover, by the same argument the knowledge of existence to itself and its life as well as whatever is beyond it is possible, since knowledge and life are synonymous with existence.

Alongside these things, the power and Will of Necessary being is also proved since these two are requirements of life and knowledge. His self-existence is proven a being that exists in the ultimate and perfect state must be the source of all the beings that exist on a lower the source of all the being that exist on a lower state.

Necessary being is thus no other than God, who is Knowing, Able, Willful, Living, and Creating; Omniscient and Omnipotent. And since all the lower degrees of existence automatically follow Necessary being in accordance to their level of dignity and strength, the fact that He is the Creator, the Lord, and the Owner, is proved.

The conclusion to be drawn is that the method we have pursued is stronger, simpler, and better than any other method used to search for the first cause. One who follows this method to gain knowledge of God, His essence, Attributes, and Actions, has no need to rely on things other than God, or the invalidity of circular and infinite chains of causation to prove His existence. He comes to know God and His uniqueness through His very essence itself:

شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ

'Allah (himself) witness that there is no God but Him ... (3:18).

And gain knowledge of other things in this manner:

أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

"Is it not sufficient that your Lord is witness to all things? (41:53)

This path suffices the people of perfection in their search for the Truth, its Attributes and Actions. But since everyone does not have the ability to draw so many conclusions from one single principle, we have no other choice than to put forth other paths leading the seekers to knowledge of the Truth, even though, these methods may not have the power and efficiency of the first method in directing the seeker to God⁴³.

18. Is Argument Of Truthful Ones (Siddiqin) A Valid Argument?

From what we have said up to this point, it becomes clear that the argument of *Siddiqin* has been set forth in two distinct ways. The first version is the one set forth by Ibn Sina, Nasir al-Din Tusi, and certain other thinkers, while the second in that of Sadrul-Muta'allihin (Mullah Sadra). In his commentary on the *Isharat* of Ibn Sina, Nasir al-Din Tusi calls Ibn Sina's version of the argument of the *Siddiqin*, a *priori* argument.

19. A Priori (Burhan E Inni) And A Posteriori (Burhan E Limmi)

Arguments

Although the term "a priori argument" is well known to all those who are familiar with philosophy, it may be worthwhile to explain it here so that we can continue our discussion with sufficient clarity.

In a priori reasoning—as opposed to the posteriori reasoning we first apprehend the existence of the cause, and this apprehension leads us to affirm the existence of the effect, Since, if the cause is found to exist, the existence of the effect automatically follows. In the posteriori reasoning the case is exactly inverse. Here we apprehend the existence of the effect first and move on to affirm the existence of the cause, since no effect can exist without the cause being present also. Let us cite an example:

We look at the sky and see that dark clouds are moving in the distance. We say then that it must be raining there. What makes us to cognize the existence of the clouds in that particular point of the sky is our direct sense perception of them. Moreover, since we are aware of the causal relationship between these kinds of clouds and rain, we add up these two apprehensions and come up with the third one, which is that it is raining there.

Now let us consider another case. It is a chilly winter night. We are sitting in a room, closed all doors and windows, and pulled the curtains. Suddenly, we hear the sound of a rain–shower pounding on the roof of the house. The minute we perceive that the rain is pouring down, we also realize that rain–clouds are passing over our home.

This is an example of a posteriori argument: That is, coming to know that existence of the cause through apprehending the existence of the effect.

As far as our knowledge of the original source is concerned, if we come to gain any knowledge of its existence by first apprehending its creatures, and following this apprehension conceive of the idea that these creatures must have a creator possessing such and such qualities, this cognitive process, moving from knowledge of the effect to affirmation of the existence of a cause, is a form of logical apprehension. And this is, of course, *a posteriori reasoning*.

If, on the other hand, we first come to know of God and His Attributes through immediate knowledge, conclude from such knowledge that a God possessing such qualities must have creatures of such and such a sort, even though we have no direct knowledge that such creatures do in fact exist, then we have come to apprehend the existence of them through knowledge of the existence of the cause. This, too, is a form of logical apprehension: *a priori reasoning*.

Nasir al–Din Tusi says that the path taken by Ibn Sina regarding the knowledge of 'origin' in his *Isharat*, i.e, "Argument of *Siddiqin*", is actually a priori reasoning likewise, 'Allamah Hilli, in his *Kashf al–Murad fi Sharh al– Tajrid al–I'tiqad*⁴⁴, has also said that Ibn Sina's "Argument of *Siddiqin*" is a priori reasoning.

However, Sadrul-Muta'allihin does not consider the *Siddiqin* argument to be an argument at all, and therefore does not discuss the question of its being either a priori or a posteriori.

In his *Asfar*, after mentioning some examples of philosophical arguments set forth as proof of God's existence, goes on to say:

"As it has already been mentioned, regarding proof of the existence of Necessary being, there is no argument that can really be called an argument. And whatever is expressed as a demonstration is not related directly to proving the existence of the Necessary being. Regarding proving the existence of the Necessary. Regarding proving the existence of God, there is an argument⁴⁵ similar to that of posteriori argument".

In a footnote on the above section of the *Asfar*, Allamah Tabatabai says:

"...and hereby the point is clearly revealed to the insightful that the existence of the Necessary being is a necessary and undeniable principle, and the arguments set forth to prove the existence of the Necessary being are really some kind of reminders (and not proofs) ..." ⁴⁶

We believe, however, that careful examination of the "Argument of the *Siddiqin*", even Sadrul-Muta'allihin's version of it, shows that this formulation is neither fully an argument nor fully not an argument. For the truth of the matter is that the "Argument of the *Siddiqin*" has three aspects each of which must be dealt independently. These three aspects are:

- A. Knowledge of the existence of the origin (God) through better understanding of 'being'.
- B. Knowledge of the Attributes of the 'origin (God) through perfect understanding of being.
- C. Knowledge of the signs and Effects of the origin through the extensive knowledge of existence.

So far as the first and the second aspect is concerned our intellectual task is to gain deeper knowledge of being (*wujud*) without trying to prove the existence of something through apprehension of the existence of something else.

But as for to the third aspect, our intellectual task is to discover His first effect; that is, (The first emanated) through the accurate and wide knowledge of the origin (God), so that to apprehend objective reality. Then by furthering this method on His other effects and acts we may be acquainted with them one by one. In fact, we imply an argument in this section which is the same as called a priori argument, for we apprehend the existence of an effect and its derivations through the comprehensive cognition of its cause.

Therefore, Sadrul-Muta'allihin's *Siddiqin* argument is as much as related to the cognitive of the existence of the origin (first cause) and His attributes, it is developed form of a knowledge of an object which we have already known, that is, the notion of existence though it cannot be called an argument.

But that part which concerns the cognition of the origin and His features and acts; that is the proof of the existence of the universal intellects and souls in philosophical sense and holy and holiest grace in mystical terms. Then there is no doubt that it is an argument by means of which we apprehend the existence of effect through the conclusive cognition of the cause.

Thus, this argument is called a priori argument' (Burhan-e Limmi).

20. Which Of The Proofs Set Forth For The God's Existence Is Closer To The Approach Of The Qur'an

In many of theological and mystical books Muslim scholars are interested more or less to introduce the general view of philosophers and their own philosophical ideas in certain subjects in coordinate with the Qur'anic teachings. As if they want to enhance the credibility of their views or at least to save it from the opponent for being anti-religious views. But these kinds of conformation and ascriptions are incompatible with the ordinary meaning of the verses of the Qur'an; that is, in most cases it is their own interpretations only.

Among the different arguments for the existence of God as mentioned above. The Aristotle's and his like-minded thinker's argument is compatible with the Qur'anic teachings, because this argument is based on the dependence of a needy being on an independent, being motion to the mover, effect to cause, object to the Creator of the object and contingency to necessity?

If the usage of the term argument is correct from the stand point of originology, it should be called "a posteriori argument" (Burhan-e Inni). What about Sadrul-Muta'allihin method? Shall we call the eschatology of this philosopher as the same Qur'anic approach. Sadrul-Muta'allihin supports his argument by reciting the following verses of the Qur'an:

شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ ۗ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

"Allah bears witness that there is no god except Him —and [so do] the angels and those who possess knowledge— maintainer of justice, there is no god but Him, the Almighty, the All-wise. (3: 18).

According to Sadrul-Muta'allihin the witness of God on His uniqueness is another proof of the denotation of the very "existence" on the uniqueness and necessity of the self-existent. This is the same matter that Sadrul-Muta'allihin brought about in his *Siddiqin* argument (*Burhan-e Siddiqin*)

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مِثْلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَنْ

يَشَاءُ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

“Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His Light is a niche wherein is a lamp —the lamp is in a glass, the glass as it were a glittering star— lit from a blessed olive tree, neither eastern nor western, whose oil almost lights up, though fire should not touch it. Light upon light. Allah guides to His Light whomever He wishes. Allah draws parables for mankind, and Allah has knowledge of all things.” (24:35).

Therefore, God is shining in the world. His shining existence is clear and cognizable and very thing also should be cognized in the light of that shining light⁴⁷ Rumi says:

“Sun appeared, the proof is the same sun. If you seek proof, then do not turn your face from him”.

How we apprehend the existence of God? The reply is that we see Him objectively and then apprehend Him. Even we see and apprehend the other beings in the light of the sun.

سُنُّرِبِهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

“Soon We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in their own souls until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth. Is it not sufficient that your Lord is witness to all things?” (41:53).

Ibn Sina, Nasir al-Din Tusi, Allamah Hilli, Sadr ul-Muta'allihin and other like-minded thinkers believe that: the last part of this verse regarding the knowledge of origin (first cause), is possible through the concentration on the notion of existence that is the same argument of *Siddiqin* as we have discussed earlier.

Among the verses of the Qur'an the verse *Nur* (24:35) is to some extent relevant with this argument. Of course, it is provided to have deep insight into this verse in order to understand and use it as the *"Burhan-e-Siddiqin"*.

In the verse 3: 18, ***“Allah bears Witness that there is no god but He”***. There is the matter of witness⁴⁸ of God on His uniqueness so, it requires to keep in view some meaning for it. This meaning is likely the same as it has come in the *Siddiqin* argument.

وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا أَعْجَمِيًّا لَقَالُوا لَوْلَا فُصِّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ

“And if we had made it a Qur'an in a foreign tongue, they would certainly have said: why have not its communication been made clear?” (41:44).

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ فَاخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ

“Certainly, We gave Moses the Book, but differences arose about it...” (41:45).

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ كَفَرْتُمْ بِهِ مَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنْ هُوَ فِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ

“Say, ‘Tell me, if it is from Allah and you disbelieve in it, who will be more astray than someone who is in extreme defiance (41:52).

سُنُرِهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ

“Soon, We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in their own souls until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...” (41:53).

Regarding the sequence of the verses this question may arise as to whether the pronoun "it" in the sentence "It is the truth" is referred to the Qur'an of God or any other thing. As it is quoted from *Qatadah* and other exegetists in this regard, therefore, this verse is about the truthfulness of the Qur'an not God.

Accordingly, that verse is related to the other issues of Islamic teachings not to any method of the knowledge of the origin.

Conclusion

Regarding the above discussion we may come to the following conclusions:

- (1). The issue of the proof of the existence of God is put forwarded in the Qur'an in a simple manner.
- (2). At the same time, the Qur'an has not over looked the suspicion over the existence of God.
- (3). Nevertheless, it has confined only to some awakening questions so that to release man from suspicion about the existence of God.
- (4). In the light of such wakefulness and vigilance, man may apprehend the existence of God through the concentration on the dependence of all beings on God.
- (5). In the process of travelling (mystical), man may rely on his simplest perception (nature) and need not to involve himself in technical arguments.
- (6). This path of the Qur'an regarding the notion of God is more or less in confirmative with the attitudes of the many scholars in the world either indirectly (through interpretation) or directly.

(7). Some of the Qur'anic verses, that have come in philosophical and mystical books, regarding the proof of the God's existence, are either irrelevant with the theological discussions like the verse (41:53) or they are related to other issues.

After The Proof Of The Existence Of God

Now at the end, this question may arise as to: whether man, regarding the notion of "The origin" (*Mabda'*), can know only the existence of God that is to acknowledge that there is a creator for this world or he may transcend this stage and attain a clear idea of God?

This issue has been discussed in detail in philosophy and Islamic Theology (*kalam*) and we will discuss in the further chapter of this book as well.

What may be said about the Qur'anic view point is that man is asked to have comprehensive knowledge of God and the major issue in this comprehensive knowledge is the issue of unity of God (*Tawhid*) and His uniqueness which the Qur'an rely on it.

1. A.J. Arbery, Reason and Revelation, p. 9.

2. Upanishad, p. 419.

3. Allamah Tabatabai, Al-Mizan, 12, 2, 3.

4. Mulla Sadra, Al-Mabda' wal-Ma'ad, p. 16.

5. In his book Al-Mizan, 'Allamah Tabatabai while interpreting this verse about the innate nature of religion has taken a broader view and expressed the opinion that all the teachings and religion is based on a system of belief and practice and all innate needs of man.

6. Please refer to Imam Fakhr's Tafsir-e Kabir vol. 15, p. 40-49, Tafsir-e Majma' ul-Bayan vol.4, p. 497-498, and Tafsir Al-Mizan vol. 8, p. 338-346.

7. One such commentator is Sayyid Qutb in his book Fi Zalal al-Qur'an, vol. 3, p. 670.

8. Please refer to Tafsir-e Majma ul-Bayan vol. 4, p. 498 and Tafsir-e Kabir – Iman Fakhr vol. 15, p. 46-52.

9. Certain knowledge is a clear knowledge beyond any doubt and ambiguity. Immediate knowledge, intuitive knowledge are the examples of certain knowledge. The best way to attain such knowledge is the field act. For in such field, one may confront with objective reality and immune from subjectivities. The subjectivities that are away from the real world and deprive man from comprehending the reality.

10. Al-Qur'an:

وَقَالُوا مَا هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا يُهْلِكُنَا إِلَّا الدَّهْرُ وَمَا لَهُم بِذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ

And they say: There is nothing but our life in this world; we live and die and nothing destroys us but time, and they have no knowledge of that; they only conjecture. (45:24).

11. أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ....

12. قَوْمٌ يَنْتَفِكِرُونَ وَ....

13. قَوْمٌ يَنْذَكِرُونَ وَ....

14. From this page up to the page 200, the discussion is philosophical to utilize those who are working on theology. Those who are not familiar with philosophy, can delete this section.

15. That is Greek mythological gods were merely the figments of man's imagination. Man's intellectual weakness in knowing the origin of the ultimate things is responsible in substituting God by gods. On the field of natural science also used it in place of causes and natural factors. As a result, misled in both fields of theology as well as natural science.

16. Aristotele, Metaphysics, p. 247.

[17.](#) Ibid, p. 713.

[18.](#) Ibid, p. 1000.

[19.](#) Ibid, Book Alpha (minor) and book Lambda.

[20.](#) Ibn Sina, Isharat wa Tanbihah, p. 109–115.

[21.](#) The original statement of Ibn Sina in his "Isharat regarding this point, is as follows:

"Contemplate on how our statement for testifying to the existence of the first (the Creator). his uniqueness (Oneness), and his freedom of any imperfection and defect had not needed anything other than deliberation upon the existence itself, and didn't need the deliberation upon his created beings, even though it is an evidence for testification, but the first way of deliberation is more authentic and valuable'.

That is to say, if we deliberate upon the state of existence, and this testifies to his existence as it is the real manifest existence it would be the firm true evidence for all the following stages of the whole existence and being.

The divine holy book, the Qur'an, has indicated this fact saying:

"We will soon show them our signs (ayat) in the universe, and within themselves, until it will become manifest unto them that is the Truth..." (41:53).

I say that this statement is meant for a group of people. And the Holy Qur'an has continued saying:

"Isn't sufficient as regards your lord, he is witness over all thin". (42:53)

And this statement is meant for another group of people, who are the faithful devotees to Allah (As-Siddiqin) who take him as evidence for testifying to the other things and not the vice versa.

[22.](#) Ibid. p. 123.

[23.](#) Ibid. p. 123.

[24.](#) Nasir Al-Din Tusi, Tajrid al-E'tiqad, p. 172

[25.](#) Allamah Hilli, Kashf ul-Murad Fi Sharh Tajrid al-E'tiqad.

[26.](#) That is, a reality which does not need origin.

[27.](#) That is, the very existence is proved to be an existent independent of cause.

[28.](#) If we continue, it we may not reach to an existent independent of cause.

[29.](#) On this approach, through the process and doubt between necessary and contingent being we discover the Necessary being. That is why the argument discussed here is called the argument necessary and contingency.

[30.](#) As is stated in chapters, the verse 148 of the Qur'an.

[31.](#) What connects the major and minor premises to each other and enables us to reach a third conclusion through knowledge of them.

[32.](#) According to Rumi: the sun came, as this is the proof of sun if you want proof, do not turn your face away.

[33.](#) "O that which was a guide unto itself".

[34.](#) Mullah Sadra, Asfar, p. 26–27.

[35.](#) The issue of existence, the concept and its reality has always been one of the most delicate issues of philosophy. In our age, some of the followers of Hegel have furthered Hegel's analysis of existence with reference to other concept and the objective reality which derived from that for instance Heidegger's book, Being and Time is related to this issue.

[36.](#) Dr. Ali Shariat Madari is a professor at Isfahan university.

[37.](#) Dr. Ali Shariat Madari, Philosophy p. 335

[38.](#) Ibid, p. 336–337.

[39.](#) Ibid, p. 339.

[40.](#) Ibid, p. 339.

[41.](#) Being (Mawjud) grammatically is passive participial and most probably derived from wajada that is acquired its Persian version is yafteh that is, has got, later on this term got new meaning other than passive participial. It was something which enjoy existence which is hardly passive participial. Even the verb "wajada" is used as meant become existent which does

not carry the suspicion and it is like intransitive verb, existent (Wujud) is also like this. Now this term has nothing to do with "to acquired" or "have been acquired". But it means "to be" or "being".

[42.](#) If anyone was named Pervez before him then this name would have remained his exclusive property.

[43.](#) Mullah Sadra, Asrar vol.6 p. 25–26

[44.](#) Allamah Hilli, Kashf ul–Murad Fi Sharh Tajrid al–E'tiqad, p.172

[45.](#) Mullah Sadra, Asfar vol.5 p. 28–29

[46.](#) Ibid, vol. 6, p. 15.

[47.](#) For details of the philosophical commentary on the verse of 'light', refer to Mullah Sadra's commentary, p. 358,375, Asfar, 5:349, Shawahid, p. 36

[48.](#) There are many instances in the Qur'an indicating that Allah bears witness as:

“Allah bears witness that there is no god but He.” (3:18).

Allah bears witness that He has revealed the Qur'an:

"But Allah bears witness by what He has revealed it with His knowledge ..." (4:166).

Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are liars.

"And Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are surely liars." (63:1).

Allah bears witness to the prophethood of His Prophet (S).

“We have sent you (O, Prophet!) to mankind as an apostle; and Allah is sufficient as a witness.” (4:79).

And God bears witness to everything (5:117).

Regarding such issues references to God being His own witness have occurred frequently in other religious scriptures also even in the books of non–Ibrahmic religious, Zoroaster considers God as the witness to his prophethood and rightness of his religion. He says:

'O people as you could not find and choose the right path for yourselves, Mazda Ahura made me the Judge of both the groups, worshiper of Mazda and worshiper of devil, and sent me towards you, so that I could point to the right path for you and all of you could live together according to the true religion. Mazda Ahura is my witness and bears witness of my religion. (2:41, The Avesta)

Chapter 4: Tawhid Or Monotheism

1. Oneness Of God

Theological science of the Qur'an more than everything rests on oneness of God, and its primary motto is:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

"There is no god but Allah."

This motto has been repeated in the Qur'an more than sixty times in different words. Even in the following short verse it has been repeated twice:

شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ ۗ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

"Allah bears witness that there is no God but He, and (so do) the angels and those possessed of knowledge, maintaining His creation with justice; there is no god but He, the Mighty, the wise." (3: 18).

The following are the verses which contain this motto but in other phrases:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

"There is no god but Allah." (37: 35).

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ

"There is no god but He." (2: 163).

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

"There is no god but You." (21:87).

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا

"There is no god but Me." (16:2).

مَا مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

"There is no god but Allah." (3:61).

مَا مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاحِدٌ

"There is no god but the one God." (5:73).

مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ

"You have no god other than Him." (7: 65).

مَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ

"And never was there with Him any (other god)" (23:91).

إِنَّمَا اللَّهُ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ

"Allah is only one God." (4: 171).

أَنَّ إِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ

"Your god is one God." (18: 110).

إِنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمْ اللَّهُ

"Your God only Allah." (20:98).

إِنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ

"He is only one God." (6: 19).

إِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ

"Your God is one God," (2: 163).

إِنَّ إِلَهُكُمْ لَوَاحِدٌ

"Most surely your God is One." (37:4).

هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ

"He, Allah, is one." (112:1).

2. Allah

There are two terms in Arabic language for God which are very close to each other in terms of meaning. Yet, at the same time they are different. One is "*Ilah*" (إله) and the other one is "*Allah*" (الله). "*Ilah*" (إله) grammatically is a common noun and in Persian is called "*Khuda*" (خدا) and its plural form is "*Khudayan*" (خدایان), in Arabic also the plural form of "*Ilah*" that is "*Ilahah*" (الهة) is used.

But "*Allah*" (الله) is proper noun and its expressions in Persian are "*Khuda*" (خدا), "*Khudawand*" (خداوند), "*Yazdan*" (یزدان), "*Izad*" (ایزد).¹

Accordingly, "*Khuda*" (خدا) in Persian language is used in two senses both as a common noun and proper noun; while common noun is pluralized, latter is not.

In the English, the term for "*Khuda*" is god. It is like Persian term with the difference that god in English is written in two ways: god and God. The former with small "g" is synonymous with "*Ilah*" in Arabic and "*Khuda*" in Persian it is common noun.

The word written with capital "G" (God) is used as proper noun in the sense of the Arabic term "*Allah*" and Persian term "*Khuda*" proper noun in the sense of the *Allah* is inferred from the pre-Islamic Arabic literature and poetry recorded in history and the Qur'an itself. The Arabs recognized the God who created the world and called him "*Allah*" (الله). Accordingly, "*Allah*" was the particular name of the creator of the universe as "*Allat*", "*Alazzi*", "*Manat*", "*Yaqus*".

Most probably this "proper name" for the creator of the universe came into usage as a result of their referring to the creator as "*al-ilah*" that meant "the god" by prefix in "*ilah*" with the Arabic article "*al*", that meant "the", i.e. "the god".

Gradually, in the course of time it was accepted as referring to the creator of the world. And by the passage of the time the latter "*hamzeh*" of "*ilah*" between Al (ل) and "*ilah*" was deleted and the word "*Allah*" became the new term and the particular name for the creator of the universe.²

Anyhow, we will render both "*Allah*" and "*Ilah*" as "*Khuda*" in Persian translation of the Qur'anic verses and Arabic passages and we hope there will not arise any confusion in understanding what we mean to refer to by this term.

3. Tawhid

By the term "Unity of God" (*Tawhid*) it means believe in one reality and in theological sense it refers to believe in the unity of God and the origin of being and to have faith in his uniqueness in every respect, i.e. from the view of His Essences, Creativity, Sovereignty, and Administration of the universe on one

hand, and on the other from the stand point of servitude and worship or supplication and so on (on the part of man).

4. Tawhid In The Qur'an

Most of the monotheistic verses of the Qur'an rest on "Tawhid in commandment and direction" and "Tawhid in worship and obedience" to one God. The Qur'an in the first place focus the attention of man on the oneness of the creator and the sustainer. After making this point clear that is the creation and governance of the universe is God's Task and that sovereignty over the universe belongs to Him only, it concludes that supplication and worship be directed to God only.

5. Tawhid In Creation And Commandment

The first verses of the Qur'an revealed to the prophet are about "Tawhid", which began with reference to His "Creation and Commandment"³.

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ

"Read in the name of your Lord who created" (96:1).

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ

"Created man from a clot." (96:2).

اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ

"Read and your Lord is Most Honourable" (96:3).

الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ

"Who taught (to write) with the pen" (96:4).

عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

"Taught man what he knew not." (96:5).

According to the Qur'an most of the Arab idolaters believed in "Tawhid in creation and commandment",

or at least they were ready to accept this belief.

وَلَيْنِ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ فَأَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ

“If you ask them, ‘Who created the heavens and the earth, and disposed the sun and the moon?’ They will surely say, ‘Allah.’ Then where do they stray?” (29:61).

In the Qur'an, verses 31:9–13 and 87 are about the same belief. Yet at that time, there were some people who were oblivious to the “Tawhid” in Creation and Commandment" and the Qur'an asked them, to show, if there were other gods who were responsible for creation and administration of the world.

خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا وَأَلْقَى فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ أَنْ تَمِيدَ بِكُمْ وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ كَرِيمٍ

“He created the heavens without any pillars that you may see, and cast firm mountains in the earth lest it should shake with you, and He has scattered in it every kind of animal. And We sent down water from the sky and caused every splendid kind [of plant] to grow in it. (31:10).

هَذَا خَلْقُ اللَّهِ فَأَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ بَلِ الظَّالِمُونَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ

This is the creation of Allah. Now show Me what others besides Him have created. Rather the wrongdoers are in manifest error!” (31:11).

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ شُرَكَاءَكُمُ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ أَمْ آتَيْنَاهُمْ كِتَابًا فَهُمْ عَلَى بَيِّنَتٍ مِنْهُ ۗ بَلِ إِنْ يَعْذُ الظَّالِمُونَ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا إِلَّا غُرُورًا

“Say, ‘Tell me about your partners [you ascribe to Allah] whom you invoke besides Allah? Show me what [part] of the earth have they created. Do they have any share in the heavens?’ Have We given them a scripture so that they stand on a manifest proof thereof? Rather the wrongdoers do not promise one another [anything] except delusion. (35:40).

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُمَسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ أَنْ تَزُولَا ۗ وَلَئِنْ زَالَتَا إِنْ أَمْسَكَهُمَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا

Indeed, Allah sustains the heavens and the earth lest they should fall apart, and if they were to fall apart there is none who can sustain them except Him. Indeed, He is All-forgiving, All-forgiving.” (35:41).

The Qur'an addresses those who are in doubt over the weakness of man-made gods and asked them to think over it so that they may apprehend this obvious fact:

قُلْ مَنْ رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ قُلِ اللَّهُ قُلْ أَفَاتَّخَذْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ لِأَنْفُسِهِمْ نَفْعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ أَمْ هَلْ تَسْتَوِي الظُّلُمَاتُ وَالنُّورُ أَمْ جَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ خَلَقُوا كَخَلْقِهِ فَتَشَابَهَ الْخَلْقُ عَلَيْهِمْ قُلِ اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ

“Say, ‘Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth?’ Say, ‘Allah!’ Say, ‘Have you then taken others besides Him for guardians, who have no control over their own benefit or harm?’ Say, ‘Are the blind one and the seer equal? Or are the darkness and the light equal?’ Have they set up for Allah partners who have created like His creation, so that the creations seemed confusable to them? Say, ‘Allah is the creator of all things, and He is the One, the All-paramount.” (13:16).

The Qur'an again attract the attention of those people whose minds are not sharp enough to comprehend a simple fact:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ضُرِبَ مَثَلٌ فَاستَمِعُوا لَهُ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَنْ يَخْلُقُوا ذُبَابًا وَلَوْ اجْتَمَعُوا لَهُ وَإِنْ يَسْلُبْهُمُ الذُّبَابُ شَيْئًا لَا يَسْتَنْقِذُوهُ مِنْهُ ضَعُفَ الطَّالِبُ وَالْمَطْلُوبُ

“O mankind! Listen to a parable that is being drawn: Indeed, those whom you invoke besides Allah will never create [even] a fly even if they all rallied to do so! And if a fly should take away something from them, they cannot recover that from it. Feeble is the invoker and the invoked!” (22:73).

مَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ

“They have not regard Allah with the regard (that is) due to Him; Indeed, Allah is All-strong, All-mighty.” (22:74).

The verses 30: 40, 25: 1-4, 35: 3, 39: 43, emphasize the point that we have to think properly over the issues of "Creation and Commandment", that is creation of the universe and governance of it. If we think correctly and logically in this matter we will be led to the notion that all our supplication and worship belong to God Almighty only.

The verse 54 of the *Surah Al-A'raf* says that the creation and governance of the world is vested in nobody but Allah:

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُعْشِي اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ يَطْلُبُهُ حَثِيثًا

وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُومَ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ بِأَمْرِهِ أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ

“Indeed, your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and then settled on the Throne. He draws the night’s cover over the day, which pursues it swiftly, and [He created] the sun, the moon, and the stars, [all of them] disposed by His command. Look! All creation and command belong to Him. Blessed is Allah, the Lord of all the worlds.” (7:54).

6. The Quranic Proofs Of Tawh1d In The Spheres Of Creation And Command

According to the Qur'an, the unique and consistent order which is governing throughout the universe is an obvious proof of Uniqueness and Oneness of the Creator and Controller of the universe. And we are asked to contemplate over such firm and coherent system in order to realize the unity in creation and commandment.

وَاللهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ ۖ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ

“Your god is the One God, there is no god except Him, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful” (2: 163).

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ مَاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيَّاحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

“Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, and the ships that sail at sea with profit to men, and the water that Allah sends down from the sky —with which He revives the earth after its death, and scatters therein every kind of animal— and the changing of the winds, and the clouds disposed between the sky and the earth, are surely signs for a people who apply reason.” (2: 164).

The verses 6:94–99, 7: 58, 10:3–6 and 10:67–68, 16:10–20, 16:65–74, 16: 80–81, 17:12, 36:33–41, 45:1–5 and several other verses of the Qur'an draw the attention of man towards the evident signs in the orderly system of the universe which indicate the Oneness of the Creator.

7. Refutation Of The Doctrine Of Polytheism

The Holy Qur'an refutes the doctrine of polytheism.

مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِذَا لَذَهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ وَلَعَلَّ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ

“Allah has not taken any offspring, neither is there any god besides Him, for then each god would take away what he created, and some of them would surely rise up against others. Clear is Allah of what they allege!” (23:91).

عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

“The knower of the unseen and the seen, so many, He is above having any partners that they ascribe [to Him].” (23:92).

If there were many creators, then the relation of them with the universe would have been like either one of the following assumptions:

(1). Firstly, each one of the creator owns a certain part of the universe which is created by him and ruled by him. In this case, there should be separate orders or disciplines in each part, independent of the others. But this assumption is wrong, for as a matter of fact, the entire world is governed by one order which is consistent and coherent.

(2). Secondly, one of the regional creators (gods) may be greater than and superior to other creators and His function might be to unit other creators and bring unity and harmony among them. In this case, he is to be considered the real creator and sovereign of the world and rest of the creators he treated as His agents.

(3). Thirdly, let us assume that all the creators rule over the world and there is no any limitation clear cut division between their spheres of domination and they act and operate wherever and whenever they like. The result of such system will be an anarchy of conflict in their wills.

In this regard the Qur'an says:

لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ

“If there had been in them any gods except Allah, they would both have certainly been in a state of disorder; therefore, glory be to Allah, the Lord of the Throne, above what they attribute (to Him).” (21:22).

According to these notions, oneness and eternity of the system of the universe negates the doctrine of multiplicity of god and their sovereignties. The belief that this unity of order and purpose in the universe is governed by many gods is also refuted. The other assumption which holds that there are two or more

gods in this universe operating simultaneously and coordinately everywhere, is merely an illusion, for to assume that there are two or many gods, necessitates that there should be at least some difference of disharmony between them. It will, anyhow, affect the harmony and will certainly affect the order and purpose of the universe.

Sadr ul-Muta'allihin in his book, *Asfar* refers to the above quoted verse of the Qur'an 'in this context and concludes:

"Another way of proving the oneness of God is implied in His Godhood and His Sovereignty and oneness, and cohesiveness of the universe is an evident proof of the oneness of God. This is the same approach which Aristotle, the teacher of the Peripatetics, adopted and the Divine book also indicated." [4](#)

At another place, in the same book Sadr ul-Muta'allihin throws light on this matter and says that:

... "Taking into consideration that sphere of being is unique and its scope and arcs are integrated organically with each other coherently and that there is unity in its multiplicity and there is conclusive proof for his oneness, ingeniousness, almightiness, greatness and kindness may the name of your God be great and Magnificent. Since the domain of being is one, the creator of that also should be not more than one. His sovereignty embraces all that exists."

وَاللَّهُ مِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ مُحِيطٌ

"And Allah besieges them from all around." (85:20) [5](#)

Following this point, Sadr ul-Muta'allihin states that the Divine book pointed to those verses of the Qur'an which we have cited earlier.

8. Causes: Their Place And Role In The World

The Holy Qur'an rests on the belief of "Tawhid in creation and Commandment". Nevertheless, it does not overlook the role of causation in the world. The Qur'an says:

وَاللَّهُ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِقَوْمٍ يَسْمَعُونَ

"Allah sends down water from the sky with which He revives the earth after its death. There is indeed a sign in that for a people who listen." (16:65).

The phrase "**Revive the earth**" means, to remind role of water as a means of reviving the earth.

What is indicated from the text of the Qur'an regarding the "causes and their role" is that God, the Omnipotent and Omniscient knows everything and is able to do everything. But he created the world

according to a particular design and within that system. He assigned to certain created things the task of creating certain other phenomena. But such created things are totally subordinated to Divine will and purpose and act as God's agents.

These agents perform their duties obediently. They operate under their Lord's command and do not deviate a bit from his path and are completely under Divine control:

...وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُومَ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ بِأَمْرِهِ...

"... and [He created] the sun, the moon, and the stars, [all of them] disposed by His command..." (7: 54).

The magnificent force of gravitation of the sun is effective in the vast domain of His sovereignty due to His will only. Yet such force operates in accordance with the God's command. The forceful gravitation of the earth is also very effective, but that is too insignificant vis-a-vis God's will and command. Do you not see that if God wills, He can grant ability to a small bird to fly against the gravitation of the earth and suspend in air for hours?

أَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى الطَّيْرِ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ فِي جَوِّ السَّمَاءِ مَا يُمْسِكُهُنَّ إِلَّا اللَّهُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

"Have they not regarded the birds disposed in the air of the sky: no one sustains them except Allah. There are indeed signs in that for a people who have faith." (16:79).

9. God: The Creator And Destroyer Of Causes

Therefore, from the stand point of the Qur'an the law of "Cause and Effect" is a great force in the system of the universe. It is valid and valuable. Man, in spite of possessing God given faculties, knowledge and increasing power of manipulation and performing amazing things in this world. Nevertheless, in all his efforts and acts, he should be aware of the law of causation, because he is only able to act within the field of its operation. Otherwise, all his efforts would be in vain. But this powerful system of cause and effort is under the domination of God's will. It means while there is a framework for man and other beings to act within that; there is no such limitation on God and this frame work is nothing for the real efficient cause of this system for it is He who with His power and knowledge created all the causes with a certain effect or plural effects and qualities. Any time He wills, He may strip a particular cause or a set of causes of its effects.

قَالُوا حَرِّقُوهُ وَانصُرُوا آلِهَتَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فَاعِلِينَ

“They said, ‘Burn him, and help your gods, if you are to do anything!’” (21:68).

قُلْنَا يَا نَارُ كُونِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

“We said, ‘O fire! Be cool and safe for Ibrahim!’” (21:69).

وَأَرَادُوا بِهِ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنَاهُمُ الْأَخْسَرِينَ

“They sought to outmaneuver him, but We made them the biggest losers.” (21:70).

Accordingly, whenever He considers necessary to divest the fire of its burning capacity, He can do it by the same command which has created the world.

If the wise and powerful men of this century have attained ability to stop the explosion of a bomb, or a mine and other explosive devices which are manufactured by him through radio and electronic messages, why not God be able to divest the same thing which he created of its effect?

The approach of some other religions, is also, similar an incident in Upanishad ken when Brahma divested fire of his burning power: Now Brahma won a victory for the gods. Now, in the victory of this Brahma the gods were exulting. They bethought themselves: "ours indeed is this victory, ours indeed is this greatness!"

"They said to Agni (Fire): Jatanedas, find out what this wonderful being is.

So, be it.

He ran unto it.

Unto him it spoke: "who are you?"

"Verily, I am Agni", he said,

"Verily, I am Jatavedas."

Of what power are you invested? Indeed, I might burn everything here, whatever there is here in the earth. It put down a straw before him 'Burn that!' He went forth at it with all speed. He was not able to burn it.

There upon indeed he returned, saying: "I have not been able, to find out who this wonderful being is."[6](#)

Thus, Brahma can divest the Agni (gods of fire) of its burning power to the extent that he is not able to burn even a straw.

10. Miracles And Supernatural Events From The Qur'anic View

Point

There is no contradiction between miracles and law of causation, which we have discussed above. According to the law of causation, "no phenomenon comes into existence without being produced by some cause". From the Qur'anic view–point there is cause of miracles also and the cause of miracles is God's special will. So, the incident of miracles is not only incompatible with general principle of causation, but it is not also inconsistent with the scientific and practical value of common law connection cause with effect, for, man in his quest to applying scientific laws which he has discovered within the system of causation operating in the physical world, does not expect to discover the absolute laws of nature that does not permit any exception.

All persons who are involved in research in the field of empirical sciences, know that most of the scientific laws which are discovered as the laws of nature, are subordinated to the laws of relativism. Conscious experts of natural science, who are not arrogant, do not believe in absoluteness and hundred percent certainty of these laws.

Yet, despite this uncertainty they pursue their research rest on the same relative laws and draw conclusion in accordance with the same laws that are only relatively true and applicable unless further discoveries in science prove them unfounded what had come to be known as a scientific and empirical law. In our ordinary life also, we are not to wait for discovering absolute and hundred percent valid laws.

All wise people in the world use for travelling, such means as car, train, ship, and air–plane which are controlled by expert technicians, and run by experienced and well–trained drivers, captains pilots, despite knowing well that all these means of transport do not guarantee hundred percent safety. At any moment even the most sophisticated of them despite being controlled and run by the best experts in the field may face some unexpected trouble and technical failure as a result of which they meet accident.

Scientists, in their research work, follow the same path. Every experienced scientist is well aware that any experiment conducted under new condition by new instruments, may lead to discover new facts and relationships between various natural objects may lead him to negate the earlier assumptions and reject the earlier scientific laws or may prove that earlier formulas are giving wrong results in certain circumstances and exceptional cases because of the presence of some unknown factors which undermine the earlier formulas discovered by themselves.

At the first stage, attempt to review the accepted assumptions and try to modify them. At the second stage, try to achieve maximum validity of the modified law with the possible highest percentage, for example (999999/1000000) and consequently in their work rely on this law. Now the frequency of miracles and supernatural events which occur in certain exceptional cases by the command of god is very small even less that so we may conclude that accepting the possibility of the occurrence of miracles

by the will and command of God does not undermine and affect the scientific and empirical validity of the general principle of causation.

11. Science Of Cause; Departure From Superstitious Conceptions

One of the valuable teachings of the Qur'an concerning the causes and their validities is elaborated as follows:

In the course of knowing the causes and the extent of their effects, we should rely merely on the knowledge that is clear, unambiguous and self-evident, that is, we may depend only on conclusive proofs which are able to remove all ambiguity, and rest not on some baseless and unverifiable assumptions.

To believe in imaginary physical factors, causes backwardness in science and technology and brings in its wake retrogression and inability to exploit the natural resources just like those ancient people who while suffering from certain maladies and diseases did not try to discover in a scientific way their real causes and took recourse in baseless superstitions such as the effect of stars on human fate, and as a result make use of their scientifically developed instruments like Astrolabe (*Ostorlab*) in order to foretell the effect of celestial spheres on man's affairs ignoring to make use of it for scientific purposes.

To believe in superstitious and imaginary forces in metaphysical sphere is more dangerous than it is in science, for it distracts man from the sublime principle of Tawhid and traps them into polytheism (Shirk). That is why Qur'an regarding the metaphysical causes emphatically and explicitly declares that one has to abstain from acting upon arbitrary dubious conjectures and opinions.

وَمَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا

“And they have no knowledge of it; they do not follow anything but conjecture, and surely conjecture is not substitute for truth.” (53:28).

وَقَالُوا لَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَنْ كَانَ هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى تِلْكَ أَمَانِيُّهُمْ قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

“And they say, ‘No one shall enter paradise except one who is a Jew or a Christian.’ Those are their [false] hopes! Say, ‘Produce your evidence, should you be truthful.’” (2: 111).

قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا سُبْحَانَهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ بِهَذَا أَتَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

“They say, ‘Allah has taken a son!’ Immaculate is He! He is the All-sufficient. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. You have no authority for this [statement]. Do you attribute to Allah what you do not know?” (10:68).

قُلْ إِنِّي عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّي وَكَذَّبْتُمْ بِهِ مَا عِنْدِي مَا تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ بِهِ إِنَّ الْحُكْمَ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ يَقْضِي الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْفَاصِلِينَ

“Say, ‘Indeed I stand on a manifest proof from my Lord and you have denied it. What you seek to hasten is not up to me. Judgement belongs only to Allah; He expounds the truth and He is the best of judge.’” (6:57).

The above quoted Qur'anic verses emphasize scientific knowledge based upon proof, conclusive, argument, self-evident and verification.

12. Supplication

Supplication is one of the causes that is effective in man's affair, that is, to focus attention on God with the totality of one's existence in seeking His assistance. There is no doubt that God is well aware of man's needs and his secret desire. But as He has formed a law that govern man's relation with nature in his life that is, nothing can be attained without struggle and action and that every action bears its fruits. He has laid down the principle that no treasure is uncovered without toil and no reward is conferred without one's being deserving it, similarly regarding man's direct relation with God a system of supplication and its acceptance by God has been determined.

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ

“When My servants ask you about Me, [tell them that] I am indeed near most. I answer the supplicant's call when he calls Me. So, let them respond to Me, and let them have faith in Me, so that they may fare rightly.” (2: 186).

Lest not anybody say:

"Is God's will be changed by our supplication, as He asks us to pray to have something from Him? Is not the Divine will changeable?"

This question resembles to the question regarding work and effort on one hand, and the Divine will and destiny (Qaza wa-Qadar) on the other, which has given rise to the controversy of will, determinism and intermediate position (Amr Bayn al-Amrayn).

In this context also, it is said: Is not everything predestined for everybody by God from pre-eternity? or is god's will or whatever He predestined from the beginning, changeable, as a result of man's beginning

changeable as a result of man's action and effort? In this matter we came to the conclusion that effort and action on the part of man are anyhow effective. We tried to solve this problem in the following way:

"God granted authority to man from pre-eternity to have freedom of choice and action and attain his aim according to his will." In this matter of supplication and its being granted also we may arrive at a similar conclusion that is as follows:

God is eternal, His will is also eternal and it is His immutable will that ordained a large part of the being that is nature to be in the state of "becoming" rather than remaining as "being". In this part of the being (nature), at every moment a new phenomenon may emerge automatically and in this continuous process prior factors play a vital role.

For instance, in certain cases my work or supplication, which is also regarded as a part of my effort, is effective and plays an important role, the same role or duty that God has destined for us from the beginning.

Accordingly, God is eternal and His knowledge and will are eternal too, and at the same time at any moment new phenomena emerge in this world, and that man's act, will, and supplication play an effective and important role in their emergence.

يَسْأَلُهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ

“All those who are in the heavens and the earth ask of him; every moment He is in a state (of glory).” (55:29).

If you undergo and face hardships, you should not be disappointed. You should not leave your efforts but strive and seek God's help, for you can never anticipate with certainty that there is no way out of a difficult situation. "Every day He exercises (universal) power." How you can consider yourself being defeated hundred percent. Most probably the situation may change tomorrow in your favor.

There are cited a lot of such new incidents in the Qur'an which happened contrary to man's anticipation. For instance, seeking of assistance by the Prophet Musa (a) (20:25–26); seeking of son by the prophet Zakariya (a) (19:19), etc. Through they considered to be as effective cause as other kinds of causes in the nature.

For instance, God granted particular qualities to light, heat, electricity, and gravity etc. or ordained that some herb with a specific chemical composition may be effective in curing a disease. Similarly, He assigned a particular role and effect to "supplication" which can be effective in fulfillment of man's desires. This effectiveness of supplication is not only confined to psychological effects only.

Psychological supplication still has many known and unknown effects.

For example, it revives hope, strength, will and actualize many hidden potentials in man, even encourages man to take up some job which he is not expected to perform. But the way Qur'an describes the effectiveness of supplication covers far greater aspects other than discussed above. The best description of the effect of supplication according to the Qur'an is given below:

Supplication itself is a kind of cause which has its effect; it is not necessarily psychological such as strengthening of will etc. Supplication in other religious scriptures is also considered to be an effective case in man's activities and affairs. This view is not only formed in the Semitic religious books but also in the Aryans books. The Avesta in this regard says:

"O, Mazda Ahura all those wise persons whom thou consider rightful and pious, make them successful. for I believe that expressing one's aspiration before thee bears fruit and success for one's salvation." (34: 10, *Avesta*)

The basic difference between the views of the Qur'an and the Avesta and other religious books is that in the later supplication is not addressed to the Creator of the universe only in the following supplication:

"O, Mazda! Ahura! I O, Urdibehish I O, Bahman! lest not this pious servant of yours cause any unpleasantness to you enable us to endeavour to offer to you my benediction and supplication. It is you who are more able than all people of the world to bestow success upon the pious and raise them to the world of spirits." (34: 9, *Avesta*)

There are numerous such instances in the Avesta, but in the Qur'an seeking help and supplication is specified to God only. The Qur'an emphasizes that we should raise our hand towards God only in order to seek our help, and to refrain from seeking help of anybody other than God, for deities are only agents who cannot do anything independently. They cannot grant anything to anybody and in the same way cannot take away anything from anybody.

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَدْعُو رَبِّي وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِهِ أَحَدًا

“Say: I only call upon my Lord, and I do not associate any one with him.” (72:20).

13. Tawhid As Regards To Worship

As we have discussed earlier, *Tawhid* in the Qur'an rests more than everything on monotheism and "Tawhid as regards to worship" is based upon it. It is considered to be the logical consequence of "Tawhid in creation and commandment". When it has been made clear that there is only God's will and command at work behind all affairs of the world e.g. creation, administration and sovereignty, and everything everybody acts in the way God destined to it.

Moreover, nothing has any independent role to play in this world except that which is determined by God

for it. When we know that all the sources of movement and are subordinated to Divine will such as the sun, the moon, the stars, clouds, wind, rain, lightening, thunder, soil, water, devils, angels, etc. then worship and praise of such obedient agents or their images and status is meaningless.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

“O men! serve your lord who created”. You and those before you so that you may guard (against evil)” (2:21).

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ فِرَاشًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقًا لَكُمْ ۗ فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

“Who made the earth a resting-place for you and the heaven a canopy and (who) sends down rain from the cloud then brings forth with it subsistence for you of the fruits; therefore, do not set up rivals to Allah while you know.” (2:22).

وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ الْجِنَّ وَخَلَقَهُمْ ۗ وَخَرَفُوا لَهُ بَنِينَ وَبَنَاتٍ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۗ سُبْحَانَ تَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ

“And they make the jinn associates with Allah, while He created them, and they falsely attribute to Him sons and daughters without knowledge; Glory be to Him, and highly exalted is He above what they ascribe (to Him)” (6: 100).

بَدِيعُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أُنَّىٰ يَكُونُ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ صَاحِبَةٌ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

“Wonderful originator of the heaven and the earth! How could He have a son when He has no spouse, and He (Himself) created everything, and He is the knower of all things” (6: 101).

ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَاعْبُدُوهُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ

“That is Allah, your Lord, there is no god except Him, the creator of all things; so, worship Him. He watches over all things.” (6: 102).

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ اللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ لَا تَسْجُدُوا لِلشَّمْسِ وَلَا لِلْقَمَرِ وَاسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُنَّ إِن كُنتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ

“Among His signs are the night and the day, and the sun and the moon. Do not prostrate to the sun, nor to the moon, but prostrate to Allah who created them, if it is Him that you worship.” (41:37).

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَندَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ

“Among the people are those who set up compeers besides Allah, loving them as if loving Allah –but the faithful have a more ardent love for Allah.” (2: 165).

If one wishes to worship for the fulfillment of one’s desires, all praise and supplication are due to God only, for He alone can fulfill one's desires:

قُلْ أَدْعُو مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُنَا وَلَا يَضُرُّنَا

“Say: shall we call on that besides Allah, which does not benefit us nor harm us...” (6: 71).

If worship is meant by self-effacement, love and passion of an imperfect being vis-a-vis the glory, perfection and beauty of the most perfect Being, it should be again for God only, for He is the only one who deserves to be the object of such love and passion.

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ

“...and those who believe are stronger in love for Allah ...” (2: 165.)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

“In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful” (1:1).

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

“All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds” (1:2).

الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

“The Beneficent, the Merciful” (1:3).

مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

“Master of the Day of Judgment” (1:4).

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

“You [alone] do we worship, and to You [alone] do we turn for help” (1:5).

Faith in one God Almighty, the Creator, the source of creation who is above everything, is found in most of the religions, philosophical schools and mystical schools. Furthermore, most of these schools of thought and religion, besides holding that there is only one God, are also of the view that there is no being in the world comparable with God, the prime Creator.

Accordingly, He is one and peerless. but the Qur'anic conception of *Tawhid* does not confine itself to this extent but goes to say that prime Creator is not the God of gods, He is the only God and that is all. This is why, in other religions, faith in the unity of God is not inconsistent with polytheism in worship, i.e. seeking help from others and worshipping other gods too.

But according to the Qur'an, *Tawhid* and the realization of the unity of God becomes meaningful only when it is practically translated into *Tawhid* in worship, supplication, seeking help, praise and *Tawhid* in obedience.

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ

“...and those who believe are stronger in love for Allah ...” (2: 165.)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

“In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful” (1:1).

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

“All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds” (1:2).

الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

“The Beneficent, the Merciful” (1:3).

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“Master of the Day of Judgment” (1:4).

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

“You [alone] do we worship, and to You [alone] do we turn for help” (1:5).

In order to gain deeper insight into the Qur'anic doctrine of monotheism and the far-reaching of the verses of the *Surah Al-Hamd*, we direct our attention to the following passages from the Avesta:

"O, *AhuraMazda*! bestow upon me with the blessing of *Urdibehish* that liberates virtuous and good people, welfare in the two worlds, corporeal and celestial; I that with good character is approaching thine."⁷

"O, *Urdibehish* I praise thee and Bahman and *Mazda Ahura* and *Sipant Armadh* in a new and befitting manner, for it is thou and these who have stretched and decorated the eternal celestial world for those who are pious and virtuous. And I seek from thee help whenever I am call for help."⁸

"O, *Urdibehish* shower our blessing rewards and boundaries *Goshtasp*, O, *Sipant Armadh* let my wishes and needs be fulfilled.

O, *Urdibehish*, or Lord bestow strength on thine prophet so that he may be able to apologize Thee.⁹

It is true that "AhuraMazda" is considered by the Avesta to be "the great God who is the source of all", and neither *Ahriman* nor the highest angels are to be equal to His rank. But in the matter of praise, supplication and seeking help, AhuraMazda¹⁰, Bahman¹¹, Urdibehish¹², Sipant Armadh¹³, etc., also, are objects of worship and their help is sought to fulfill man's needs and desires. But the Qur'an totally prohibits the worshipping of and seeking help from any being other than God.

14. Tawhid As Regards To Submission And Obedience

Obedience from the standpoint of the Qur'an as of two kinds:

- (1). Obedience along with the unquestioning submission vis-a-vis whatever is ordered to man. In the view of the Qur'an, this kind of obedience in fact, is called "servitude" (*'ubudiyah*), which is exclusive to God and not to any being other than Him.
- (2). Obedience to those who rightly have right of guardianship (*wilayah*) over us. In our interest and public interest as well as from the view of human inclinations it is essential to obey the *wali* that are the Prophet (S), the Imams (a) and those leaders or rulers that are appointed by the Prophet (S) and Imams

(a) or the leaders who have attained this status in the absence of Imam Mahdi (a) in accordance with the authentic religious traditions, and the parents etc.

The condition that makes their obedience obligatory is that they do not deviate from the path of justice and *shari'ah*. It is the duty of people to consider these matters critically and refrain from obeying those who violate the law of *shari'ah* and are unjust. Accordingly, such obedience is not absolute obedience and it is by means total submission and servitude.

اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهَيْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ
سُبْحَانَهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

“They have taken their scribes and their monks as lords besides Allah, and also Christ, Mary’s son; though they were commanded to worship only the One God, there is no god except Him; He is far too immaculate to have any partners that they ascribe [to Him]!” (9:31).

Muhammad ibn Ya'qub Al-Kulayni (329, H) in his book *Al-Kafi*, says that:

"Some of our associates narrates from Abu Basir that he enquired from Imam Sadiq (a) regarding these words of Allah:

اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهَيْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ

“They have taken their scribes and their monks as lords besides Allah...” (9:31).

"The Imam observed: By Allah they (rabbis and monks) never invited them for their worship (since) if they had invited them for their worship, at no cost would they have responded to them. Actually, those monks and rabbis rendered unlawful what was (divinely) lawful to them (on their own accord) and vice versa."

Al-Kulayni quotes the same tradition with reference to other sources also according to which the Imam's observation is as follows:

*“...By Allah, neither did they (Christians) fast for their monks and rabbis, nor did they pray for them, but actually they followed them (blindly) when they declared the unlawful as lawful and the lawful as unlawful...”*¹⁴

The Shia exegetes generally, while interpreting this verse of the Qur'an refers to the same tradition.

Imam Fakhr al-Razi (543 or 4-606 H) also, in his *Tafsir al-Kabir* writes:

"Know that God the exalted by the word *"ittakhidhu"* (they have taken) describes the Christians and Jews as committing a kind of Shirk. There are some points to be considered in this verse which are as follows:

The first issue: ...

The second issue: Most of the exegetes hold that by the term "Arbaban" (Lords) which occurs in the verse are not meant rabbis and Monks, but it refers to those who had subordinated them and blindly accepted whatever they said. There is a tradition regarding Adi ibn Hatam¹⁵ that when he was a Christian, one day he came to the Prophet (S) and the Prophet (S) was reciting the *Surah al-Baqarah*. When he reached this verse,

'Adi says" *I said to the Prophet (S) that we were not worshipping them.*

The Prophet (S) said: *did not they declare the lawful as unlawful and were you not declaring also the same?*

'Adi said: 'Yes'

Then the Prophet (S) said: *it was the same as worshipping them.*

Razi says: *I said to Abu al-'Aliyyah that what was the nature of godhood of rabbis and monks among the children of Israel (Bani Isra'il)?*

He replied: *It was so that whenever they come across something in the Holy Book which was contrary to what those rabbis and monks were saying, they accepted what those rabbis and monks said and rejected the text of the Holy Book."* ¹⁶

15. Submission Vis-A-Vis God's Commandments And Revelation

15- Submission vis-a-vis God's Commandments and Revelation and Abstention From Internal Divisive Disputations in the Rank of the Unitarians

Tawhid regarding submission and obedience automatically necessitates the worshipers of God, to surrender themselves to the Divine Commandments, in religious matters. In this regard, they should overlook their personal inclinations and attitudes in order to pave the way for unity and solidarity of the unitarians, and save them from internal divisive religious disputations. The Qur'an, in this regard says:

وَلِيَحْكُمُ أَهْلُ الْإِنْجِيلِ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

***"Let the people of the Injeel judge by what Allah has sent down in it. Those who do not judge by what Allah has sent down — it is they who are the transgressors"* (5:47).**

زَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيِّمًا عَلَيْهِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ

عَمَّا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَا جَاءَ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ

“We have sent down to you the Book with the truth, confirming what was before it of the Book and as a guardian over it. So, judge between them by what Allah has sent down, and do not follow their desires against the truth that has come to you. For each [community] among you We had appointed a code [of law] and a path, and had Allah wished He would have made you one community, but [His purposes required] that He should test you in respect to what He has given you. So, take the lead in all good works. To Allah shall be the return of you all, whereat He will inform you concerning that about which you used to differ” (5:48).

In these verses, the Qur'an put forwarded a logical and reasonable solution in order to save the followers of the revelation (*wahi*) from and kind of disunity so that all the people who has faith in God and the path of the Prophet (S) abstain from useless controversies and disputes¹⁷.

Every individual or group with his own understanding of Divine revelation (*wahi*) should rush towards good and virtues and in this way, compete for good deeds rather than engage itself in unwarranted and fruitless disputes like the followers of earlier religions.

The proper way to solve the issue as to "what is right"? One should in the first place, refer to the Qur'anic text for clarifying one's doubt. In case, differences arise as to what is truth and who is the bearer of truth. The final solution should be left to that day when all veils will be removed and sender of the revelation (*wahi*) will make the truth known in unambiguous manner.

It seems that this is the only way for attaining unity of the followers of the revelation (*wahi*). Otherwise, not only the followers of one Prophet or scripture will quarrel with the followers of other prophets and the right and bright path of God will be lost, but also there may emerge disagreements among the followers of the same Prophet and the same scripture regarding this or that Ijtihad and this or that creed as to which is right. Even the followers of the same creed may dispute with one another an account of following this Mujtahid or that Mujtahid, as a result of which the light of *wahi* will be reduced to a weak and dim light.

That is why the Holy Qur'an considers faith in Divine unity as the axis of all belief and deed in religion, and in definite terms declare the disputes of seventy-two sects (72 sects is a term, a popular term used in Rumi's *Mathnavi* i.e. different sects) on the unity of God among Muslim as deviation from the right path and prohibit all theological disputes except those that may be enlightening and free from prejudices and selfish interests. The disputations, that are prohibited, are those which are egotistic in the eyes of God and attainment of social unity that is based on revelation.

16. Essential Unity: The Uniqueness And The Peerlessness Of Allah, The Peerlessness Of God

أَمْ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ ۗ فَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْوَلِيُّ وَهُوَ يُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

“Have they taken guardians besides Him? [Say,] ‘It is Allah who is the Guardian, and He revives the dead, and He has power over all things’ (49:9).

وَمَا اخْتَلَفْتُمْ فِيهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَحُكْمُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ ۗ ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبِّي عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ

“Whatever thing you may differ about, its judgement is with Allah. That is Allah, my Lord. In Him I have put my trust, and to Him I turn penitently” (49: 10).

فَاطِرُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَمِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ أَزْوَاجًا يَذُرُّكُمْ فِيهِ أُنثَىٰ كَمَا يُنثَىٰ لِلْإِنسَانِ وَأُنثَىٰ لِلْإِنسَانِ كَمَا يُنثَىٰ لِلْإِنسَانِ وَالسَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

“The Originator of the Heavens and the Earth, He made for you mates from your own selves, and mates of the cattle, by which means He multiplies you. Nothing is like Him, and He is the All-hearing, the All-seeing” (49: 11).

لَهُ مَقَالِيدُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

“To Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth: He expands the provision for whomever He wishes, and tightens it [for whomever He wishes]. Indeed, He has knowledge of all things” (42: 12).

These verses again emphasize that God is the sole controller of the world, and add: "Naught is as His likeness". Therefore, God is a Peerless Being.

17. The Uniqueness Of God

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ

“Say: He, Allah, is One” (112: 1).

اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ

“Allah is He on Whom all depend” (112:2).

لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ

“He begets not, nor is He begotten” (112:3).

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

“And none is like Him” (112:4).

18. What Is Meant By Uniqueness And Peerlessness Of God:

The prominent thinkers are of the view that Uniqueness and Peerlessness of God is the same as His Essential Unity which has been a subject of philosophy and mysticism. the simplest interpretation of the Essential Unity can be given as follows:

When we say, "God is one", it is meant God is a Unique Essence that exclude the concept of multiplicity. Even it is not possible to conceive any two beings or two types that are like Him, therefore, uniqueness is implied in His Essence and Tawhid or oneness is also essential for His Essence.

Thus, to understand the oneness of God. It is necessary to, at least, know Him correctly, that is, to have a correct conception of the term "God" in our mind. If we understand by this term what is really meant by it, automatically we will reach the conclusion that if there is God, He is one and cannot be two or many, for, His Essence is incompatible with duality and multiplicity.

To make this matter more explicit, let us bring an example: Look at a line which is assumed to be in space and suppose this line extends on both sides infinitely. Now we assume one more line parallel to that one at a distance of one meter from the former and extend it infinitely on both sides. Whether there is any contradiction in assuming two parallel lines at such a distance? Dose it involves any difficulty or contradiction? No, for according to the definition of parallel such two lines will be at equal distance at every point, and if they are extended up to infinity, they will never meet.

Irrespective of all discussions regarding the correctness of this definition as to whether it is relative or absolute and so on, it is clear that at least we can assume such lines.

Now let us look at a body which is before us. Suppose this body is enlarged infinitely from all sides and directions, that is in length, breadth, and height. Now the question is can we assume another body simultaneously that can extend like if in all dimensions infinitely? The reply will be in negative, for, the

former body has already occupied all the space and there remains no room for the second body, whether finite or infinite, unless the latter one enters into the former one.

But this assumption is also wrong for two bodies neither can enter into each other nor can the other occupy the space between the former's at once. Accordingly, we cannot assume two indefinite bodies in space. Whichever body that is assumed in space will not be other than the same one.

In this assumption, we discussed an infinite body and it was made clear that the assumption of an infinite body negates the existence of another infinite body automatically. Yet, at the same time it does not negate the possibility of the assumption of a non-physical being such as an infinite spirit that can enter an infinite body.

Stretch this issue to the extent that it may be applicable to a being that is infinite in all respects. Is it possible to assume two or more such being? No, for, in case of assuming two such beings each one of them should be different from the other one. Hence, the existence of each one of the two will limit the other. Therefore, none of them will be infinite. Thus, God is a Being that is Peerless and Unique. His being is beyond all kinds of duality and multiplicity¹⁸.

19. Numerical Tawhid

If one fully understands the meaning of Tawhid and the Oneness of God, it could be well understood that His unity is not numerical unity such as "being in one piece." For, being numerically one implies that other such being is hypothetically possible, but due to certain factors it does not exist. This assumption is applicable to those beings only which have multiplicity inherent in them, that is there can be supposed to be two or more such things.

Sadr ul-Muta'allihin in his book *Shawlihid al-Rububiyyah* says: "His oneness is not numerical unity like that of other beings which when multiplied become numerous. Rather, His unity is real unity in the sense that He is peerless (It is not possible to assume a second or third like Him). (*Shawahid al-Rububiyyah*, p.48)

In his book *Arshiyah*, Mullah Sadra (Sadr ul-Muta'allihin) has discussed this interesting issue in a profound manner under the title *Qaedah al-Mashriyyah* who are interested in penetrating this issue further may refer to it.

20. Personal Unity

The term personal unity is used vis-a-vis specific and generic unity. For example, Hushang and his best-singing nightingale share generic unity for both of them are living beings (animals), but do not have personal or specific unity. Hushang and his black playmate share generic and specific unity but not class unity, for Hushang is white and his friend black.

At the same time, they have no personal unity as well, for, they are two different and distinct beings. Hushang and his brother Ahmad share generic and specific unity, for both are from the same race (white) and the same father and mother. Even their physical bodies, shapes and behaviours may share common features like an apple which is cut into two parts. But they do not have personal unity, for, after all they are two distinct individuals.

Personal unity in the peculiar sense discussed above, is associated with numerical unity. Therefore, God cannot be conceived as having personal unity and be a person. But from philosophical point of view personal unity possesses a profound and delicate meaning, which God possesses and cannot be without it.

From profound philosophical point of view, we can assert that every objective fact has to possess personal unity of its own accord, that is, it is distinct and different from other facts, whether it is essentially dualistic in nature or not. If it is non-dualistic in respect to its essence, then personal unity would be a necessity of His essence, and it is not determined necessarily by external factors. But if it is dualistic in respect to its essence, it needs to be specified by an external factor or factors in order to possess personal unity.

In this sense we claim that God also possesses personal unity, for, He is a Being which is distinguished from other realities. But personal unity is essential to His Being. Therefore, His identity is by His Own Being while the identity and personal unity of other being is dependent upon the others. It is God who has granted personal identity and unity to them.

Sadrul-Muta'allihin in his book *Arshiyah* says:

"Nothing except His Own Being determines His Identity..., Nothing is a proof for His existence save His Essence. His Being is a proof of and a witness to His uniqueness. As it is said "God is witness that there is no God save Him", For, His unity is not like that of a number of a species, as we usually understand by personal unity.

It is not also generic of specific or relative unity. His unity is unknowable. His unity is the root and basis of all forms of unity. His unity is of a different kind that is grounded in His Sublime Essence in the same way as His existence is necessitated by His Being, which is the source of all beings. Therefore, there is no second for Him..." (*Arshiyah*, p. 220,221)

21. Another Aspect Of "Essential Unity"

21. Another Aspect of "Essential Unity": Negation of compoundness (of God); Negation of Attributes over and above His Essence, and Negation of Multiplicity of Attributes or Unity of Attributes:

Another aspect of the Essential unity of God is that He is the Unique Being, Simple and Single, neither

His Essence is a compound of various parts nor His Being is composed of an Essence and Attributes that are over and above His Essence [19](#).

Conclusion

In mystical and philosophical works, usually four kinds of *Tawhid* are discussed: Essential Unity, Unity of Attributes, Unity of Acts and Unity in worship.

From these four kinds of Tawhid, Tawhid as regards to act and worship are directly and easily understandable from the Qur'an, and basically the Qur'anic teachings rest on these two kinds of Tawhid. But Tawhid as regards to Essence and Tawhid as regards Attributes cannot be deduced easily from the Qur'an.

If we study the Quran without being acquainted with the subtle and delicate philosophical and mystical ideas, probably, we cannot find even a single verse in the Qur'an that can directly be related to these two kinds of Tawhid. But if we turn to the Qur'an with full command of the subtle notions of philosophy and mysticism and contemplate seriously, we can find some verses of the Qur'an that are relevant to these two kinds of Tawhid. It is for this reason that for understanding of these verses one requires grater knowledge than required ordinarily.

It is at a much higher level that the verses referring to Essential unity and unity of Attributes become intelligible and do not seem to be alien to the Qur'anic doctrine of unity. With great care and diligence such verses may be interpreted as having relevance to these subtle notions of unity.

[1.](#) How far is the usage of the Persian term "Izad" and "Yazd" as the translation of Allah correct and compatible with the original meaning of those terms in the Avesta?

Dr. Moin in A Persian Dictionary (Farhang-e Mo'in Vol. I) says: "Izad" (Yazd) means:

(1). Firishtah, Malak i.e. angles; (Explanation): In Zoroastrian faith it is used for angles who are in every respect inferior to "Amishaspand". The number of "Izadan" are many and divided into two categories: "Minawi" and "Jahani". AhuraMazda is at the head of Yazdan. The term Yazdan is a plural form of Yazd, but in Pahlavi and Persian languages is used as a singular noun for God.

(2). Khuda, Afaridegar i.e. Creator, Allah. Its plural form is Yazdan.

[2.](#) Regarding the origin of this word different views have been advanced (from 20 to 30 views). You may refer to Taj al-Arus, vol. 1 to 9, the word 'illah' and its derivation.

[3.](#) Many philosopher and thinkers have interpreted the term creation (Khalq) and command (Amr) as the former referring the physical world and the latter the world of abstraction or ideas. For having better understanding of these terms one may refer my article published a few years ago in Maktab-e Tashayy'u.

[4.](#) Asfar, Vol.6, p.94.

[5.](#) The verse 85: 20 is related to God's knowledge and might which encompasses all disbelievers who deny the Divine truths. But Sadr ul-Muta'allihin has generalized it meaning to cover all these things.

[6.](#) 362-363, The Upanishad.

[7.](#) The Avesta, 32, 2, 3.

[8.](#) The Avesta, 33.

[9.](#) The Avesta, 23.

[10.](#) Mazda, Ahura, Mazda Ahura and AhuraMazda all are name of God, the great Creator, according to the Zoroastrian faith. (The Avesta, ft. note. p. 32) AhuraMazda, AhuraMazda, Hormazd, Ormazd, Ormazd, Hormazd, Humwzd (Pahlavi; Ohrmazd). AhuraMazda the wise Lord, the almighty God of ancient Iranian and the Zoroastrian is the Creator of the earth and the heaven, and Amishaspand and Izadan are also created by Him. He is Himself power and wisdom, and is the source of good virtuously, holiness and pity. (A Persian dictionary "Farhang-e Mo'in", Vol. 5).

[11.](#) The first of the arch angles that represents AhuraMazda 's pure thought, wisdom and knowledge and teaches man right speech. (The Avesta, ft. note p. 32).

[12.](#) The second of the arch angles that represents AhuraMazda's truthfulness and purity, and he is the responsible for celestial sphere and god's fire on the earth. (The Avesta ft. note p. 32).

[13.](#) The fourth of the arch angles denotes virtuosity and sacred humility. This angel represents friendship, patience and humility of AhuraMazda in celestial sphere and is the guardian of the earth, its welfare and progress in the physical world. It is regarded as female that encourages people to engage themselves in agriculture and cultivation of land. It is called AhuraMazda's daughter in the same way as Auhar is revert and exalted by being called AhuraMazda's son. (The Avesta, ft. note, p. 32).

[14.](#) Al-Kafi, 2, 153. Please refer to online edition of Muhammad Ya'qub Al-Kulayni's book, Al-Kafi: <http://www.holybooks.com/al-kafi-shia-divine-text/> [8]

[15.](#) 'Adi ibne Hitam (d. 68 A.H), is one of the companions of the Prophet (S) that came from Syria to Madinah and embraced Islam.

[16.](#) Tafsir al-Kabir, 16, 36, 37.

[17.](#) Notes at the end of the chapter.

[18.](#) Tawhid in submission and obedience to God is one of the valuable aspects of Islamic Tawhid that place a decisive role in Socio-economic structure of the society. In our discourse, we have confined ourselves to exposition of the basic principle of Islamic Tawhid only, and have not gone into details of its various aspects that are related to Islamic social system, economic system and the education system pertaining to human life and society.

[19.](#) A detailed account of this notion has been given in the eleventh chapter in book of philosophy, of which one may refer to Al-Asfar Vol. 6, PP- 100-105.

Sadr ul-Muta'allehIn, in Al-Shawahid Al-Rububiyah basis his proof of the unity of God on this argument only. In this regard he says:

"He second emanation of the oneness (Wahdaniyyat) of the Necessary Being: for this valuable notion that is the most significant one in the view of 'Urafa with the knowledge that God has kindly bestowed upon us, we have a divine argument (Burhan-e 'Arshi) which is conclusive and highly irrefutable in its strength ..."

Chapter 5: Names and Attributes of God in the Qur'an

1. Name, Attribute

In the process of cognizing every objective reality, man acquires more or less an explicit and distinct mental impression or conception, in the light of which, he can distinguish it from other facts. Sometimes, man assumes something in this world, and at the same time, knows that such a thing is not real but is

merely an imaginary thing.

Take for instance, an architect's design which he has prepared for constructing a building that has not come into existence yet now. He just conceives a building that may be constructed in accordance with it. In this case, also, man should have distinct and clear idea of the imaginary thing in his mind so that it may be distinguished from other imaginary or real things with which he has been acquainted.

Such conceptions or impressions of things, imaginary or real, may be expressed by their natural or inherent names. It is to be noted that these 'names' are not words or terms but are only images and pictures, clear or vague, of the things that man's mind has formed mentally to identify the things he has formed mentally in order to identify them. These names or images play the same role which is played by words and terms to make things intelligible.

When man communicates with himself only and refrains from exchanging views with others, he can use his private and unconventional names and mental images. But when he encounters others and exchanges his views with them, he is bound to use common names or sign for his mental constructions of factual or imaginary things to let others understand what he has in his mind. These are the words and terms which mankind gradually invented in the light of which they have got their denotation. The extent of the connotation of such accepted words depends on their convention. These symbols¹, that is, words are in fact commonly accepted names denoting real or hypothetical matters.

In a broad sense, all words including noun, adjective, adverb, conjunction, preposition sound etc. are names (*ism*)². Name in its broad sense means symbol. The usage of the word noun as distinguished from verb, article, adjective etc. is mostly related to later classifications of words in the course the development of grammar, and from there it become current in other fields such as mysticism, Theology (*kalam*), etc.

Thereafter it influenced the idiom of conversational language. In this classification, every word which was used to refer to a thing, a person, an act or a state was called "noun". And every word which was used for describing a particular quality of an existent was called "adjective". Accordingly, Farai-dun is a "noun", for this word is used to draw the attention of a listener towards an actual and objective being without taking into consideration of its specific quality. But the word "stout" is and adjective, for it indicates a particular quality, that is, stoutness, of a person (or a thing).

2. Names And Attributes Of God

We come across various Name and Attributes of God in theological discussions. But, before going in details of this issue it would be better, first to deal with another issue that pertains to suspension and anthropomorphism.

The theme of this discussion is whether our knowledge of God is to the extent that on its basis we can

ascribe to Him certain name or names and an attribute or attributes or our knowledge of God is up to this extent that we can just say that "He is" and that is all.

3. Suspension Or Nullification (T'atil)

A group of thinkers emphasized the point that man in his efforts for knowing the origin of being can achieve this much knowledge only to say that there is an origin of the world, and a source for existence, without having a definite knowledge of such origin and source of being³. In different languages different names have been given to this "unknown reality", but all these words are names of a being and "proper nouns", that is these are merely indicators of some conception of His reality, that is, the origin of being.

The origin which we know His being only. We are aware that "He" is and He is not an imaginary being. But we do not have the least knowledge of His nature. All these names denote merely His being, nothing more. That is why the best expression or name for the origin of being is the term "He" and its equivalent expressions in other languages such as He (هو), (او) and so on, which not only denotes His Being, but also implies His "unknowability". Anyhow, it should be kept in mind that even known terms such as *Khuda, Allah, God, Brahma, AhuraMazda*, etc., are not more explicit than the term "He" and its equivalent terms.

According to these thinkers, any name or attribute that are made to refer to the origin of existence, with a view to describe Him better, not only will be alien to Him but will also result in misleading notions about the origin of beings. According to this view, the highest stage of the knowledge of the origin is to confess that "He is and He is superior to and beyond all conception that man conforms to".

"Oh, thou ist beyond the reach of all imagination analogy and fancy; And superior to all that has been said, and what has been heard that written about thee."

According to this view, "the knowledge of the origin", after affirming faith in the existence of the origin, extends in one direction, only that is sublimity and purity of God in its to be superior to and beyond all notions which are fabricated by human mind. Philosophers and theologians (*Mutakallimun*) called this doctrine "the doctrine of suspension", (*Ta'til*) for it holds that human understanding and intellect is incapable of attaining the least knowledge of Him, therefore suspended.

But the term suspension (*Ta'til*) in *Shii* tradition is used in another sense. In their tradition they consider suspension as the belief that the world is devoid of an intelligent creator and the term "God" is devoid of having any attributes at all.

Al-Kulayni in his book *Al-Kafi*, narrates from Hassan ibn Saeed:

"Abu Jaffar the second i.e. (the tenth Imam (a)) he was asked: Is it possible to say that God is "a thing". He replied, Yes. For this conception (of God) place Him beyond the two extremes: The extreme of suspension and the extreme of anthropomorphism⁴."

In other traditions the following words are narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (A):

"...Since the negation (of all attributes) leads to the same absurdity, that is negation of the actual existence of God; and the second direction leads to anthropomorphism⁵."

Shaykh al-Saduq in his book *Asrar al-Tawhid*, quotes the following tradition:

"Abd al-Rahim al-Qasir said that I sent a set of questions to Abu 'Abd Allah (Imam A'ayan of which is the following:"

..."Regarding the existence of glorified Lord kindly enlighten me whether He possesses a particular form and features? God makes my thy... ransom, would you please write your view about the true faith regarding Tawhid. Then, he (Imam al-Sadiq (a)) replied, my letter through 'Abd al-Malik ibn A'ayan as follows":

"May God bless you. You have asked about the true faith regarding Tawhid and the faith of earlier religions to god. Nothing like Him and He is hearing and seeing. He is superior to all that is said about Him by the followers of the doctrine of anthropomorphism. They make Him like His creatures and attribute falsity to Allah."

May God bless you. Know that the true faith regarding Tawhid is the same that is elaborated in the Qur'an while describing the Attributes of God. Therefore, keep away from believing in absurdity and futility and anthropomorphism as well. There is neither negation nor comparison. He is eternally Existent God. God is superior to what people say about Him. Do not go beyond the Qur'an, because despite having light in your possession, you are likely to go astray⁶.

In a way it may be said that suspension in its first sense naturally and logically leads to the second sense as well. When existence except that, "He is". Now the question will arise automatically: who and what is the referent of the pronoun "He". We may use the pronoun "he" to indicate some person or something we know already and can be distinguished from other beings. Therefore. if we say we do not know anything about the origin except that "He is", we are using a pronoun that has no referent or in case it has referent that is imaginary hypothetical.

This type of criticism is made by many contemporary materialist thinkers on theology. Hence, if really, God exist, at least, we should have some idea about His reality in order to distinguish Him from other realities which we know that we should not confuse Him with other beings.

4. A Critique Of The Doctrine Of T'atil (Suspension)

The basic criticism of this doctrine is as follows:

If inability of mankind regarding the knowledge of God is to this extent that he cannot know anything

about God, and only can remember Him by the word 'He', which means "absolute ambiguity" concerning God.

Now the question is: how can one believe His reality. It means that those great thinkers who have accepted the doctrine of suspension have fallen prey to a kind of misinterpretation. They have confused the knowledge of the essence (*Marifat be Kunh*) and the knowledge of the signs (*Marifat be Vajh*) or aspects. A thing may possess many specific signs or through which we can distinguish it from other things. In this case, if we become familiar with any of the particular signs or aspects of a thing we will be in a position to recognize it in the midst of other things without waiting to be acquainted with all its aspects that distinguish it from other being. Not only this is true about God, but also for other being as well.

For instance, you have two children and you can easily distinguish them from each other. But are you in a position to claim that you are acquainted with all of their physical and psychological features?

Hence, as for the possibility of all embracing comprehensive knowledge about God, it may be confessed that man's ability to acquire such a knowledge is not possible and his mind has to give up all efforts to know God comprehensively. As a poet says:

*"Intellect can know the Essence of His;
If a straw reaches the bottom of an ocean"*

But as far as the comprehension of God's sign is concerns in some way or other, that is, that kind of knowledge which distinguishes His Being with other than Him. One should have this kind of knowledge of God. As a matter of principle without the least knowledge of this kind it would be absurd to talk about God.

Therefore, impossibility of a comprehensive knowledge of the Essence of God does not necessarily mean that we are unable to gain any kind of knowledge of God. But, there is a middle position between the absolute comprehensive knowledge of God and absolute incomprehensibility of such a knowledge. There are rather many such middle positions ranging from relative knowledge up to knowledge of one or more dimensions of the Absolute Being.

If we probe deeper into problem of knowing God, its value and limitations, it leads us to the realization that even man's knowledge of this very corporeal world also is not absolute, that is, we cannot know the essence of an object. Contemporary scientific knowledge also is concerned with phenomena only and not the essences and substance of an object.

So far as the knowledge of the origin of things is concerned, we find the same limitations of knowledge, with the difference that we realize that every object of nature possesses essence which is the bearer and receptacle of the appearances. But our knowledge of God and His reflection with phenomena leads us to this conclusion that He is Doer of all and the Creator of all objects and is not the bearer or receptacle of

them.

Therefore, an intelligent man while contemplating over the Essence of God, may confess his inability sincerely by saying:

I do not know what are Thou; whatsoever is Thine Being.

But, when the same man looks at the mirror (of nature) that reflects the images and signs of God, and becomes aware of certain distinctive signs of God, naturally he will be in a position to have some kind of knowledge of God. Anyhow, this kind of knowledge is far better than absolute ignorance about God. This possibility enables him to talk with certainty about His being.

Hence, it should be concluded that whoever believes in the existence of God, automatically apprehends Him through at least, one of His Attributes in accordance with the way through which he pursues God. This knowledge of God will be associated with qualities of God as, the Origin, Creator, Sustainer, Controller, and the Necessary Being etc.

5. Anthropomorphism (Tashbih)

Anthropomorphism is an approach exactly opposed to the doctrine of suspension. In this theory God is made to be like other being in term of their shapes and forms, and difference of God with other beings is regarded as being of the type at the level of which one being has with any other being.

In different religious texts we come across various interpretations which indicate their anthropomorphic approaches⁷.

6. A Critique Of The Doctrine Of Anthropomorphism

The most fundamental criticism of anthropomorphism is that it is deceptive, for, in this approach such attributes are spoken with regard to God which are incompatible with His Being source (of all beings) and a Necessary Being, for example, it is said⁸:

"He is a great spirit in the body of this world."

if "He" is a spirit in the body of this world, how is He the source of the existence of this world which is His body?

Was this soul body or had some other body before it created this body (world)?

If this soul was bodyless, then it should not have needed any body. In this case, the world which He has brought into existence should be His creation and not His body or form. If he was in some other form, then whether He was the source of that form or not, and so on.

Generally, if the source of this world is the same Infinite existence, then it is wrong to consider for Him, shape form, etc., for, these things are indications of limits and finitudes, whereas the infinite cannot have limitations or finitude.

7. Neither Suspension, Nor Anthropomorphism, But Relative

Knowledge

The correct position, we may state thus: neither suspension, nor anthropomorphism. Man does not have comprehensive and all-embracing knowledge of the source of being; but through His peculiar signs which man comes across in His creations, he may gain some valuable, though, relative knowledge of God. However, any instance of such knowledge will not be a full or absolute knowledge.

He (of course) possesses all positive aspects which are reflected in such cases of awareness. But, at the same time, He is free from all those limiting negative aspects of relative awareness which accompany the positive aspects.

Accordingly, the best names and attributes are inadequate to express the infinite character of His being. So, we can use the best names and attribute only with the condition that we have already purified it from their negative and limiting aspects. Otherwise, it will give us an incorrect and finite picture from God which may not be in conformity with "His reality." It is from this stand point that we say:

God is higher than any name or attribute. He cannot be described and the highest degree of knowledge of Him is to consider Him higher than any knowledge.

...the perfection of believing in His oneness is to regard Him pure, and the perfection of His purity is to deny Him attributes...[9](#)

Therefore, according to this motto "His are the most beautiful names." So, we should beware not to be a deviate

وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا وَذَرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

“To Allah belong the Best Names, so supplicate Him by them, and abandon those who commit sacrilege in His names. Soon they shall be requited for what they used to do.” (7:180).

Here, it is the matter of best names; this name or that name. So, it is meaningless to debate over it

قُلْ ادْعُوا اللَّهَ أَوْ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمَنَ أَيًّا مَا تَدْعُوا فَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ

“Say: call upon Allah or call upon the beneficent God; whichever you call upon, He has the best

names...” (17:110).

Accordingly, the main point is to avoid any name or attribute to God which has a negative impression. And it should also not be inconsistent with His absolute and infinite perfection. For this reason, one should be careful in using words while describing His acts, and attributes. Lest His greatness is affected any sort of ambiguity and clouds His absoluteness and infinitude.

When we say God is seeing and He sees our acts, indeed we use the word 'seeing' with its very same meaning but with a broad sense than what we mean in ordinary usage.

When you say: Ahmed saw your act, you mean he cast a glance on your action. That is, a picture of your action is sketched in his eyes. This picture was transferred to the center of the faculty of vision via nerves, and Ahmed in this way acquired the picture of your act and got awareness.

Now, suppose Ahmed to be blind. Immediately you may ask: if Ahmed is blind, how did he see your act? Here you may change your words and say: I am wrong. But if medical efforts bear fruit and forge electrical eyes for blinds to enable them to receive visual waves and transfer them to the center of the factuality of vision without passing from the eyes. In that case, could there remain any doubt about the answer of the following question!

"Ahmed is blind. How did he see your act?"

Will you give up your claim and say that I was in mistake? Never, for, you may reply to the objector that your objection is true but before the invention of the electrical eyes, and not now. For, "seeing" is not confined only to the natural eyes. So, even, if someone is blind, in principle he is not blind for, he can see by means of electrical eyes.

Accordingly, with the invention of the electrical eyes one of our limitations which is about "seeing" was removed. That is, the limitation of having only the natural eyes. By the invention of those electrical eyes one who has no eyes or shuts his eyes can still be able to see around.

If this analytic outlook is broadened, we will come to see that many of such limitations which appear in our mind with the word "seeing", either they do not interfere in the mechanism of "seeing", or in case they interfere, they do not concern the basic issue of seeing which we emphasized on.

The basic point regarding the notion of "seeing" is that it may provide us reliable and direct awareness which cannot be achieved through other channels. That is why sometimes the word "seeing" and its derivations are used in the sense of awareness for example, we say:

"What a young man sees in a mirror.

An old man can see the same in a mud brick."

A young man can see in the mirror by the help of his eyes. But by what means the old man can see in a

mud brick? The reply is that, he can see by the deep vision of wisdom and experience not by means of eyes. This is applicable in the case of "listening", "smelling", "touching". The main point in all these cases is that we achieve "clear awareness". But can I see the voice of lion in the forest? The reply is negative. Here I have to say I hear the voice of lion. Why? for, the acquisition of the voice is possible only through the sense of hearing and not the sense of seeing. Accordingly, the senses of hearing and seeing are related to the notion of acquisition. Acquisition by means of seeing or hearing.

It becomes clear that there is a wider principle for the notion of "seeing". Firstly, we presented various terms for the notion of "acquisition" in order to find out that their varieties are related to the variety of physical organs that is, different senses. Later on, we extended it in order to find out artificial substitutes and we applied the same words. But this extension brought in its wake further extension that is:

The certain, clear and direct knowledge of facts through the eyes is called "seeing" and the certain, clear, and factual awareness through the ears is called "hearing". These are called so independently of the fact whether they are gained by means of the related organs or by other means.

In the light of such meanings we say: God sees, God is seeing, God hears, God is hearing and so on.

Therefore, God is seeing means that He is aware of what we perceive through the sense of seeing. God is hearing means, He is aware of what we acquire through the sense of hearing.

As in the following sentences;

God is kind, God loves, God does not love, God gets angry, God desires, God does not like etc. words are to be used in their proper sense but ignoring those limitations which usually come in our minds while using them. That is why "neither suspension, nor anthropomorphism" is accepted in theology from Islamic and Qur'anic point of view.

8. Names And Attributes Of God In The Qur'an

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ

“He is Allah besides whom there is no god; the Knower of the unseen and the seen; He is the beneficent, the Merciful” (59:22).

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيْمِنُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

“He is Allah, besides whom there is no god; the King, the Holy, the Giver of peace, the Granter of security, Guardian over all, the Mighty, the Supreme, the Possessor of every greatness; Glory be to Allah from what they set up (with Him)” (59:23).

هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِي الْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

“He is Allah the Creator, the Maker; the Fashioner, His are the most excellent names; whatever is in the heavens and the earth declares His glory: and He is the Mighty, the Wise.” (59:24).

9. His Are The Most Excellent Names

The main names and the Attributes of God in the Qur'an are the same which have come in this verse (لَهُ) (الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى) “His are the most excellent names”. Therefore, if you contemplate over any goodness and perfect manifestation, the highest degree of them is for God.

Take for instance: Powerfulness and efficiency are perfections and God is efficient and powerful who possesses the highest power.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

“Surely Allah has power over all things.” (29:20).

Knowledge is also perfection, and God is the knower at the highest level. He knows the unseen and the seen and He knows all things.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

“...Surely Allah knows all things.” (9: 115).

عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْكَبِيرِ الْمُتَعَالِ

“The knower or the unseen and the seen...” (13:9).

Wisdom is also perfection, God is the all wise.

وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

“... and Allah is Knowing, Wise.” (60: 10).

Kindness to others is also perfection, God is the Beneficent, the Merciful at the highest level.

أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

“...He is the most Merciful of the merciful ones.” (12:64).

So, you are free to call upon God with any excellent name.

قُلِ ادْعُوا اللَّهَ أَوْ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمَنَ أَيًّا مَا تَدْعُوا فَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ

'Say: call upon Allah or call upon, the beneficent God; whichever you call upon, He has the best names; ...' (17:110).

وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا وَذُرُّوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

“And Allah's are the best names, therefore, Call on Him thereby, and leave alone those who violate the sanctity of His names; they shall be recompensed for what they did.” (7:180).

10. Excellence And Purity, Of God

God possesses every perfection at highest level, therefore, He is free from any kind of shortcoming impoverishments or needs. Some verses of the Qur'an which came in praise of Allah emphasized His purity and perfection.

11. Allah: Un-Needingness Of Allah

The Qur'an considers God free from impoverishments and neediness, and emphasized on His un-needingness as an important principle in theology, in the light of which one can recognize certain intellectual and ideological deviations concerning the notion of God.

12. Allah: Un-Needingness Of Begetting Child

قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا سُبْحَانَهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنَّ عِنْدَكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ بِهَذَا ۗ أَتَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

“They say: Allah has taken a son (to Himself)! Glory be to Him; He is the self-sufficient; His is what is in the heavens and what is in the earth; you have no authority for this; do you say against Allah what you do not know” (10:68).

Followers of many of the religions such as: Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, Hindus, Polytheists, etc., and say Him to have child or children. The Qur'an brings up this matter in two forms and refutes both cases. The first form is natural son and the second is adopted son.

وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ الْجِنَّ وَخَلَقَهُمْ وَخَرَقُوا لَهُ بَنِينَ وَبَنَاتٍ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ

“And the make the jinn and associates with Allah, while He created them, and they falsely attribute to Him sons and daughters without knowledge; glory be to Him, and highly exalted is He above what they ascribe (for Him)” (6: 100).

بَدِيعُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ صَاحِبَةٌ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

Wonderful originator of the heavens and the earth! How could He have a son when He has no consort, and lie (Himself) created everything, and He is the knower of all things.”(6: 101).

ذُلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَاعْبُدُوهُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ

“That is Allah, your Lord, there is no god but He; the Creator of all things, therefore serve Him, and He has charge of all things” (6: 102).

These verses and some other verses of the Qur’an negate such father–son relationship in its ordinary sense; that is, the relation of a really born son with God is inconsistent with the exalted position of God who says that the emergence of all beings from God is to be considered as having the relation of a creator and creature not in the form of begetting.

In certain ancient religious beliefs, the emergence of the world from the origins of being was considered to be in the nature of birth or detachment from the body of creator. The author of the book "*The Hindu conception of the Deity*" says:

"It seems that the oldest theological theory about God stemmed from the efforts to find answer to the following question:

Where from has emerged this world?

That is why the Upanishads are full of theories about the creation such that each of them believed that the first cause is creator of this world and then attempted to prove why and how it occurred:

There is an old theory in the *Brihadaranyaka* which says that: "The world in the beginning was only a self (At man) in the form of a person (*purusha*); when he looked at his around, there was nothing except himself ... he wished to have a mate. Actually, he was as large as a man and woman who are in their embracement. He divided himself into two parts: one, the husband (*pati*) and the other, wife (*patni*). These two gave birth to a man."

Such rough analogy in which God has considered to be like man and creation in the form of birth, that is.

similar to the reproduction of the animate beings, is seemingly one of the oldest doctrines about the creation which has been left for us by the Upanishad. [10](#)

Catholic Christianity considers the notion of birth as being higher than the notion of "creation" and they curse those people who believe that the son of God is created:

"...We have faith in one father God. Omnipotent creator of all the seen and the unseen. And in the one God, Jesus, the son of God, born from a father, the unique son who was begotten from the essence of father, God from God. Light from light, the real God from the real God, who is born, not created, from the essence identical with father's, by Him all come to existence i.e. whatsoever is in the heaven and in the earth. He descended and manifested for to save we human beings. He became man, he suffered and on the third day got up and ascended to the heaven. He will come to judge the alive and the dead, and we believe in Holy spirit and catholic churches, and curse to those people who say once upon a time Jesus did not exist, or believe that He was nothing before He come into existence, or that he came into existence from nothing, and curse to those who hold that He is from other essence, or the son of God was created so He, is changeable ... (A part of the official latter of Christianity which was approved in the second Nicaean council, June, 325 AD) [11](#).

In Hindu religion, not only "the birth of world from God" was brought up, but the "birth of God himself has been mentioned. "God encounters all diameters of the heaven, He is born from eternity, He is inside the womb, He has been born and will be born"... [12](#).

Such interpretation can be justified on the philosophical grounds and Hindu world outlook, which sometime stretch up to the monism. But the acceptance of such interpretations and justifications, in the case of being true, are not at the level of the common people. that is, these are beyond the intellectual capacity of not only masses but also of higher ranking people. Therefore, when theology in general calls upon the people towards Him, the Qur'an calls upon in a comprehensive and general form as follows:

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ

“Say: He, Allah, is One” (112:1).

اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ

“Allah is He on Whom all depend” (112:2).

لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ

“He begets not, nor is He begotten” (112:3).

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

“And none is like Him” (112:4).

With reference to what we related from the Upanishad, one can easily understand why in this verse, the Qur'an talks about the "begets not" and "nor was begotten" of God.

The Qur'an considers all these ideas as unfounded and unfair and says that: those people who consider the servants of God who are His creature as a part of God separated from Him, are openly following the path of blasphemy.

وَجَعَلُوا لَهُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ جُزْءًا ۗ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَكَفُورٌ مُبِينٌ

“And they assign to Him a part of His servants; man, to be sure, is clearly ungrateful” (43: 15).

13. Allah: Besought Of Our Faith, Prayer And Obedience

وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ إِنَّ تَكْفُرُوا أَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ

“And Musa said: if you are ungrateful, you and those on the earth all together, most surely Allah is self-sufficient, praised” (14:8).

Man, regarding the principle of God's un-neediness should know that He needs neither our faith, or worship or obedience. If He seeks our faith, worship and obedience in fact it is for our own sake not for His.

If the whole universe turns infidel and non-believing, His glory cannot be stained.

14. Allah: Needing No Charities

Since the time the Islamic movement reached a stage of its completion it has become necessary for the Muslims to contribute from their own lives and properties to safeguard Islam. And whenever it becomes inevitable, they ought to spend their saving, and sacrifice their lives in the cause of Allah. In this regard, the infidels and 'hypocrites' began murmuring that it means Mohammad's God is poor and needs our financial support. Otherwise, He could have supplied His Prophet (S) directly:

لَقَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَقِيرٌ وَنَحْنُ أَغْنِيَاءُ سَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَالُوا وَقَتَلَهُمُ الْآنبيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَتَقُولُ ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ

“Allah has certainly heard the remark of those who said, ‘Allah is poor and we are rich.’ We will record what they have said, and their killing of the prophets unjustly, 1 and We shall say, ‘Taste the punishment of the burning.’” (3: 181).

This verse clearly states that this said remark belongs to the Jews because, their great crime of murdering the Prophets has been referred to in other verses of the Qur'an also which reminiscent their past as well.

In the following verse also, this point has been raised in the context of Jews:

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ يَدُ اللَّهِ مَغْلُولَةٌ غُلَّتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَلُعِنُوا بِمَا قَالُوا بَلْ يَدَاهُ مَبْسُوطَتَانِ يُنفِقُ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ

“And Jews say: the hand of Allah is tied up! their hands shall be shackled and they shall be cursed for what they say. Nat, both His hands are spread out, He expends as He pleases....” (5:64).

Through such poisoning, they attempted to shake the financial support of the people to the Islamic movement, and thereby, to slow down the amazingly fast speed of the expansion of Islam. The Qur'an reminded the Muslims that the God they worshipped needs none of wealth. If He asks you to spend your wealth in the path of Truth, it is for your honour, and for stalling any danger of your humiliation and annihilation.

وَأَنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ وَأَحْسِنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

“And spend in the way of Allah and cast not yourselves to perdition with your own hands, and do good (to others); surely Allah loves the doers of good” (2: 195).

If one refuses to obey divine demands and refrains from spending in the path of God, one simply betrays one's own self, as God needs no part of anyone's wealth.

هَآ أَنتُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ تُدْعُونَ لِنُفْسِكُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يَبْخُلُ وَمَنْ يَبْخُلْ فَإِنَّمَا يَبْخُلُ عَن نَفْسِهِ وَاللَّهُ الْغَنِيُّ وَأَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ وَإِن تَتَوَلَّوْا يَسْتَبْدِلْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَكُونُوا أَمْثَالَكُمْ

“Behold! you are those who are called upon to spend in Allah's way, but among you are those who are niggardly, and whoever is niggardly against his own soul; and Allah is self-sufficient and you have need (of Him), and if you turn back He will bring in your place another people, then they will not be like you.” (47:38).

15. Allah: Above Any Need Of Our Sacrifices

The general view of the idolaters in matters of sacrifice pertained to their offering of the most delicious victuals to the gods, and thereby to win their pleasure and favour. Sometimes with the same aim they sacrificed animals and handed over their carcasses to the temple-Keepers, hoping that they would feed them to the gods. But the Qur'an calls upon the people to worship a God who is unending and is above the (usual) need of dress or food. So, what for is sacrifice in Islam? The Qur'an answers to this question thus:

وَالْبُدْنَ جَعَلْنَاهَا لَكُمْ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ فِيهَا خَيْرٌ فَاذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا صَوَافَّ فَإِذَا وَجَبَتْ جُنُوبُهَا فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا وَأَطِعُوا الْقَانِعَ وَالْمُعْتَرَّ كَذَلِكَ سَخَّرْنَاهَا لَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

“And (as for) the camels, We have made them of the signs of the religion of Allah for you; for you therein is much good; therefore mention the name of Allah on them as they stand in a row, then when they fall down eat of them and feed the poor man who is contented and the beggar; thus have We made them subservient to you, that you may be grateful” (22:36).

لَنْ يَنَالَ اللَّهُ لُحُومُهَا وَلَا دِمَاؤُهَا وَلَكِنْ يَنَالُهُ التَّقْوَىٰ مِنْكُمْ كَذَلِكَ سَخَّرَهَا لَكُمْ لِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَاكُمْ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

“It is not their flesh or their blood that reaches Allah. Rather it is your God wariness that reaches Him. Thus, has He disposed them for your benefit so that you may magnify Allah for His guiding you. And give good news to the virtuous” (22:37).

16. Allah: Unneedness Of Our Holy War

The command for fighting holy wars and sacrificing of lives is not because God is in need of our support or cannot dispense Truth and Justice without our fighting.

Nay, He is Omnipotent and is free from any kind of weakness, inability and need. If He asked us to wage holy war against oppression, wickedness and whatever is bad, it is because in the process of such a struggle we may improve ourselves and achieve the highest human perfections.

وَمَنْ جَاهَدَ فَإِنَّمَا يُجَاهِدُ لِنَفْسِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ

“And whoever strives hard, he strives only for his own soul; most surely Allah is self-sufficient, above (need of) the world.” (29:6).

17. The Absolute Un-Needingness Of God

In brief, it is you who need God, and He is above any need of us.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ

***'O men! You are they who stand in need of Allah, and Allah is He who is the self-sufficient, the praised one.'* (35: 15).**

18. Allah Is Beyond Time And Space

Being free from "poverty and need", God must be beyond Time and Space, that is, He is neither contained in Time nor Place. He is but beyond Time of Place.

For, whatever is contained in place stands in need of it, and whatever is contained in time, should consider to be a being which not only contained in a special condition in particular time, otherwise, it could have not been contained in that particular time but, it could exist for ever in this case, if it could have not been a chronological being to be contained within the framework of time and its being to be depended to a particular condition of time.

19. Is God In The Heavens?

When we say God is beyond being contained in Time and Place, it implies that Place – Earth, Heaven or the Empyrean region – has no sense for Him. He was there before the creation of all things, therefore, how is it possible to call these creations to be His space, and quarters? Despite all this, in view of most of the people there is a special relationship between God and heaven. They seek God in heaven. At the time of prayer and supplication, they fix their eyes and raise their hands towards the heaven, as if God were in the Heaven. Even non-believers consider His place in the heaven.

The Qur'an narrates the story of Pharaoh who challenged the prophet Musa (S) and says.

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ مَا عَلِمْتُ لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرِي فَأَوْقِدْ لِي يَا هَامَانَ عَلَى الطِّينِ فَاجْعَلْ لِي صَرْحًا لَعَلِّي أَطَّلِعُ إِلَى إِلَهِ مُوسَى وَإِنِّي لَأَظُنُّهُ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ

***"And Pharaoh said: O Chief! I do not know of any god for you besides myself; Therefore, kindle a fire for me, O Haman, for brick, then prepare for me a lofty building so that I may obtain knowledge of Musa's God, and most surely I think him to be of the liars."* (28:38).**

Pharaoh thought, God is in the heaven, so to confirm whether the Prophet Musa's preaching was true or

false and also to confirm if the same God whose messenger, Musa, claimed to be existed there or not, he should try to reach the heaven. But how to go up to the heaven? The only way out that Pharaoh's imagination hit upon was to order the construction of a very high palace so that from the roof top of that he could look at the skies. He hoped to make inroads into the heaven from a palace taller than the pyramids and the sun temples of Egypt.

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يَا هَامَانَ ابْنِ لِي صَرْحًا لَعَلِّي أَبْلُغُ الْأَسْبَابَ

“And Pharaoh said: O Hamman! build for me a tower that I may attain the means of access” (40:36).

أَسْبَابَ السَّمَاوَاتِ فَأَطَّلِعَ إِلَى إِلَهِ مُوسَى وَإِنِّي لَأَظُنُّهُ كَاذِبًا

“The means or access to the heavens, then reach the God of Musa, and I surely think him to be a liar...” (40:37).

20. Record Of This Notion In Pre-Islamic Scriptures

21. In The Upanishads

The basic teachings of Hinduism are based upon pantheism, according to which heaven, and the earth, high and low, men and the world, all indicate (unity in multiplicity and multiplicity in unity). Hinduism does not conceive the world separate from God in the form of the Creator and the creature. Despite this, we come across in the Upanishads, which form a part of the revealed scripture of Hinduism, certain passages which describe the heaven as the world of Brahma the golden apartment of divinity etc., and it is said that the human soul after being purified from all impurities and attain perfection reaches the heaven and unites with Brahma or rather becomes Brahma.

3 – "Verily the seat of the self is the heart... verily who gradually comes to this realization ascends to the celestial world."

4 – "Now this luminous and calm self that leaves the body hurriedly and attains sublime life; thus, it appears its real form. This is what is called the self, it is eternal fearless. It is Brahma."

5 – "Verily there are three Sat-ti-yam. Syllables Sat" stands for being, that is eternal; "ti" means mortal; "yam" combines and reconciles both of them, that is why it is called yam day by day, verily one who realizes this, reaches the celestial world¹³

2 – "...All vices are turned away from there, for the world of Brahma is free from all evil¹⁴

3 – "But only those persons will have access to the world of Brahma who have lived the pious life of a seeker of religious sciences; only those will reach the world of Brahma. Those will enjoy in all the worlds infinite freedom (will enjoy absolute liberation) [15](#)."

"...Verily there are two rivers in the world of Brahma on the third heaven and those are *Aya*, *Nya*, there is a lake named *Airamad'ya* from where blessing and ecstasy gushes out; it is here that there is a fig tree named *Samasavana* which bears figs; it is here that there is a fort named *Aparjitah*; and there is the Golden apartment of divinity."

"But only those who lived the pious life of a seeker of religious science can find these two rivers (*Aya*, *Nya*). Only these can possess the world of Brahma. They enjoy infinite freedom in all the world [16](#)."

[22. In The Avesta](#)

In the Avesta also there are frequent references to the celestial world (*Jahan-e-Minawi*). We find certain characteristics of celestial world in the Avesta which are described by the phrases such as the celestial world is the rest house of God and his chosen angels.

"O, Ahura I ask thee, tell me:

"Whether I who purifies virtuous people from sin and guide them to the right path, would be able with the permission of the lord of celestial world to give the people the good tidings that they would be admitted to the rest house where being like thee, O' Mazda, with *Urdibehish* and *Bahman* is in deep slumber [17](#)?"

The celestial world is a world opposed to the corporeal world.

"O' Mazda Ahura! bestow upon me with the blessing of *Urdibehish* that liberates virtuous and good people, welfare in the two worlds, corporeal and celestial; I that with good character is approaching thine [18](#)."

The celestial world is the world of Ahura Mazda that is made to reward those who are virtuous.

"O' Mazda at the time when the sinners and the worshipers of evil would be punished, ask *Bahman* that he opens the doors of the eternal celestial world for those who have striven to eradicate falsehood and evil and sought for the victory of truth and good [19](#)."

The celestial world is the same world that is named in Persian after *Asman* [20](#), the supervising spirit of the celestial world.

"I praise the bright *Asman* (heaven), a place better suited for virtuous (*Behisht*), the place that showers felicity; I praise that *Asman* [21](#)."

The decrees of Ahura Mazda are heavenly, that is they are issued from *Asman*;

"If O' Izad (God), thou do not abstain from helping and giving refuge to us, and with the help of *Urdibehish*, we are benefited by the governance and power of the celestial sphere, I can stand up along with all of my followers that listen to that celestial command and can fight against all those who are unbelievers and humiliate thine law, and can make effort to eliminate them²²."

The heaven sustains the earth:

"O' Ahura! I asked thee, tell me who is that sustains the heavens at their place that day do not fall down." (23,24)

This sustenance is through the assistance of *Farvahrs*, the mighty and the victorious.

"AhuraMazda addressing *septiman Zardusht*, says:

O' *Septiman!* verily, I make you aware of the splendor and power and assistance and support of the powerful victorious and virtuous *Farvahrs*, and tell thee how the victorious and virtuous *Foroheres* rush to assistance and support me."

"O' *Zardusht* It is because of their power and splendor that I sustain the heavens high so that from their height they do fall down and engulf the earth and all that surrender it. The heavens that is hoisted by the celestial spirits and which is stable and spread from horizon to horizon, is like bright and Malden metal that visible at the third sphere over the earth. The heaven that like a fabric woven with stars contains in it *Mazda, Mehr, Shan* and *Sepandarmedh*. The heaven whose beginning and end is not perishable²³."

23. In The Torah (The Old Testament)

In Old Testament (the Torah) also we come across the similar interpretations of heavens being the seat of God as such:

"Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the Lord descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace. the whole mountain trembled violently, and the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder then Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him.

The Lord descended to the top of mount Sinai and called Moses to the top of the mountain, So, Moses went up and the Lord said to him, "Go down and warn the people so, they do not force their way through to see the Lord and many of them perish. Even the priests, who approach the Lord must consecrate themselves, or the Lord will break out against them.

Moses said to the Lord, "the people cannot come up Mount Sinai, because you yourself warned us, put limits around the mountain and set it apart as holy."

The Lord replied, "Go down and bring Aaron up with you. But the priests and the people must not force their way through to come up to the Lord, or he will break out against them²⁴."

"Then he said to Moses, "come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. You are to worship at a distance, but Moses alone is to approach the Lord; the others must not come near. And the people may not come up with him²⁵."

"Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself. But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites; they saw God, and they ate and drank.

The Lord said to Moses, "come up to me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the Law and Commands I have written for their instruction²⁶."

It is said in many occasions that whenever God had some work, He used to come down and then ascend.

"Then the Lord said, "the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me, if not, I will know.

The men turned away and went towards Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the Lord then Abraham approached him and said: "will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked²⁷."

Then after doing that work He went up.

"When he had finished speaking with Abraham God went up from him²⁸."

"Then God went up from him (Jacob) at the place where he had talked with him²⁹."

because His seat is in the heavens:

Then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Forgive and act; deal with each man according to all he does, since you know his heart (for you alone know the hearts of all men)³⁰.

"Go up to the high heaven? The only way out that Firon's imagination hit upon was to order the construction of a very high palace so that from the roof top of that he could look at the skies. He hoped to make inroads into the heaven from a palace taller than the pyramids and the sun temples of Egypt."

"And Pharaoh said: O Haman! build for me a tower that I may attain the means of access, the means of access to the heavens, then reach the God of Musa, and I surely think him to be a liar...³¹"

24. In The Bible

God in the Bible is repeatedly called "your father who is in the heaven."

"You have heard that it was said, 'love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But I tell you: love your

enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven ... Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect³²."

"Be careful not to do your "acts of righteousness" before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven ... This, then, is how you should pray: ... our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven, Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts...³³

In the Bible too "heaven" is the kingdom of God and the place to which good people shall finally go.

"Blessed are those who are presented because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven³⁴."

25. God And Heaven In The Qur'an

In the Qur'an God has been addressed as "One who is in the heaven".

أَمِنْتُمْ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ أَنْ يَخْسِفَ بِكُمْ الْأَرْضَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَمُورُ

"Are you secure that He who is in the sky will not make the earth swallow you while it quakes?" (67: 16).

أَمْ أَمِنْتُمْ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ أَنْ يُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا ۗ فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ كَيْفَ نَذِيرِ

"Are you secure that He who is in the sky will not unleash upon you a rain of stones? Soon you will know how My warning has been!" (67: 17).

We come across in the Qur'an some other issues that have a close relationship with this issue.

26. Descending Of Divine Message (Wahi) From Heaven:

The Qur'an says that God "sends the Message below" (from heaven). So, the *Wahi* (divine Message) came down from above:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ...

"It is He who has send the Book down to you" (3:7).

Where from does the Message come down? From the heaven. That is why the devils hide themselves in the heaven in order to eaves drop something from the Message.

وَأَنَا لَمَسْنَا السَّمَاءَ فَوَجَدْنَاهَا مُلَبَّتٌ حَرَسًا شَدِيدًا وَشُهَابًا

“Indeed, We made for the heaven and found it full of mighty sentries and flames” (72:8).

وَأَنَا كُنَّا نَقْعُدُ مِنْهَا مَقَاعِدَ لِلسَّمْعِ فَمَنْ يَسْتَمِعِ الْآنَ يَجِدْ لَهُ شِهَابًا رَصَدًا

“We used to sit in its positions to eavesdrop, but anyone listening now finds a flame waiting for him” (72:9).

إِنَّا زَيْنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِزِينَةِ الْكَوَاكِبِ

“Surely We have adorned the nearest heaven with an adornment, the stars” (37:6).

وَحِفْظًا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ مَارِدٍ

“And (there is) a safeguard against every rebellious Shaitan” (37:7).

لَا يَسْمَعُونَ إِلَى الْمَلَأِ الْأَعْلَى وَيُقَذَّفُونَ مِنْ كُلِّ جَانِبٍ

“They cannot listen to the exalted assembly and they are thrown at from every side” (37:8).

دُحُورًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ وَاصِبٌ

“Being driven off, and for them is a perpetual chastisement” (37:9).

إِلَّا مَنْ خَطِفَ الْخَطْفَةَ فَأَتْبَعَهُ شِهَابٌ ثَاقِبٌ

“Except him who snatches off but once, then there follows him a brightly shining flame” (37:10).

27. Ascension

Angels and the prophets 'ascend' to God:

سَأَلْ سَائِلٌ بِعَذَابٍ وَاقِعٍ

“One demanding, demanded the chastisement which must befall” (70:1).

لِلْكَافِرِينَ لَيْسَ لَهُ دَافِعٌ

“The unbelievers – there is none to avert it” (70:2).

مِنَ اللَّهِ ذِي الْمَعَارِجِ

“From Allah, the Lord of the ways of Ascent” (70:3).

تَعْرُجُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ خَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ

“To Him ascend the angels and the Spirit in a day the measure of which is fifty thousand years” (70:4).

مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَى

“The heart was not untrue in (making him see) what he saw” (53:11).

أَفْتُمَارُونَهُ عَلَىٰ مَا يَرَىٰ

“What! do you then dispute with him as to what he saw?” (53:12).

وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَىٰ

“And certainly he saw him in another descent” (53:13).

عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ

“At the farthest lote-tree” (53:14).

عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَىٰ

“Near which is the garden, the place to be resorted to” (53:15).

إِذْ يَغْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَىٰ

“When that which covers covered the lote-tree” (53: 16).

مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَىٰ

“The eye did not turn aside, nor did it exceed the limit” (53: 17).

لَقَدْ رَأَىٰ مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَىٰ

“Certainly he saw of the greatest signs of his Lord” (53: 18).

According to the traditions the Ascension of the Prophet is mostly termed as a kind of heaven-walk.

28. The Throne

The Qur'an repeatedly reminds us of the God's throne:

وَهُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ

'...He is Lord of the tremendous throne.' (9: 129).

قُلْ مَنْ رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ

“Say: who is Lord of the seven Heavens, and Lord of the tremendous throne?” (23:86).

آيَاتِ سَجْدَةِ اللَّهِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ

“Allah, there is no God except Him, the Lord of the tremendous throne.” (27:26).

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْكَرِيمِ

“... There is no God except Him, the Lord of the throne of Grace.” (23: 116).

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ...

“And He it is who created the heavens and the earth in six days—and His throne was upon the water...” (11:7).

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ

“Lo! Your Lord is Allah who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then He established Himself upon the throne...” (10:3).

The verses No. 7:45, 13:20, 25:29, 20:5, 32:4, 57:4 are in this regard.

الَّذِينَ يَحْمِلُونَ الْعَرْشَ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ

“Those who bear the throne, and all who are round about it hymn the praises of their Lord ...” (40:7).

وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ عَلَىٰ أَرْجَائِهَا ۗ وَيَحْمِلُ عَرْشَ رَبِّكَ فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ ثَمَانِيَةٌ

“and the angels will be all over it, and the Throne of your Lord will be borne that day by eight [angels]” (69: 17).

وَتَرَى الْمَلَائِكَةَ حَافِينَ مِنْ حَوْلِ الْعَرْشِ

“And you (O Muhammad) will see the angels surrounding the Throne...” (39:75).

29. What Is The Throne Of God And Where Is It?

Apart from the above verses regarding the throne of God, the term "throne" has been used in other verses also:

وَرَفَعَ أَبَوَيْهِ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَخَرُّوا لَهُ سُجَّدًا

“And he placed his parents on the throne and they fell down before him prostrate...” (12: 100).

إِنِّي وَجَدْتُ امْرَأَةً تَمْلِكُهُمْ وَأُوتِيَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَلَهَا عَرْشٌ عَظِيمٌ

“Lo! I found a woman ruling over them, and she hath been given (abundance) of all thing, and

there is a mighty throne.” (27:23).

In this and other similar verses as 27:28, 27:38, 27:41, 27:42 the term throne is used in its ordinary sense, e.g. a throne which rulers sit on and give orders to their agents who throng round, or below the throne, to act in this way to that.

Do the verses about the throne of God imply that God sits on it like the earthly monarchs, and issues orders from there, with the sole difference that His throne is very big in keeping with His greatness and importance?

In the Bible God's "throne" has been referred to thus: "But I tell you, do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool³⁵."

If we attempt a mental picture of God from the aforementioned phrase in the Bible, we see Him in the form of a very huge giant whose feet, when he sits in the heaven, rest on earth. But the question is, if a reader of the Bible reading the above quoted verses (from Mathew: 5), really thinks so, or takes metaphor or simile implying that the authority and power of God encompasses all the heavens and earth, as has been done by the Qur'an:

وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ

“...His Throne extends over the heavens and the earth...” (2: 255)

"*Kursi*" (the Throne) which is another form of the same "*Arsh*" (the throne).

If by '*Kursi*' is meant "*Arsh*" and by '*Kursi*' the 'chair' that is placed on the throne for the ruler to sit on, with his ministers and clerks sitting or standing at its bottom and the attendants bowing near it, (the God shall look like an awesome temporal despot). Not so, this verse simply means that the entire universe is under God's rule.

Therefore, the term "*Arsh*" stands as a metaphor for the Absolute Sovereignty and rule of God³⁶. The Qur'an says,

وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ

“God's throne was on water [before the creation of heavens and earth]” (11:7).

A throne or chair do not stand on water unless it is in the form of a boat or raft. This verse, therefore, means that earth and sky had not yet been formed and the universe was all water, and God ruled over nothing but water³⁷. But after the creation of heavens and earth, the center of God's command shifted to the heavens from where He carries on His rule over heavens and earth.

In most of the verses of the Qur'an, about God's "*Arsh*" we should, for our convenience, accept this meaning of the term. But in the case of the two verses: 47:7 and 69:17 this sense is not directly admissible, for, we can interpret two verses as follows:

The throne of God exists in a visible state and is transportable, for on the Day of Rising it shall be drawn over the heads of the Risen.

So, some Muslims consider the "*Arsh*" of God as a costly throne set at the highest center point of heaven. This throne is made of the most precious matters and jewels³⁸, and on each of its legs some text is inscribed.

There is no doubt that Muslim scholars from the very beginning have believed that such vulgar conception is inconsistent with the elevated position of god who is introduced in the Qur'an as a Being free of all needs. But, however, according to the two concerned verses, throne (*Arsh*) is only a symbol expressive of the infinite. So, this question still remains at its place (unanswered): What is the *Arsh* of God and where is it?

30. The Centers Of Command In Nature

A certain and clear answer to the question as "What is the throne of God and where is it, is not an easy task. The clearest and the most definite answer to this question should be sought from the very 'revelation', but as we have said that we cannot acquire anything beyond this point that:

"The throne of God is a visible fact from where God rules over the world, and that it is borne by a group (of angels)."³⁹

To expect a clear and definite answer to such questions from any source other than the 'revelations' shall be out of place. Any awareness on this matter: "What is the throne (*Arsh*) and where is it" is neither in the realm of empirical science, nor in the domain of speculative philosophy. Now, the empirical philosophy from many points in the realm of nature asks us to apprehend things imaginatively as the Qur'an proffers us clues to the visualization of *Arsh*.

Inside an atom, proton is assigned the commanding role at the center. In the solar system the sun is the center of command and the source of light, heat, gases and various waves which enable other beings/elements inside this system to fulfil their needs and so on.

31. The Supreme Center Of Command In Nature

If there exists such a central system in all solar systems that contain the galaxies and clouds, then the entire cosmos automatically comes under one supreme central command where all other commands eventually terminate⁴⁰. For example, the brain is the supreme center of command in man, and all the secondary and tertiary commands that issue forth from the spinal cord or the heart etc. Originally

emanate from brain.

This supreme center of command, assumed for the entire nature, is a concrete fact which is in the heaven as well as is transportable, having a special relation between itself and God, and that all divine command to nature flow from that center without the need to presume any space for God. Just as some people hold that soul is separate from body and is still related with body.

32. The Supreme Center Of Command In The Entire Being

If we take the cosmos to be much bigger than the physical world, an argument for one supreme centre becomes automatically relevant. The great centre governing the physical world should be itself subordinate to that supreme centre. And, without attributing any metaphorical meaning to *Arsh* as denoting his omnipotence of degrading it to mean a rich jeweled throne on which God is sitting, we can discover in that supreme centre all the attributes of *Arsh* as indicated in the Qur'an.

In the Islamic mystical tradition also, we come across some interpretations of "*Arsh*" as being a solid fact. Qaisari in the introduction to the *Sharh-he Fusus-e Qaisari* says that:

"...'*Arsh*' is the manifestation of the merciful name and quarter of Him, and "*Kursi*" (throne) is manifestation of the compassionate name..." [41,42](#)

Islamic traditions also in general consider "*Arsh*" as a concrete heavenly fact.

33. Supplication And Heaven

With respect to the earlier assumed picture of *Arsh* raising hands towards the sky while praying, or looking up while meditating on God, became easily understandable. For, the Heaven is certainly a spectacle of beauty, full of God's grace, and signs of His glory, power, wisdom and knowledge.

لَقَدْ رَأَى مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَى

“Certainly he (the Prophet in Ascension) saw, of the greatest signs of his Lord.” (53: 18).

It is a place where from various divine benedictions such as water, air, useful gases, heat, light and hundreds of other useful matters descend on the earth and its inhabitants.

وَفِي السَّمَاءِ رِزْقُكُمْ وَمَا تُوعَدُونَ

“And in the heaven, is your sustenance and what you are threatened with.” (51:22).

Therefore, concentrating on it (the heaven) and raising hands in prayer towards it, even without believing that God's place lies there is helpful in its acceptance (by God).

Ascension of angels or the prophets is in the form of Ascending to the heaven towards the supreme center of command of God, not for seeing Him or meeting Him face to face, but it is actually to see His great signs that reflect His God hood.

لَقَدْ رَأَى مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَى

“Certainly he (the Prophet in Ascension) saw, of the greatest signs of his Lord.” (53: 18).

Tabarsi in the interpretation of verse No. 12 of chapter No. 53 (*The Star*) writes as follows:

"...And Abi Al-Aliyah records: The Prophet (S) of God was asked whether he had seen god in the night of Ascension. He replied: "I saw a brook then a curtain at its back, and behind that curtain was a refulgence. I saw nothing more. "Abathar and Abi Sa'id Khidri also say: The Prophet (S) was asked in respect of the divine words... The Heart was ... saw"..., and he answered: "I (just) saw a light."

But Shabi refers to 'Abd Allah ibn al-Haris and Ibn 'Abbas, as having said, "Muhammad (S) did see his God". Then he refers to Masruq who had narrated to him his conversation with Ayesha. He (Masruq) had asked Ayesha directly regarding this matter, Ayesha told him that his question made her hair stand on end (in terror). Masruq asked her to wait a little and recited والنجم Ayesha then said to him to pause for a while, and not to allow his thought to wander.

The Prophet (S) saw Gabriel with his real face, but whoever said that the Prophet (S) had seen God, is a liar. God the exalted says that eyes cannot encompass Him, but He may enter the eyes...[43](#)

Verily, Divine message (Wahi) may descend from the heaven to the earth, for the recipient of the message is the Prophet (S). He, after all, is an earthly being who is placed on the earth. Accordingly, whether he listens to this divine message as a voice, or sees and reads it in the form of a written text, receives the message in his heart as a spontaneous phenomenon. So, the message in this form can be lowered down from the heaven (descension), and devils to tap it clandestinely may hide themselves in the heaven.

In this way the verses of the Qur'an regarding this part can be easily understood and accepted without interpreting the notions of "descension", "heaven" and the story of the devils ambushing in heaven. So much is the interpretation of the heavenly books which are used as the divine books of revelation can be approved without requiring their interpretation.

34. Is God Omnipresent?

From some verses in the Qur'an and religious debates, we draw such concepts as God is nowhere but everywhere.

وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ

“...He is with you wherever you are...” (57:4).

A group of people relate this verse to the following impression as:

"God is everywhere." But a deeper awareness of the Qur'an will show that it is not so. There are certain phrases in the Qur'an showing that God is with the virtuous, God is with those who tolerate, and so on.

But in each one of these phrases "being God with..." is used for expression of particular meanings. In the verses 5:12, 8:13, 20:46, 47:35, 47:192, 16:128, 9:36, 9:40, 9:133, 9:194 are for expression of meaning that God is assistant of Good people, pious men, patient, and believers.

The verses 4:108, 58:7 are for the expression of this matter that God knows everything and nothing is covered for Him.

يَسْتَخْفُونَ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يَسْتَخْفُونَ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَهُوَ مَعَهُمْ إِذْ يُبَيِّتُونَ مَا لَا يَرْضَىٰ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطًا

“They hid themselves from men and do not hid themselves from Allah, and He is with them when they meditate by night words which please Him not, and Allah encompasses what they do.” (4:108).

A deep concentration into the verse (57:4) indicates that there are such meanings in this verse as well.

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يَعْلَمُ مَا يَلِجُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا وَمَا يَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيهَا وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

“He it is who created the heaven and the earth in six Periods, and lie is firm in power He knows that which goes deep down into the earth and that which comes forth out of it, and that which comes down from the heaven and that which goes up into it, and lie is with you wherever you are; and Allah sees what you do.” (57:4).

But in the history of Muslim thought we come across certain people or groups who relate these verses to other things⁴⁴. The Pantheistic tradition of mysticism seeks to justify its view by citing the following

verses:

...وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ...

“...He is with you wherever you are...” (57:4).

وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ

“...And know that Allah intervenes between man and his heart.” (8:24).

وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ

“...And we are nearer to him than his life-vein [jugular]” (50: 16).

فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوا فَتَمَّ وَجْهُ اللَّهِ

“...so whichever way you turn, there is the face of Allah...” (2: 115).

They claim that Qur'an too endorses their belief in the Immanence of God, and, in this way God is the sum total of all in this world, and that every object is a part of Him⁴⁵. But a deeper insight into these verses, and those preceding and following ones, reveals that not even one of these verses even remotely refers to Immanence.

In fact, the verse 57:4 aims at ensuring to the Muslims a fuller measure of God's help by saying that: "He is with you wherever you are."

The verses 8:24 and 50: 16 seek to impress on man that God knows all that is overt or covert, open or secret. The verse 2: 115 clarifies to Muslims the fact that the God of "Masjid ul-Aqsa" is the same as the God of Masjid ul-Haram, and if the 'Qiblah' of Muslims was shifted from Masjid ul-Aqsa to Masjid ul-Haram, it was to assert the full independence of Islam, the Prophet (S) and his heavenly scripture and to silence those who say that the Prophet (S) is offering only a re-hash of Judaism, so none of these verses endorses pantheism.

Anyhow, what the preceding discussion about God leads to is that He is higher than all that is bound to place and time, Therefore, "He" is neither in the heaven nor on the earth nor everywhere.

35. The Issue Of The God's Visiblensess – Seeability

The verse 6: 103 in this context says:

لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْأَبْصَارَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ

“Vision comprehends Him not, and He comprehends (all) vision; and lie is the knower of subilties, the Aware.” (6: 103).

Allamah 'Hilli in his book *Kashf al-Murad* says:

"The Must-ness of God's being also implies a denial of His ever being visible." [46](#)

'Allamah further argues:

"Know that almost all the philosophers are of the view that God cannot be seen. But those who attribute God a body, believe God can be seen. Nevertheless, had these people not considered God as body, and had considered him as a Being abstract from matter, they too would not have counted his Visiblensess as Possible."

"But Asharites hold views contrary to those of all philosophers about the seeability of God. They claim that though God is not a body and is abstract from matter. He can still be seen." [47](#)

Ash'ari (P.330) in his book "*Maqalat*" says:

"Certain schools have expressed their faith in the seeability of God in this world itself. May be, God shows himself as one among those we come across in the street. Some of them believe in the Possibility of God entering various matters.

Often, they see a virtuous handsome man and guess that God had entered his frame.

Most people who claim that one may have the vision of God right here in the world, say that even shaking hands with God, touching Him or seeing Him frequently is possible [48](#). They further say that a person who is true of heart can meet with God in this world as also the other world. This belief has been referred to some of the followers of *Misr* and *Kahmas*.

It is also referred to the followers of Abdul Wahid bin Zaid that the seeability of God is in the same measure as one's goodness. Therefore, the better a man acts the more of God he can see.

Some other people believe that we can see God in this world in dream but not while awake.

Raqabah b.Musqala has said, "I saw God in dream declaring that he would award an exalted place to Sulayman Tihl as he had been offering his morning prayer with the same ablution (wudu) that he

performed for his late evening ('Isha) prayer, for about 40 years. That is to say, he kept sleepless nights and continued prayers till morning."

There are many people who disbelieve the claim that, God can be seen in this world and assert:

"*God can be seen only in the hereafter.*"[49](#)

Ash'ari has in the last part of the first volume of this book, summed up the ideas of "followers of traditions and sunnah" thus:

The Traditionists and Sunnis say that God can be seen on the judgement day as refulgent as the full moon (of the fourteenth), but by believers alone, and not by infidels for there shall hang a veil between God and infidels. God The great says:

كَلَّا إِنَّهُمْ عَنْ رَبِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَمَحْجُوبُونَ

***"No indeed! They will be alienated from their Lord on that day."* (83: 15).**

Musa (a) urged on God that He be seen by him right in this world. But God revealed His glory on the mountain and pulverized it to show that He cannot be seen in this world, but can be seen only in the hereafter.

This is the view that Ash'ari subscribed to. But 'Allamah Hilli wondered when God has no body according to Ash'ari himself, however, He can be seen either here or in the hereafter.

36. The Cause Of The Emergence Of This And Similar Beliefs Among Muslims

A survey of the options and beliefs of these people and their comparison with those of the non-Islamic sects, indicate that they had been more under the influence of the non-Islamic belief and thoughts than the teaching of Islam and the Qur'an. This explains the cause of their staying away from the right path.

Nevertheless, Abu al-Hassan Ash'ari's own view regarding the God's vision is not influenced by that of others because he and his followers always emphasized this Principle referring to the 'scripture' and sunnah in all Islamic sciences so that they succeed to prevent the deviated intellectual influence of outsiders.

Now the question arises: What caused them to believe in God's vision in the hereafter? It can be easily gathered from their own writings that what brought them to such a belief are certain parts of verses from the Qur'an itself.

The Qur'an repeatedly terms the Day of Judgement as a day of meeting God:

هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَلِّي عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَلَائِكَتُهُ لِيُخْرِجَكُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ ۚ وَكَانَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيمًا

“He it is who sends His blessings on you, and (to do) His angels, that He may bring you forth out of utter darkness into the light; and He is merciful to the believers” (33:43).

تَحِيَّتُهُمْ يَوْمَ يَلْقَوْنَهُ سَلَامٌ ۗ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَرِيمًا

Their salvation on the Day that they meet Him shall be, peace, and He has prepared for them an honorable reward.” (33:44).

There are many verses in the Qur'an that tell of the meeting of man with God on the Day of Judgement as 2:46, 2:223, 2:249, 6:31, 6: 154: 9:77, 10:7, 10:11, 10:45, 11:29, 13:2, 18: 105, 18:110, 25:21, 29:5, 29:23, 30:8, 32: 10, 32:23, 84:6. It is the way of interpreting these verses that makes the mess. However, they do speak of meeting God. For instance, in the verse 6 of chapter 84, the Qur'an says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا فَمُلَاقِيهِ

“O man! Surely you must strive (to attain) to your Lord, a hard striving until you meet Him.” (84:6).

Ash'ari and his group are of the view that by the term "meeting" means face to face confrontation, in other words "seeing". Accordingly, Day of Judgement is the day of seeing God. Particularly, dilating on the following verses they are certain that by 'meeting' is meant, the real vision:

وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاطِرَةٌ

“(Some) faces on that day shall be bright” (75:22).

إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ

“Looking towards their Lord” (75:23).

There is no denying the fact that if we too concentrate just on these verses, we would also think that the believers will see God face to face on the Day of Judgement. But the Qur'an contains other verses too on the issue on 'direct vision of God', suggesting its improbability in a clear and unmistakable way⁵⁰.

It is evident that to learn the Qur'anic teaching regarding this issue, in the first place these verses should be taken into consideration. In this verse such vulgar demand as "we want to see God" is put forwarded and refuted decisively.

In view of the fact that apprehension of non-empirical facts and faith in their existence always was difficult for skeptics and bad-believed people, some of the opponents of the prophets had been demanding to see God face to face to remove any doubt and disbelief (about God).

For instance, the Israelites thus urged upon Musa⁵¹:

وَأِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَا مُوسَىٰ لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّىٰ نَرَى اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْكُمُ الصَّاعِقَةُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ

“And when you said: O Musa! we will not believe in you until we see Allah manifestly so the punishment over look you while you look on.” (2:55).

The Israelites were so adamant in their insistence that prophet Musa had on alternative but to take the issue to God⁵²

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ مُوسَىٰ لِمِيقَاتِنَا وَكَلَّمَهُ رَبُّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ أَرِنِي أَنْظُرْ إِلَيْكَ قَالَ لَنْ نَرَاكَ إِلَّا أَنْظُرَ إِلَى الْجَبَلِ فَإِنِ اسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُ فَسَوْفَ تَرَانِي فَلَمَّا تَجَلَّىٰ رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ دَكًّا وَخَرَّ مُوسَىٰ صَعِقًا فَلَمَّا أَفَاقَ قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“When Moses arrived at Our tryst and his Lord spoke to him, he said, ‘My Lord, show [Yourself] to me, that I may look at You!’ He said, ‘You shall not see Me. But look at the mountain: if it abides in its place, then you will see Me.’ So, when his Lord disclosed Himself to the mountain, He levelled it, and Moses¹ fell down swooning. And when he recovered, he said, ‘Immaculate are You! I turn to You in penitence, and I am the first of the faithful” (7: 143).

The Arabs also had put the same demand to the Prophet (S) of Islam so that they could believe in God.

وَقَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّىٰ تَفْجُرَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ يَنْبُوعًا

“And they say: We will by no means believe in you until you cause a fountain to gush forth from the earth for us.” (17:90).

أَوْ تَكُونَ لَكَ جَنَّةٌ مِّنْ نَّخِيلٍ وَعِنَبٍ فَتُفَجِّرَ الْأَنْهَارَ خِلَالَهَا تَفْجِيرًا

“Or you should have a garden of palms and grapes in the midst of which you should cause rivers to flow forth, gushing out” (17:91).

أَوْ تُسْقِطَ السَّمَاءَ كَمَا زَعَمَتَ عَلَيْنَا كَيْسَفًا أَوْ تَأْتِيَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ قَبِيلًا

“Or you should cause the heaven to come down upon us in pieces as you think, or bring Allah and the angels face to face (with us)” (17:92).

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَوْ نَرَى رَبَّنَا لَقَدِ اسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَعَتَوْا عُتُوًا كَبِيرًا

“Those who do not expect to encounter Us say, ‘Why have angels not been sent down to us, or why do we not see our Lord?’ Certainly, they are full of arrogance within their souls, and mighty is the insolence of their impiety!” (25:21).

يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَ الْمَلَائِكَةَ لَا بُشْرَىٰ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُجْرِمِينَ وَيُقُولُونَ هِيَ حِجْرًا مَّحْجُورًا

“On the Day when they shall see the angels, there shall be no joy on that day for the guilty, and they shall say: It is a forbidden thing totally prohibited.” (25:22).

Berating the demand of those people who, in the time of the Prophet (S), wanted to see God. These verses consider it as indicative of their pride and recalcitrance. And as they were desirous of seeing the angels too, the Qur'an adds:

“Yes, they shall see the angels on the Date of Judgement. But that shall do them no good. These very angels shall be there deputed to belabour them for their sins. And those who clamour today to see them shall be crying them to keep away from them.”

The verse 6: 103 says exhorts with finality.

... لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ

“Eyes can encompass Him not.” (6: 103).

Do the above quoted verses not lead our minds to believe that God cannot be seen with the eyes in this world or the other?

Now, what is meant by meeting with God on the Day of judgement? Probably it means that, on that day, not an iota of doubt shall remain in anybody's mind about the existence of God. And, it shall be as good as seeing Him face to face.

37. God The Knower

God knows all things, for we human beings, the entire world is divided into two parts: The invisible (*ghayab*) and the visible (*shahadat*). But God is the knower of the invisible as of the visible. Actually, there is nothing hidden for God. The world as a whole is visible for Him.

عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْكَبِيرُ الْمُتَعَالِ

“The knower of the unseen and the seen, the Great, the most High” (13:9).

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَخْفَىٰ عَلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ

“Allah—surely nothing is hidden from Him in the earth or in the heaven.” (3:5).

God is aware of even the smallest things of the world, including each act that we do:

وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ

“...And whatever good you do, Allah surely knows it.” (2:215).

And God's knowledge is the knowledge of presence, as of something being just face-to-face. It is the knowledge of a witness who sees an incident with his own eyes to depose about it as a witness.

أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

“...Is it not sufficient that your Lord is witness to all things?” (41:53).

For ages the Philosophers and exponents of Islam had been thinking that the God's knowledge of particulars was inconsistent with the Essence of God. And this controversial issue i.e., "Divine Providence" (*Inayat*) had been preoccupying their minds. According to them God's knowledge of particular is justified only through His knowledge of the universals.

This approach is inconsistent with what the Qur'an says about the God's knowledge. At last, Mullah Sadra as he used his philosophy to explain the notions of necessity, contingency, unity, and multiplicity, applied the same approach to describe that God's comprehensive knowledge of particulars is the knowledge by Presence (immediate knowledge) which is in proportional with His Essence and in this way, he resolved the problem of "Providence" (*Inayat*).

Anyhow, the Qur'an emphasizes the God's knowledge by presence (immediate knowledge) on all matters in the world and considers god as **"The Knower" (6:73)**, **"The Knowing" (2:32)**, **"The Great Knower" (5:109)**, and **"Allah is Aware" (4:35)**, **"Allah is Wise" (2:32)**, He runs the world in the best way.

38. God The Powerful

God has power over all things, all acts:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

"... Surely Allah has power over all things." (2:20).

He has power and is 'able' 2: 20, 6: 37. He is the Strong, the Mighty 11: 66. He is the Supreme, 6: 61, 12: 39. He has power and is strong. A He desires anything to come into being or any work to be done, it is enough for Him to command: "Be" and at once it is.

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

"All His command, when He wills something, is to say to it 'Be,' and it is." (36:82).

39. Will And Intention Of God; Fate And Destiny

Usually those beings which enjoy "Knowledge", and "Power" are able to materialize what they will or a part of their will and even they are able to make effort in order to achieve it. When we attempt to materialize our will with consciousness:

"I intended to do some work", so:

"Will is an awareness and strong wish which can be effective in achieving of our goals."

Among the various beings in this world, at least rational animals possess this capability of will, that is, when they have an urge of something from within they make conscious effort to achieve it. Man enjoy this advantage more than other animals.

The domain of man's will is wider than of the other animals, that is why the role of knowledge and consciousness is more creative in the life of man than it is in the other animals. Despite all many activities that man himself perform are not seemingly the act of will. For instance, circulatory system, respiratory system, digestive system, major glands and minor glands producing the necessary chemicals in the body. These systems function involuntarily⁵³.

Nevertheless, the realm of voluntary acts anyhow limited, for example, no voluntary act of man can have any effect on the rotation of the solar system or can influence the hereditary physical characteristics with which he is born. As such, the effect of 'will' and 'intension' of man is limited.

That is why sometimes it so happens that one decides to do something but fails for those factors which are beyond the sphere of one's knowledge and power, prevent one's will from being materialized. But God Who is the absolute Knower and All powerful can do what He wills.

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ فَعَّالٌ لِّمَا يُرِيدُ

“... Surely your Lord is the mighty doer of what he intends” (11: 107).

فَعَّالٌ لِّمَا يُرِيدُ

“The great doer of what He will” (85: 16).

Nothings can prevent Him from performing His will, 11:33, 11:35: 11:44 etc.

His will govern the whole world (*qada*). And not the will of others than him (40:20) whatsoever and whenever anything acts or moves its act and movement are within the framework pre-determined by God, for, he has imposed certain limitations on everything (*qadar*) 25:2, 65:3, 41:10...

Man, too is governed by this absolute law. The role of his ability to develop and adopt the path of truth is limited, and is determined by Fate and Destiny of God (*qada wa qadar*). God as such wishes that man with his own distinct will and choice determines his future for good or bad, beauty or ugliness, brightness or gloom.

Even within these limits, neither man nor any other being can consider himself the undisputed and absolute ruler of the limited jurisdiction. If God wills, He can render man Powerless and ineffective even here.

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِالْمُرْصَادِ

“Most surely your Lord is constantly watching.” (89: 14).

It is likely that His command divests the efforts of an arrogant individual or a group in a manner that is warned and has to understand even within the domain of one's power and ability to mould himself, he always should keep in mind that the will and intention of God compasses everything and rules everywhere.

There are many instances in the Qur'an regarding such command of God, as the verses 68: 17-32 directly illustrate the same matter:

"We brought them to test and trial the same way as we tried those orchard-owners who has sworn that they would pluck the fruits of the orchard, but did not utter "If God wills." And while they were asleep, a storm, by God's command, began blow in the orchard rendering it a desolate plot."

When the morning dawned, they called on each other to start soon for the garden and fruit plucking, lest the poor got to know of it and entered the orchard.

In this way, determined to deprive the poor, they set out for the orchard.

But when they saw the orchard, they said:

"Most surely, we have gone astray, Nay! we are made to suffer privation"

The best of them said: "Did I not say to you, Why do you not glorify (Allah)?"

They said: "Glory be to our Lord, surely we were unjust."

Then some of them advanced against others, blaming each other.

Said they: "O, woe to us! surely we were in ordinate:

May be, our Lord will give us instead one better than it: surely to our humble petition."

40. God: The Eternally Alive

A being which enjoys power along with consciousness and will is called an alive being. The same way we determine an individual or society to be alive based on his/their quest with awareness and knowledge. Which nation is more alive? A nation that display greater measure of conscious quest in its life. Among the living creatures, man is endowed with the fullest measure of life. Therefore, the conscious quest in his life is the deepest and broadest.

Now, which being enjoys the highest level of conscious activity and is greater than all other active and conscious beings? God, so, God is the living and even enjoys the maximum rank of life. The Ever Living 40:65, the Living who dies not.

وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْحَيِّ الَّذِي لَا يَمُوتُ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِهِ

"And rely on the Ever-living who dies not, and celebrate His praise ... (25:58).

The living who is Self-Subsisting and never tires of work or action. Slumber does not overtake Him nor

sleep.

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ

“Allah is lie besides whom there is no god, the Ever living, the Self-Subsisting by whom all subsist; slumber does not overtake Him nor sleep...” (2:255).

الم اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَأَنْزَلَ التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ

“Alif Lam Mim. Allah, (there is) no god but He, the Ever living, The Self-Subsisting by whom all things subsist. He has revealed to you the Book with truth ...” (3:1-3).

وَعَنْتِ الْوُجُوهُ لِلْحَيِّ الْقَيُّومِ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ حَمَلَ ظُلْمًا

“And the faces shall be humble before the living, the self-subsistent God, and he who bears iniquity is indeed a failure.” (20: 111).

The word "qayyum" is of the same root from which the word "qiyam", meaning standing is derived.

The word "qa'im" which is the subject, means one who stands up. Therefore, the word "qayyum" which is an exaggeration should mean very much "Firmly standing", or in more clear words "that who is eternally established". The exegetists are of the different views regarding the meaning of this attribute in the Qur'an. Tabarsi in his *Majma 'ul-Bayan* says:

"The word "qayyum" means one who maintains the creation, whether in the creation of beings or in providing the day to day maintenance to them. As it is said in another verse: there is no moving creature on the earth that whose maintenance is not provided by God. This view is narrated from Qatadah. If is said that "qayyum" means He is omniscient. It is derived from this Arabic idiom."

That is, "this person knows whatever is written in this book". In another place it is said "qayyum" means "eternally existing", that he who always existed."

This view is quoted from Sa'id ibn Jubayr and Dahhak. On other occasion it is said that "qayyum" means "that one who is watching all standing over their heads so that to reward or punish them according to his knowledge." This view is narrated from Hassan Basri. The word "qayyum" is in harmony with all these various interpretations.[54](#)

In the philosophical discussions this word "qayyum" is defined as (القائم بالذات مقوم لغيره) which means self-independent and not depended upon others. What stands on this foot and its existence is not

derived from outside and that imparts to others and make them stand. We depend on you for you are independent

Sadr ul-Muta'allihin (Mullah Sadra) also inclined to accept the same interpretation, after discussing the issue in detail, he finally concluded that by the term "*Qayyum*" it meant that who is so much independent that all others depend for their existence on Him."[55](#)

Sayyid Qotb in the interpretation of "*qayyum*" says: "That who not only created all beings, but maintain them also."[56](#)

'Allamah Tabatabai also in his *al-Mizan* 2: 347–348 has interpreted the word in a way similar to the version of Qatadah in *Majm'a ul-Bayan*.

We are of the view that the same meaning that is ever standing, ever-subsisting and ever-watchful, which have come in Persian translation are not only more compatible with the meaning and derivations of the literal meaning its derivations from "*qiyam*" but also, they are consistent with the explanations of the verse (2:255), regarding the interpretation of the word "*qayyum*". The term "*qayyum*" in this sense is complementary to the same attribute "Hay" and weights its meaning.

As we know that all living beings in the earth are more or less in need of sleep. They should sleep to reinforce themselves for the continuation of life. Sleep is associated with weakness and dullness of muscles, and every animate being sleeps usually falls down and cannot stand on its feet in state of sleep, usually a part of his vital energies, particularly the abilities of perfection and movement, will be in the state of semi-suspension.

The Qur'an says: God is perfect living being, whose modes of being have no room for dullness; He is indefatigable being, Ever-subsisting and Ever-awake, neither sleep overtakes Him nor does He nap. Therefore, He is Ever-knowing an Ever Powerful. Now let us once again pay attention to the sequence of text of verse:

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ

“Allah—there is no god except Him — is the Living One, the All-sustainer. Neither drowsiness befalls Him nor sleep. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who is it that may intercede with Him except with His permission?[57](#) He knows that which is before them and that which is behind them, and they do not comprehend anything of His knowledge except what He wishes. His seat embraces the heavens and the earth, and He is not wearied by their preservation, and He is the All-exalted, the All-supreme.” (2:255).

You have seen that all the conclusions that may be driven from this verse indicate the wisdom and absolute power of God which is the sign of being free from any weakness regarding the Attribute of His life.

41. God: The Merciful And The Compassionate

Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful (1:1), Allah is compassionate to His servants (3:29) and He gives you all that you ask from Him; and has bestowed upon us innumerable bounties (14:34), (16:18). Surely, Allah is the Bestower of sustenance, (51:58), Allah is the best of sustainers (62:11), Allah is pardoning, Forgiving (4:99). The most Forgiving (36:66), Allah is Forgiving, Forbearing (2:235) and Exalted (34:40), if a sinner gives up the life of sin and impurity and returns to the path of God, that is, path of piety and virtue (*tubah* in its Islamic sense), God again bestows his blessings upon him and He is who accepts repentance of His servants and pardons the evil deeds (42:25) and He immediately takes a lenient view turning (to mercy) of the misdeed of the repentant (2:160).

42. God: The Hard Task Master

The signs of affection and mercy of God are abundant and innumerable throughout the universe. Man, like other beings enjoys this immanent blessing of God with this distinction that man enjoys an exceptional favour of God, that is, ability for self-improvement, a conscious process of self-improvement with knowledge of distinguishing bad and good, beauty and ugliness and also has the power to choose one of them.⁵⁸

This conscious self-improvement along with the ability to make choice is possible with this condition that at least some part of man's acts should yield desirable consequence and some yield undesirable consequences. The desirable consequences for him are pleasant and rewarding, and the undesirable consequences for him are painful and bring in their wake suffering, punishment and intense wrath of God.

This concern and anguish regarding losing desirable consequences, that is "reward" and facing undesirable consequences that is "punishment" may stimulate man to develop his self and change him into a man who deserves reward and is saved from punishment. So, existence of such concern and anguish in man's self is a blessing from God which will be followed by punishment and wrath of God for those who are thankless and ungrateful.

"Oh, thee, thine mercy is prior to thine wrath."

The Qur'an on this base repeatedly cited the wrath of God which befalls those disobedient persons.

وَمَنْ يَحْلِلْ عَلَيْهِ غَضَبِي فَقَدْ هَوَىٰ

“...lest My wrath should descend on you. And he on whom My wrath descends certainly perishes.” (20:81).

إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

“...Indeed, Allah is all-strong, severe in retribution” (8:52).

وَعَذَابًا أَلِيمًا

“...and a painful punishment [prepared for].” (73: 13).

43. God: The Great, The Exalted, The Magnificent And The Praise Worthy

Allah is the High (2:225), the Great (31:30), Possessor of the highest ranks (40: 15), Allah is Mighty, Wise (2:209), The most High, the Great (2:225). The most High (13:9), The Lord of Glory and Honour (55:78), He is praised, Glorious (11:73).

He is proud, that is the being who makes his grandness and greatness manifest and all the signs of greatness which are visible in the universe belong to him only (45:37) surely, it is He who deserves all praise, Glorious (11:73).

44. God: The Just

وَمَا أَنَا بِظَالِمٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ

“...and I do not the least injustice to My Servants.” (50:29).

He always calls upon us to act based on justice and equity (16:90), (7:29). He has created all things in this world in such a fashion that was compatible with the firm system of being, in which all are harmonious and are complimentary to each other. (87:2, 67:3). God set reward for good deeds and punishment for sin in the hereafter within the frame work of an inevitable system of "action and reaction".

In the hereafter one may reap the fruits of that which he has harvested in this world. In this way he attains that individual essence of his being which he has shaped for himself in this world. Every sweet or sour that is given to man in the other world is the product of his acts in this world, according to which he gets full and perfect justice, without any reduction, without being unjustly treated (2:281), (14:51), (40:17) etc.

Every man is responsible for what he shall have wrought (52:21). His self-development, whether it is in right direction or in wrong direction, and his endower to mold his environment so that social and physical environment becomes favourable for his welfare, and others welfare, paves the way for a man's self-development in the right direction.

45. The Ending Remarks

This part was concerned with the Names and Attributes of God in the Qur'an, with special reference to the acts of God. One can find numerous other Names and Attributes which exceed hundreds of words. We come across many such Names and Attributes in prayers and supplications. For instance, one thousand Names and Attributes of God occur in the famous supplication, known as *Jawshan Kabir*.

Most of these Names and Attributes used for God are compound words either in term of word or in term of their meanings, and since the connotation of compound words is extremely vast. One cannot be sure of any definite number for the Names and Attributes of God. Theologians and mystics also consider Names and Attribute of God to be innumerable.⁵⁹ This was a summary of the metaphysical teachings of the Qur'an dealing with the knowledge of God⁶⁰.

This type of knowledge is derived from the authentic source of revelation (*Wahy*). At the same time, it is also based on the man's conscious knowledge which attain through contemplation over the signs of God meditating on the Names and Attributes of God⁶¹. This is a kind of knowledge which can quench more or less the thirst of a man who is eager to the significance of the Names and Attributes of God and it has got its practical problem which we face, that is, orientating the life.⁶²

In this approach there is no room for futile and useless discussion which are injurious to the life of individual as well as society (Ummah). This is a lesson we should learn in order to avoid and abstain from such endless and fruitless disputes in the field of metaphysics. For, such discussions and controversies do not lead us to any definite conclusion, as most of them arise out of ignorance and prejudices.

The Qur'an criticizes those people who adopt this method particularly in metaphysical issues.

هَآ أَنتُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ حَآجَجْتُمْ فِيمَآ لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلِمَ تُحَآجُّونَ فِيمَآ لَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

“Behold! you are they who disputed about that of which you had knowledge; why then do you dispute about that of which you have no knowledge? And Allah knows while you do not know” (3:66).

I pray to God that we are not regarded as one of such people who indulge in futile disputes. Our last word is that all praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the world.⁶³

- [1.](#) These conventions are mostly social conventions which emerge gradually in social process and are not coined through the agreement reached among a group of people who deliberate.
- [2.](#) "Ism" (name) is derived from "simah" meaning symbol.
- [3.](#) How can one know Him? It is all that one can say "He is". (the Upanishad, 376).
- [4.](#) Al-Kulayni, al-Kafi, v.2, p.82.
- [5.](#) Ibid, p.84.
- [6.](#) Saduq, Asrar al-Tawhid, p.102.
- [7.](#) For detail please see Maqalat al-Islamiyya, vol. 1, p.66.
- [8.](#) It points out to the famous doctrine that is "God is spirit of the world". This doctrine is seen in the Upanishad also.
- [9.](#) Nahjui-Balagah, (Sermon 1).
- [10.](#) Bharatan Kumarpa, The Hindu Conception of the Deity, (London, 1934).
- [11.](#) U. M. Miller the History of the Ancient church in the Empire of Room and Iran. (Germany, 1931). p. 245.
- [12.](#) The Upanishad, p. 424.
- [13.](#) The Chandogya Upanishad, p. 288.
- [14.](#) Ibid, p.288.
- [15.](#) Ibid, p. 289.
- [16.](#) Ibid, p. 289.
- [17.](#) The Avesta, 9/ 69.
- [18.](#) Ibid, 2/33.
- [19.](#) Ibid, 8/40.
- [20.](#) Asman is the name of the angel that supervises the heaven. (f.t. the Avesta).
- [21.](#) The Avesta, 27/ 346.
- [22.](#) Ibid, 14/65-66.
- [23.](#) Ibid, 4/68.
- [24.](#) Compare it with that which the Qur'an says about this sustainer:
"Surely, Allah upholds the heavens and the earth lest they come to naught; and if they should come to naught, there is none who can uphold them after Him; surely He is the forbearing" (35:41).
- [25.](#) The Avesta, 238/1-2-3.
- [26.](#) The Old Testament, Exodus, 19: 19-24.
- [27.](#) Exodus, 24: 1/2.9-12.
- [28.](#) Exodus, 24: 9-12.
- [29.](#) The Old Testament, Genesis, 18: 20-23.
- [30.](#) Genesis, 17: 23.
- [31.](#) Genesis, 35: 13
- [32.](#) The Old Testament, Kings, 8: 40.
- [33.](#) Kings, 40: 36-37.
- [34.](#) The Bible, Mathew, 5: 44-45-48.
- [35.](#) From such phrases about (al-Sama al-Dunia) the nearest heaven in the Qur'an one can infer that the Qur'an considers the space within the stars placed as one heaven. That is also the first heaven, the lowest and the nearest heaven to us. So, of the phrase "the seven heavens" which is used in many verses of the Qur'an is not a symbolic impression and in the real sense indicates a specific number of heavens, then this heaven is different from the eight or nine heavens believed in old astronomy for according to that doctrine from the first up to the seventh heaven the planets were placed. The eighth heaven is the place of fixed bodies, and the ninth heaven had been Atlas, that is, starless, for more information in this regard, refer to discussions and books concerning this matter, according to that doctrine.
- [36.](#) The Lote-tree in these verses of the Qur'an is like the someh tree in the Upanishad. p. 203.
- [37.](#) The Bible Mathew, 5: 34-35.
- [38.](#) The usage of such indirect terms are usual matter in the symbolic writings.
- [39.](#) There are same view in the verses second to seventh of the genesis in the old Testament.

40. This view is also rooted in pre-Islamic culture. Take for instance the old Testament, Exodus, 24: 10.
41. Though we come across the traditions from the Prophet (S) and Imams (A) regarding the notion of throne, but totaling those tradition and investigation about their authenticity is beyond the limitation of this writing.
42. This theory is more or less close to the scientific theories with reference to the book "Science for the Intelligents" pp.27-113.
43. For detail classification about the merciful Name and the compassionate Name which is discussed in page No. 11 and his discourse on the Holy Blessing and the Holiest Blessing in page No. 18.
44. Qaisari, Sharheh Fusus-e Qaisari, p. 20.
45. Tabarsi, Majma'ul-Bayan, vol.9, p. 175.
46. Mullah Sadra, Al-Shawahid al-Rububiyah p. 48.
47. This is one of the meanings of pantheism which makes difficult to distinguish it with certain materialistic doctrine regarding the world.
48. Allamah Hilli, Kashf al-Murad, p. 182. 51 – Ibid, pp. 182-184.
49. Ibid, pp. 182-184.
50. Most probably this matter rooted in the Torah. for there are many instances in the genesis and Exodus of the Torah that God has meet Ibrahim and Jacob.
51. Ash'ari, Maqalat al-Islamyia, vol. 1, p. 263.
52. Ibid, pp. 321-322.
53. Like the verses 6:103, 7:143.
54. In the verse 4:153 same incident is cited:

يَسْأَلُكَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ أَنْ تُنَزِّلَ عَلَيْهِمْ كِتَابًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ ۚ فَقَدْ سَأَلُوا مُوسَىٰ أَكْبَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ فَقَالُوا أَرَنَا اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّاعِقَةُ بِظُلْمِهِمْ ۚ ثُمَّ اتَّخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ فَعَفَوْنَا عَنْ ذَلِكَ ۚ وَأَتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ سُلْطَانًا مُبِينًا

"The followers of the Book ask you to bring down to them a book from heaven; so indeed they demanded of Musa a greater thing than that, for they said: Show us Allah manifestly; so the lightning overtook them on account of their injustice. Then they took the calf (for a god), after clear signs had come to them, but We pardoned this; and We gave to Musa clear authority" (4:153).

55. Zoroaster also spoke about the seeing of God with his own eyes:
"AhuraMazda, when I saw you with my own eyes a thought over you in my heart that first and the last being and the father of God." (The Avesta, 8: 43).
56. There is no doubt that the function of each one of these systems is related to the nervous system. Even the advanced anatomy believes in a central command for each system located in a part of the brain. But each act which related to the command from brain cannot be called a voluntary act. Nevertheless, some people may control themselves voluntarily by practice and ascetism. They may control somewhat of their circulatory system also. but such control, in case it is true, is limited and exceptional and not applicable to all men.
57. Tabarsi, Majma al-Bayan, vol. 2, p. 362.
58. Mullah Sadra, Tafsir-e Mulla Sadra, pp. 305-306.
59. Sayyid Qutb, Fi Zalal al-Qur'an, 1/419.
60. The verses 2:117, 3:47, 16:40, 19:35, 40:68 are in this context. In certain verses it is emphasized on this point that God in achievement of His order is Besought of all means.
61. This is the same distinguishing feature of the philosophy of existence that is called today existentialism: The existence of man precedes its essence, and that man's essence is developed and shaped by himself.
62. Qaisari, Shahr Fusus e-Qaisari, p. 20.
63. In this book certain issues such as the knowledge of God, justice of God etc. are discussed briefly, though each one of these topics require detailed discussion in the form of several independent voluminous books.
Fortunately, recently some useful books have been written in this regard which deal with only some of these issues by scholars having good command of writing. We hope that books dealing with other aspects of this theme would be written

and published.

Appendix

Why Does The Knowledge Of The Principles Of Nature Come After The Science Of Physics?

Commentators and exponents of Aristotle are of the view that the classification and order of different parts of Aristotle's philosophy is made according to a method which is logical and fully considered.

One who seeks to pursue scientific knowledge of the world, in the first place, he should be acquainted with the scientific methodology, that is, logic, for scientific knowledge of the nature has to be gained only through sense of perception and empirical data, and then arriving at correct conclusions only that can be hopeful of the fruitfulness of his efforts who is acquainted with the techniques and methodology of science and its proper application. That is why Aristotle's philosophical works begin with logic.

After being acquainted with scientific method, one can enter the domain of natural science, that is, scientific efforts for cognition of nature. Therefore, Aristotle's second philosophical works after logic is called physics, that is, natural science.

After being equipped with scientific knowledge of nature and insight into causes and efforts, in nature, the field of quest and enquiry is automatically extended to the study of the primary causes and the principles of nature. This part of enquiry comprises of theology (metaphysics). Hence, naturally it will come after natural sciences.

Why The Knowledge Of The Principles Of Nature Is Called Metaphysics?

Every part of Aristotle's philosophical works has a specific name for it according to its subject matter and scope.

The first part is called "Logic" that is, principles of knowledge. The second part is "Physics" that is natural sciences comprising physics etc. But the third part which deals with the principles of nature is named according to its order in Aristotle's works and not on the basis of its subject-matter. Therefore, Aristotelians called this part of his works "Metaphysics" which was translated into Arabic as "*Ma bad al-Tabi'ah*"¹

"Ma B'ad At-Tabiah" Or "Ma B'ad Al-Tabi 'Iyyat":

With respect to the criterion which we have cited above in naming the third part of Aristotle's philosophy, that is, 'Metaphysics', the correct Arabic translation of this term is *'Ma bad al-tabi'yyat'* and not *'Ma bad al-tabi 'ah'*, because in Arabic language the term natural science is *'tabi'yyah'* not *'tabi'ah'*.

Yahya iban 'Adi (280–364), the well-known translator of Aristotle's works from Greek into Arabic has in his mind this point, and, therefore, in the beginning of his commentary says:

..."The intension of the philosopher (Aristotle) in this book, is the book metaphysics, which in Arabic may be called *"Fi-Ma b'ad al-tabt'iyah"*².

Unfortunately, after him this point was neglected and the term Metaphysics was translated into Arabic to *'Ma b'ad al-tabi'ah'* for instance Ibn-Rushd (520–595 H) in his commentary on this part of Aristotle's Philosophy says:

"This is the interpretation of the first book (Ma b'ad al-tabi'ah), it is the same essay which is denoted by "Alpha minor".³

May be the origin of such error lies in the fact that the term "Physics" in Greek is used for both nature and natural science.

Ma Wara Al-Tabiah (Supra-Physics)

It has been seen that in many of recent philosophical writings instead of *"Ma b'ad al-tabiah"* or *"Ma ba'd al-tabiyyah"* the writers use term *"Mawara al-tabi'h"*. Dictionary of Mo'in (Farhang-e Mo'in) in this regard says: "According to the ancient philosophers *Ma ba'd al-tabia'h'* the i.e., "Third Wisdom" or *"Ma wariu al-tabiah"* was one of the branches of on speculative wisdom (H.M) that is divided into two parts as follows:

- 1) Ilm al ilahi (theology) (H.M.)
- 2) Falsafeh-ye Ula (first Philosophy) (H.M.)

The branches or off-shoots of this science are:

"Nabuwwah" (Prophethood), "Imamah" (Imamate), "Ma'ad" (Resurrection).

Exposition: Aristotle called this part of philosophy which comes after physics as "Metaphysics".

Henceforth, this term became current for it. Therefore, *"ma b'ad al-tabia'h"* is more correct than *"Ma wara al-tabia'h"*.⁴

It is interpreted in that way because the term *"Ma wara al-tabia'h"* indicates that the connotation of this point that the problems of this science deals with the problems that are beyond the nature or hidden

behind it. Accordingly, these people in their writings repeatedly all non-material and incorporeal beings a supraphysical or metaphysical being.

This misconception regarding the term Metaphysics is most probably stemmed from the same error or to be more Precise from carelessness which was already shown in the translation of this term into Arabic "*ma b'ad al-tabia'h*" instead of being translated more appropriately as "*Ma b'ad al-tabiyya'h*".

Unfortunately, this misconception found its way into the writings of such a scholar as Ibn-Sina, for, he in his book, *Shifa* says that by metaphysics is meant all that is abstract and separated from nature. Ibn Sina says:

"According to this principle mathematics should be called the science of metaphysics⁵ unless the purpose of metaphysics is something else, that is, knowledge of that which is completely abstract."⁶

Anyhow, we are compelled to use the term "*Ma ba'd al-tabiah*" as the substitute from metaphysics, because "*Maba'd al-tabi'iyah*" would sound unfamiliar sense to many people. Hence instead of replacing current term by an unfamiliar term we fall back upon the term in currency keeping in our mind that by the term "*Ma ba'd al-tabiah*" we mean a science which is learnt after the natural science, and not that which is beyond the nature.

Muslims Acquaintance With The Metaphysics Of Aristotle

In the glorious age of the blossoming of the Islamic culture and civilization most of the scientific works were translated from Greek, Syriac, Coptic, Pahlawi and Indian languages into Arabic. For instance, Aristotle's Metaphysics and some other commentaries of this book were also translated into Arabic.

Ibn al-Nadim in this regard says:

"Discourses in the Book "*al-Huruf*⁷ popularly known as *Illahiyyat* (theology), are arranged alphabetically based on Greek letters, the first one is *Alif sughra* (a minor) and *Ishaq*⁸ has translated this book into Arabic. It contains up to the letter "M". Abu-Zakariyya ibn 'Adi has translated the items under this letter. The letter "N" is also found in the Greek language according to Alexander⁹. Eustathius has translated this items under this letter for kenny¹⁰ and there is a popular story in this regard.

Ahu-Beshr Mati¹¹ has translated the book *Ishaq Ibn Hunayn* which is the eleventh book along with the commentary of Alexander into Arabic, and Hunayn ibn Ishaq¹² translated the same book into the Syriac. Themistius¹³ interpreted the book A and Abu-Beshr Mati translated that book with Themistius commentary. Shemli also translated that book *Ishaq Ibne Hunayn* also translated some parts of these books. Suryanus translated the book "B" into Arabic with his own commentary..."¹⁴

Kitab Ai-Hurof

Kitab al-Hurnf is another name for Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in Arabic. The reason for choice of such a name for this book is that the articles of this are arranged alphabetically, that is, Greek alphabets as follows:

1. Book A Alpha (major) *A/if al-Kubra*
2. Book a Alpha (minor) *Alif al-Sughra*
3. Book B Beta *al-Ba*
4. " J Gamma *al-Jim*
5. " Delta *al-Dal*
6. " E Espilan *al-Ha*
7. " Z Zelta *al-Za*
8. " H Eta *al-Ha*
9. " Theta *al-Ta*
10. Article I Iota *al-Ya*
11. " K Kappa *al-Kaf*
12. " Lamda *al-Lam*
13. " M My *al-Mim*
14. " N Ny *a/-Nun*

Which is the first book "A" or "a"?

All the letters which have been used for these articles are Greek capital letters. Such as A, B, and ...But books No. 1. and 2 are marked separately by major and minor versions of the same letter that is, Alpha one is marked with "A" and the other one marked with "a".

The method followed in marking the articles of this book indicates that the book "a" (with a minor) should be complementary to the book "A" (with major "A"). That is why the first book of Aristotle should be book marked with "A"[15](#)

The same arrangement is found in the English translation of the fourteen books of *Metaphysics* by W.

W. Ross. But in the existent Arabic translation of the book the first book given is the letter "a" small, that is the capital letter "A" comes subsequent to it. Ibn al-Nadim also says in *al-Fihrist*:

"...The first is small "a". [16](#)"

Thirteen Or Fourteen?

On the basis of the writings of the "Ulama of Islam of that period it may be inferred that Aristotle's Metaphysics is comprised of thirteen books. In *Tarikh al-Hukama*, says:

"The Book Metaphysics comprises of thirteen books." (Oifti, translation of *Tarikh al-Hukama*, p- 70)

Taking into account the order of the Greek alphabets the book under the letter "K" is omitted in Arabic translation Ibn-Rushd noticed this omission (at-Kat) and in his commentary of Metaphysics said"

"This is what we may. Conjecture in accordance with the order of the articles prior to that indicated by 'Lam' that only these articles reached to us, and that we could not find the article indicated by 'K' (al-kaf) [17](#). .

Eleventh Or Twelfth

In the same context another problem also will be solved. The letter Lambda that is, the letter "L" is the eleventh letter in Greek Alphabet. But keeping in view that there are two books dealing with "A", i.e. "A" and "a" in Metaphysics, so the book "L" lambda should be counted the twelfth. But in general, the writers of Muslim period consider this as eleventh and this shows that they were totally ignorant of the book "K".

Why the Book "k" (al-Kaf) Could not find Place in the Arabic Translation?

Was this book not available to Muslim writers or were there some other reasons behind omitting it?

In this regard we do not know anything clearly. But a thorough study of the contents under the book "k" in English translation may be helpful to clarify this point. The continuous study of this book will show that its contents are mere repetition of the contents of the book indicated under "B", "G" and "H" of Aristotle's physics are mixed with them.

Therefore, it is probable that the teachers, students and readers of the Aristotle's Metaphysics have considered this book as a redundant and unnecessarily repeated the issues already discussed. So, they deleted from their manuscripts or they might have access to the copies of Metaphysics from which this article was excluded.

"Dayr" (Nature) As A Substitute For God

The following verse deals with the beliefs of naturalist or atheists:

وَقَالُوا مَا هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا يُهْلِكُنَا إِلَّا الدَّهْرُ وَمَا لَهُم بِذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ

“And they say: there is nothing but our life in this world; we live and die and nothing destroys us but time, and they have no knowledge or that, they only conjecture.” (45:24).

This verse speaks about those people who in the term of Islamic philosophy and *Kalam* are called "*Dahriyyah*" or naturalists.

Who are "*Dahriyyah*"?

Qifti in his *Tarikh al-Hukama* says:

"But "*Dahriyyah*" (naturalists) were those people in the distant past who did not believe that this world had a maker and creator. They were of the view that the present conditions of the world have been ever the same and will be the same in future also. There was no beginning in time of the circular motions which we perceive. Man was created from the sperm and sperm came into being through eternal and everlasting man, as seed comes from plant and plant grows from seed. The most renowned exponent of this group of thinkers is Thales of Miletus.^{18 19}

What Qifti said about the philosophical views of "*Dahriyyah*" regarding the Cosmos forms the basis of many materialistic philosophical world in the recent years. In such world-outlooks the world has been described as follows:

"It is sum total of motions, changes, decompositions and compositions, which are associated with one another and influence each other. In other words, the reality is continuous becoming along with the emergence of various and indefinite objects, which have neither beginning and nor end; and if we look at it from the temporal angle we cannot find any end to it. This infinite dimension is called "*Dahr*", "Time", duration etc.²⁰ Accordingly, appearance and disappearance is the essential mode of the becoming, without being in need of a creator and a destroyer. Nothing destroys us but time.

"Dahr" (Nature In Our Philosophical Terminology)

Ibn Sina in the chapters regarding the physics in his *Shifa* has put forwarded a detailed account of the concept of *Dahr* and its particular meaning, the summary of which is as follows:

When we say that a being is in time, its existence should have to emerge gradually. It is a being always in the state of becoming such as motion which occurs gradually and one part of it in relation to its other

parts should be either posterior or prior to them. Such being enjoys a new dimension which we may call temporal dimension²¹.

Occasionally it happens that an objective event in itself is not in the state of becoming, but it is mixed with another event which is in the state of becoming (in the philosophical term there is some unity between them). For an example, take a piece of a rock, in its internal composition, colour and form there is no visible change. It is lifted by a crane to the top of a building, from that very moment when the rock is moved by crane by virtue of crane's movement it is transferred to another place and by being moved acquires dimension. In other words, the moving rock will be temporalized.

Therefore, if a being is neither in itself gradual and nor having any graduality, it may by no means can acquire the dimension of time. Such being does not possess dimension of space. Nevertheless, we in our philosophical account of these may come across some conceptions which indicate that these beings are also not alien to time. For instance, regarding the spirit abstracted from matter we say: spirit was, is and will be forever. The words "was", "is" and "will be" all are related to the dimension of time.

If the abstract spirit is totally alien to temporality, then why these words which are related to time are used for it? The correct justification of this view is that the abstract spirit is not a temporal existence. That is, neither in itself possesses dimension of time nor are its attributes and accidents temporal. But we who are in time, we can look at it from within the span of time. In the process of seeing these we may arrive at the conclusion that whenever we look at spirit from within the span of time, we find it exist It is on the basis of frequent observations and successive realizations that we say:

"Spirit was, is and will be forever".

In other words when we compare this immutable thing with other mutable and transitory things, i.e. the things that are in flux, we find that existence of this (immutable thing) as compared with mutable and contingent beings is permanent. Therefore, it is everlasting. This mental conception which is formed as a result of comparing and contrasting a non-temporal reality with temporal realities is relative and susceptible to being interpreted in terms of was, is and will be. In fact, it is related to the continuity of time and not to the notions of revival and renewal.

In the specific philosophical term, it is called "*Dahr*". It is the same which in Persian we call "*Zamaneh*"²² or "*Ruzegar*". To sum up, time is the fourth dimension of contingent realities, which are in the state of becoming and reveal their contingent nature. But "*Dahr*" is the manifestation of the eternally continuing and permanent being which is beyond the becoming, and is in contrast to the contingency and destructibility of other existents that are always in the state of becoming and are contingent and changeable. In this comparison, automatically, we looked at the dimension of time as a coherent continuous process.²³

Ibn Sina after this exposition goes on to say some people hold that "*Dahr*" is "Time of static and motionlessness (reality)". "Subsequently he criticizes them pointing out that static state is in compatible

with duration or a specific period of time, i.e. temporarily, and the term "static time" is a self-contradictory.

We believe that those people who wanted to define *Dahr* as "static time" have most probably sought to say the same thing as Ibn Sina said in another way, i.e. Permanence in contrast to the mutability.

Anyhow, "*Dahr*" in any of the aforementioned senses cannot be regarded as the cause of emergence of existents and as a creator and controller of world. This is the obvious truth that anyone can easily arrive at unless one is misguided by his conjectures and false opinions and led in a direction that obliterates such an evident and clear reality.

- [1.](#) There are some other titles in philosophical texts for this field of enquiry some of which are based on the issues and subject discussed in it. For instance, Falsafah-ye-Ula, Aristotle, Mab'ad Al-Tabi'ah (Metaphysics), p. 160, Ibn Sina Illahiyyat, Al-Shifa, etc. Hikmat-e 'Aliyyah: Aristotle, Maba'd Al-Tabi'ah (Metaphysics), p. 165, Hikmate Muta'aliyyah: Sadr ul-Muta'allihin, Mabda' wa Ma'id, p. 14, Ilm-e Kulli: Sadr al-Muta'allihin, Ibid, p.2, Al-Falsafat Al-Illahiyyah: Aristotle, Ma ba'd al-tabi'ah, (metaphysics), p.707, Ilm-e Illahi: Ibn-Sina, Shifa, Illahiyyat: Yahya ibn 'Adi. Tasfir Maqalehye Alif Sughra, p. 10.
- [2.](#) Interpretation of Yahya iban 'Adi on the article Alpha (x) minor, 4.
- [3.](#) Commentary of Ibn-Rushd on Metaphysics, 3
- [4.](#) Dictionary of Mo'in, V. 4, foreign terms 207.
- [5.](#) Ibn Sina holds that if the branch of philosophy, i.e. "Metaphysics" is named according to its position in classification of different parts of philosophy, mathematics should have been misappropriated named "Metaphysics". for on account of logical sequence, mathematic comes after natural science and theology comes after mathematics. It seems that this great philosopher ignored the fact that there was no section of mathematics in Aristotle's works.
- [6.](#) Shifa, Illahiyyat, p-15.
- [7.](#) For details regarding the sequence of different chapter, please see note no.5.
- [8.](#) Ishaq Ibn-e Hunayn (215-298 H).
- [9.](#) Alexander Afrudisi is one of the scholars of the Alexandrian school in the third century.
- [10.](#) The well-known Arab philosopher (d.260.H).
- [11.](#) (d-329 H)
- [12.](#) (149-264 H).
- [13.](#) (cir.329 H).
- [14.](#) al-Fihrist, 366.
- [15.](#) Please refer to the English translation of the Aristotle's Metaphysics by W.D.Ross. This translation was first published in 1908 and reprinted in 1928 and subsequently six times with revision was reprinted up to 1966.
- [16.](#) al-Fihrist, p. 366.
- [17.](#) Ibn Rushd, commentary on the Metaphysics, O-1404.
- [18.](#) Ali Ibn Yosuf Ibn Ibrahim Qifti, (588/646 H).
- [19.](#) Translation of Tarikh al-Hukama, p. 75.
- [20.](#) There is a minute difference between Zaman and Zamaneh in Persian. It may be noted that Zamaneh is a mere general term having various connotations while Zaman always refers to a metaphysical entity encompassing the entire scheme of existence.
- [21.](#) Thales of Miletus (Eire. 600 B.C.), is considered in the histories of ancient Greece. It is said that he considered water as the origin of all bodies. But his philosophical outlook can be hardly reconciled with that of naturalists or materialists.
- [22.](#) It is the same dimension that in contemporary philosophical term is called fourth dimension.
- [23.](#) Summary of the exposition of Dahr in al-Shifa, pp. 80-81.

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In reality there is only one source for the acquaintance with the metaphysical issues of the Qur'an and that is the Qur'an itself. But in this book, I have referred to the following books also:

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