

God's Existence In Primary Islamic Sources: An Analytical Study In View Of New Atheism

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Abstract

Atheism is based on the denial of existence of God. However, Abrahamic faiths: Judaism, Christianity and Islam have firm belief on God's existence. Islam as final revealed message of God to humanity defines the concept of God comprehensively. The objective of this study is to explore God's existence in primary Islamic sources. This is a qualitative research and data is gathered from Qur'an, Hadith, books, articles and online sources. Qur'anic proofs are very simple and strong which are understandable for every man. Qur'anic proves appeal an average person and highly intellectual person equally. Muslim scholars add Qur'anic verses in their argument which support God's attributes and the creation of the universe. They argue extensively from Qur'an to explain facts about the universe and proving the existence of God. They also quote Qur'anic verses which are supported by the discoveries of modern science. New atheists are not expert of religion; however, they add references of religious sacred texts to strengthen their arguments. Sam Harris uses verses of Qur'an without understanding the context to portray Islam as religion of Terror. He writes the different verses of Qur'an without mentioning their specific contexts to support his argument. The position of atheism is illogical and irrational.

Introduction

New atheists such as Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins, Denial Dennet and Christopher Hitchens refute God and religion by using scientific, moral, historical arguments as well as criticizing the texts of religious scriptures. Present study explores the existence of God in primary Islamic sources. The study analyzes the arguments of new atheists and Muslim scholars.

According to Yasir Qadhi (2008), nothing exists on its own. Every single thing has a creator and that is how we work in our day-to-day lives. The idea that the things came into existence themselves is irrational. Every single thing around us is evidence of the

creation of God. Every object that exists must have a creator, it cannot come from nothing. Creation itself is the bigger sign of the creator. Qur'an says: *أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمْ
الْخَالِقُونَ*

“Were they created without any agent? Were they the creators?” (Qur'an, 52:35). God asks this rhetorical question in Qur'an. It has possibly three answers; first either you have created from nothing, second, you have created yourself, third, you have been created by God. The first two answers are illogical. Likewise, God says in Qur'an:

خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا وَالْأَرْضَ فِي الْأَرْضِ

رُوسَىٰ أَنْ تَمِيدَ بِكُمْ وَيَتَّ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ ۚ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً
فَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ ۚ كَرِيمٍ هَذَا خَلْقُ اللَّهِ فَأَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقَ
الَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ ۚ بَلِ الظَّالِمُونَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ

“He created the heavens without any visible support, and He placed firm mountains on the earth in case it should shake under you and He spread all kinds of animals around it. We sent down water from the sky, with which We made every kind of good plant grow on earth: all this is God’s creation. Now, show Me what your other gods have created. No, the disbelievers are astray” (Qur’an, 31:11). This creation of God is around you and no one besides God can create anything. Similarly, Qur’an says:

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ ضُرْبَ مَثَلٍ فَاَسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ ۚ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ
مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَنْ يَخْلُقُوا ذُبَابًا وَلَوْ اجْتَمَعُوا لَهُ ۚ وَإِنْ يَسْلُبْهُمُ الذُّبَابُ
شَيْئًا لَا يَسْتَنْقِذُوهُ مِنْهُ ۚ ضَعُفَ الطَّالِبُ وَالْمَطْلُوبُ

“People, here is an illustration, so listen carefully: those you call on beside God could not, even if they combined all their forces, create a fly, and if a fly took something away from them, they would not be able to retrieve it. How feeble are the petitioners and how feeble are those they petition!” (Qur’an, 22:73). God challenges that besides Him no one can create even a single fly and even they cannot take return their food from a fly. Now modern science says that the digestion of fly starts from outside of the stomach, as soon fly spit out some saliva which is digestive in nature, the food begins to digest immediately upon contact, then the fly takes this almost digested food into its system. Can the greatest scientist of the world bring back his food from a fly; he cannot do so (Qadhi, 2008). While describing its creation God says in Qur’an:

الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَنَعَ سَمَوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا ۚ مَا تَرَىٰ فِي خَلْقِ
الرَّحْمَنِ مِنْ تَفَوُّتٍ ۚ فَأَرْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَىٰ مِنْ فُطُورٍ
ثُمَّ أَرْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنْقَلِبْ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَهُوَ
حَسِيرٌ

who created the seven heavens, one above the other. You will not see any flaw in what the Lord of Mercy creates. Look again! Can you see any flaws? Look again! and again! Your sight will turn back to you, weak and defeated”

(Qur’an, 67:3-4). God invites humans to look at the consistency and flawlessness in his creation through every aspect of science and intellect. Humans cannot find a single inconsistency or fault in their creation; this is evidence of God’s existence. God shows his existence through his signs and invites humans to think about the supremacy of God. God says in Qur’an:

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ
وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ
السَّمَاءِ مِنْ مَاءٍ فَأَخْبَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَيَتَّ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ
وَتَصْرِيْفِ الرِّيْحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ
لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

“In the creation of the heavens and earth; in the alternation of night and day; in the ships that sail the seas with goods for people; in the water which God sends down from the sky to give life to the earth when it has been barren, scattering all kinds of creatures over it; in the changing of the winds and clouds that run their appointed courses between the sky and earth: there are signs in all these for those who use their minds” (Qur’an: 2:164). When we walk in the night and see the moon and stars in the sky, then we feel how weak we are in front of God’s other creation.

Qadhi argues that every person when he is in serious trouble calls God for help whether he believes in God or not. Qur’an says:

وَإِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ الضُّرُّ دَعَانَا لِجَنبَيْهِ أَوْ قَاعِدًا أَوْ قَاتِمًا فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا
عَنْهُ ضُرَّهُ مَرَّ كَأَنْ لَمْ يَدْعُنَا إِلَىٰ ضُرِّهِ مَسَّهُ ۚ كَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِلْمُسْرِفِينَ
مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

“When trouble befalls man he cries out to Us, whether lying on his side, sitting, or standing, but as soon as We relieve him of his trouble he goes on his way as if he had never cried out to Us to remove his trouble. In this way, the deeds of such heedless people are made attractive to them” (Qur’an, 10:12). He tells a story of his friend who was a sailor and he was not a Muslim. The friend told him that I never believe in God throughout my life and he was not a religious person. He used to go out to the ocean a lot. One day a storm overtook him. When he saw him drowning all of

a sudden he cried oh God save me. He saved and came back, and then he thought I don't believe in God why he cried God for help. He continued his life as nothing has happened. One day a Muslim gave him a copy of the Qur'an and he read certain verses of the Qur'an in which Allah describes the same situation. He read that when they get in trouble and when God saves them they don't thank God and go in odd ways. The friend said when I read this; I realized that it is the same situation that has happened to me. This is proof that shows the existence of God that every person calls God in dire trouble (Qadhi, 2008).

God has sent his messengers for the guidance of humanity with perfect laws and perfect belief with the support of miracles. Humans witness these miracles and analyze the laws which are perfect for human societies. This is proof of God's existence. Qur'anic proof for the God is very powerful and strong. There are many philosophical theories that prove the existence of God but these are very complicated to understand. Qur'anic proofs are very simple and strong which are understandable for every man. Qur'anic proves appeal an average person and highly intellectual person equally (Qadhi, 2008).

It is the people that do not acknowledge them because of the perception that has been blinded by arrogance hence ignoring the presence of Allah (Qadhi, 2017). He says, God has not shown his presence up to now and shown heaven or hell because the ones who do not want to believe in God will claim it to be the delusion or the magic and claim it falsely. Therefore, it is concluded that anyone who has shut his eyes, ears, and heart will always reject the presence of God and will never acknowledge it and for others who are inclined towards God, only their surroundings are important to claim his presence (Qadhi, 2017).

He argues that in Qur'an, only a few verses discuss the existence of God. This shows that there is a creator who is ingrained in the mind

of every person. He says the first proof of God's existence is creation itself; the fact we exist. The sun, moon, and planets around us are the signs of a creator. These all cannot come from nothing and there must be a cause for them (Qadhi, 2008).

There are thousands of theories and maxims and philosophical discussions throughout the history of the world from the earlier philosopher Aristotle and Plato to the later on philosophers of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This topic is hardly mentioned in Qur'an, just a few verses that discuss it because the concept of God is ingrained in every person.

Abdur Raheem Green (1962-) is a British Muslim scholar. He speaks mostly about traditional Islamic topics. He also engages in the debates about the existence of God with atheists. He argues that the question of God is a very common question prevailing in our society. People believe God to be someone who people worship and people worship these Gods because they believe that these Gods give them things that they cannot have. In different religions, people have different Gods for different things. There is a God of war, a God of rain, a goddess of love etc. In the Roman Catholic faith, people have different saints for different things for example if something is lost, ST. Anthony is prayed and the thing is found. There are always a set of rituals in these prayers for example sacrifice etc which goes to human sacrifice in an extreme situation. So if we look at the fact that God gives something, everyone has their own God and these Gods can be ideology, science communism apart from the prophets, saints etc because everything that has our faith in God (Green, 2008).

According to him, people perform these rituals that are practiced by their society to get themselves accepted by their people. Different people have taught different things, for example, Buddha provoked the people to live in the monastery to avoid the difficulties of life and it is a very difficult thing to do and that is why the practice of this religion is declining. The Qur'an

is a book that was sent for the whole of the mankind and it appeals to the common sense of mankind. It does not just show the logical rules rather it is simple and contains everything that human beings agree upon. He says that there is nothing in the totality of the human being's existence that proves that something came into existence by itself. The Qur'an keeps asking us and claims us to see the alternating days and nights, seasons and asks us to travel through the earth and all the other things because these are all the signs of the existence of God and these uninterrupted processes without any disputed mechanisms are nothing but the creations of God. The creation of God exists beyond the creation of space. Space, galaxies, sun, moon etc are all the creations of God and our Earth is just a tiny work of God. All these planets, the sun etc have different gasses, a specific distance, and the gravity and many other forces claiming that these things would not have existed without God's work (Green, 2008).

He adds that creator is not like anything in the universe and is transcendent and common sense points out towards the precision and consistency of the universe claiming that there is only one wise, powerful creator and no other like him and this is why every culture believes in one transcendent God but they actually give their knowledge and power to the creations of the God rather than the creator and hence deviating from the original path to the God. It is the God who listens to the wishes and complaints of every individual and listens to their voice and gives them what they want which is above the human powers. People ask for help from the prophets and saints when they believe that they have divine powers and that is where they are wrong and believe that the dead can hear those (Green, 2008).

He describes the attributes of God and says that God has no son, father, or anything because to be the son of God, the son should have divine powers as God has but no one possesses

those powers. God is eternal. He was never born and will never die. He is the only superpower ever existed and that is where clashes in some religions arise. Racism arises when people think of themselves as superior but God points out the only quality that makes a person better than the other is his piousness. The people who are the followers of different prophets claim them to be the best because of their ancestors forgetting the values that God has set for them. There is one power that prefers humanity above all and is the greatest of all and looks upon the signs of his creations and appreciates them because those are what show that God truly exists (Green, 2008).

Siddi Ali Ataie is a professor in Islamic Sciences with a specialization in theology and Biblical interpretation. He argues that there are two approaches to God's question. The first approach is presuppositionalism. This deals with revealed theology and we presuppose the existence of God. Jews, Christians, and Muslims argue that God exists and He has revealed Himself through Prophets, miracles, and divine books (Ataie, 2014).

Shabir Ally argues that to prove that God does not exist, specific proves should be presented as the proofs presented by Muslims are enough to prove God's existence. Life hereafter is an important topic to talk about. All the actions that are performed by an individual whether they are right or wrong will be questioned after death when the people will be resurrected after death (Ally, 2016). He argues that Allah has made different kinds of humans and has asked them to interact with each other but this is evolution and it does counter with Darwin's natural selection theory. With evolution, we cannot say that the change is occurring itself. All this change is the work of a higher supervisor (Ally, 2016). He describes the argument from Qur'an that Allah has addressed people and said that he has created people into different tribes and in different colors and creeds so that they can interact with each other and can get to know each other better. All

the creations we have encountered today and all that we are today are the blessing of God upon us because if it is not his will we wouldn't be able to move a finger (Ally, 2016).

AbulFeda Bin Masood says that atheists say that burden of proof is upon religious people to prove creation. In fact, it is illogical; the burden of proof is solely upon atheists that such a magnificent, clear, perfectly conserved, and controlled system is without any creator (Masood, P.20, 2016). He says that Prophets only told the world about God and the purpose which God has designated to humanity but no one has told us that the universe needs a creator who created us the way we are (Masood, P.21, 2016).

Richard Dawkins almost claims that he can agree on deist God¹ similar to the one that Einstein told about his beliefs about God, however, a personal God, who listens to prayers, read inner thoughts, commands to do good, and judges the human in the afterlife is not acceptable to him (Masood, P.36, 2016). Masood responds that the one attribute of God is 'omnipotence' which means perfect and complete ability and power. It is illogical to think about the creator that He has not total power and ability within it even though he has himself created the intelligence and power in the universe (Masood, P.38, 2016). He adds that the attribute 'omniscience' is to have complete knowledge of things that God has created; it is also illogical to think about the creator of the universe that he has not the complete knowledge of his creation. He says that 'goodness' is also the virtue of God and it is better to worship a God that is perfect in goodness rather worship an unjust evil God (Masood, P.38, 2016). God has given the sense to human to differentiate between goodness and evilness and directed to opt for goodness and to see goodness in God too. Moreover, he says that the attribute of 'creativity' also perfectly justifies God's ability to make a perfect design of the universe. It is illogical to

think that something in creation is more creative than the creator himself (Masood, P.39, 2016).

He argues that atheists claim that how God listens can pray and forgive sins with his direct interference in the world. He also describes this claim unreasonable and illogical. He quotes the Qur'anic verse,
 فَاطِرُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَزْوَاجًا وَمِنْ الْاَنْعَامِ اَزْوَاجًا يَذُرُّوْكُمْ فِيْهِ كَيْلًا مِّمْلًا شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيْرُ
 "nothing like a likeness of Him" (Qur'an, 42/11). He argues that it is not right to compare God's abilities of listening and watching to the abilities of a human. As we see in our nature that different birds have different capacities to see and listen to the other creatures. So God who is the creator of all must have the abilities superior and different to his creatures and he may see and listen to all the creatures at one time. So the claim that he can listen to the prayers and forgive the sins is justifiable through the means of reason and intellect (Masood, P.39-42, 2016). He says that atheists claim that how God can read the innermost thoughts of all man at the same time. He argues that there is much in the universe that people believe as fact by the necessity of observation without knowing deeply how it happens actually. He says that this atheist's claim is similar to the demand that one will have to believe in God while seeing him with his eye (Masood, P.44, 2016).

Muhammad Hijab is an academic researcher from London. He engaged in debates with Christian and atheists throughout his life. He argues that atheists claim that the universe has come from nothing and by from nothing. Atheists cannot provide evidence of this claim metaphysically, cosmologically, ontologically, or any other branch of science. He says this is an old position of atheists which is illogical. Qur'an says:

اَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ اَمْ هُمْ الْخٰلِقُوْنَ اَمْ خَلَقُوا السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ بَلْ لَا يُؤْقِنُوْنَ

¹ Deism: It is the belief that God exists as the cause of all things but refutes the divine revelation

and direct interference of God in the universe through Prophets, miracles and calamities.

“Were they created without any agent? Were they the creators? Did they create the heavens and the earth? No! They do not have faith” (Qur’an, 52:35-36). He adds that atheists claim that our universe is endless. If our universe is everlasting then to say that it came from nothing is irrational. This is a clear contradiction and atheism is based on a set of propositions that has clear contradictions. He says that Islam has also an inbuilt system of falsification. It puts different

challenges: first Qur’an says:

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا

“Will they not think about this Qur’an? If it had been from anyone other than God, they would have found much inconsistency in it (Quran, 4:82). The second is the inimitability challenge; Qur’an says to try to produce something like that. Thirdly, Qur’an makes some future predictions; it specifies time and place (Hijab, 2019).

Analysis

New Atheists	Muslim Scholars
<p>New atheists are not expert of religion; however, they add references of religious sacred texts to strengthen their arguments. Sam Harris uses verses of Qur’an without understanding the context to portray Islam as religion of Terror. Sam Harris argues “on almost every page, the Koran instructs observant Muslims to despise non-believers” (Harris, 2004, P.123). Harris writes the different verses of Qur’an without mentioning their specific contexts to support his argument in his book, The End of Faith: “It is the same whether or not you forewarn them [the unbelievers], they will have no faith” (2:6). “God will mock them and keep them long in sin, blundering blindly along” (2:15). A fire “whose fuel is men and stones” awaits them (2:24). They will be “rewarded with disgrace in this world and with grievous punishment on the Day of Resurrection” (2:85). “God’s curse be upon the infidels!” (2:89). “They have incurred God’s most inexorable wrath. An ignominious punishment awaits [them]” (2:90). “Slay them wherever you find them. Drive them out of the places from which they drove you. Idolatry is worse than carnage... If they attack you put them to the sword. Thus shall the unbelievers be rewarded: but if they desist, God is forgiving</p>	<p>Muslim scholars add Qur’anic verses in their argument which support God’s attributes and the creation of the universe. Muhammad Hijab argues from Qur’an: “Were they created without any agent? Were they the creators? Did they create the heavens and the earth? No! They do not have faith” (Qur’an, 52:35-36), “Will they not think about this Qur’an? If it had been from anyone other than God, they would have found much inconsistency in it (Quran, 4:82). AbulFeda Masood argue from about the God’s attributes: “nothing like a likeness of Him” (Qur’an, 42/11). Yasir Qadhi describes that in Qur’an only a few verses discuss the existence of God. This shows that there is definitely a creator who is ingrained in the mind of every person. He says the first proof of God’s existence is creation itself; the fact we exist. The sun, moon, and planets around us are the signs of a creator. These all cannot come from nothing and there must be a cause for them (Qadhi, 2008). Qadhi adds about the attributes of God Qur’an says: “People, here is an illustration, so listen carefully: those you call on beside God could not, even if they combined all their forces, create a fly, and if a fly took something away from them, they would not be able to retrieve it. How</p>

<p>and merciful. Fight against them until idolatry is no more and God's religion reigns supreme. But if they desist, fight none except the evil-doers"(Qur'an 2:190–93). Atheists ignore the Qur'anic verses who give the message for peace and prosperity of whole humanity without its identification. Qur'an says: "And whoever saves one – it is as if he had saved mankind entirely" (Qur'an, 5: 32). Atheists do not use religious texts references for the creation of the universe and the existence of God.</p>	<p>feeble are the petitioners and how feeble are those they petition!" (Qur'an, 22:73). Muslim scholars argue extensively from Qur'an to explain facts about the universe and proving the existence of God. They also quote Quranic verses which are supported by the discoveries of modern science.</p>
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Conclusion

Muslim scholars add Qur'anic verses in their argument which support God's attributes and the creation of the universe. They argue extensively from Qur'an to explain facts about the universe and proving the existence of God. They also quote Quranic verses which are supported by the discoveries of modern science. The message of God to humanity is clear and comprehensible. He chooses Prophets (AS) to deliver His message. The Prophets were aided by miracles which ordinary men cannot do. God is capable to reverse the universal laws because he has created them. The teachings of God fulfil the need of humanity and are necessary for peace and harmony. God challenges the atheist minds that have they been created from nothing or they have created own selves. God is necessary to play an arbitrary rule in order to establish what is right or wrong. New atheists are not expert of religion; however, they add references of religious sacred texts to strengthen their arguments. Sam Harris uses verses of Qur'an without understanding the context to portray Islam as religion of Terror. He writes the different verses of Qur'an without mentioning their specific contexts to support his argument. Qur'anic proofs are very simple and strong which are understandable for every man. Qur'anic proves appeal an average person and

highly intellectual person equally. The position of atheists is illogical and irrational.

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