

| The Divine Reality: God, Islam and The Mirage of Atheism | |
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| Author | Hamza Tzortzis - Master's and a postgraduate certificate in philosophy (University of London) |
| Claim | Atheism stems from false assumptions about the world, incoherent arguments, pseudointellectual postulations that veil emotional issues and egocentricity |
| Types of atheists | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) One who makes the negative assertion that one is not a believer in God 2) One not convinced by arguments for God's existence, also called agnosticism 3) One who makes the positive assertion that there is no God |
| Philosophical naturalism | The view that all phenomena within the universe can be explained via physical processes |
| Disagreement among atheists | Some atheist academics disagree with the new atheist discourse, involving Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, and Christopher Hitchens, as they are not informed regarding philosophy and theology |
| Implications of atheism | <p>No ultimate hope, value and purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Everything that exists is simply a rearrangement of matter - Giving value to things such as human rights or assigning purpose in a naturalistic worldview is baseless and arbitrary, a form of self-delusion |
| Plane analogy | <p>You fall asleep and wake up on a plane. You are being treated with first-class service and have access to unlimited entertainment. Would you be content with not knowing who put you on the plane and where you are going?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">فَأَيْنَ تَدْهِيْنَ</p> |
| Slavery | <p>We are all enslaved to our desires and/or society i.e. we act in a way to please ourselves or please others. The reality is that neither can be pleased till contentment and thus we live unfulfilled lives.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">عَارِبَاتٌ مُتَفَرِّقُونَ خَيْرٌ أَمِ اللَّهُ الْوَحِيدُ الْقَهَّارُ</p> |
| Reason in an atheistic worldview | Everything arises as a by-product of blind, irrational processes, therefore, the act of reasoning itself simply consists of blind, irrational forces that cannot lead to a valid, rational conclusion |

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| Exceptionalism of man | <p>Insects/bugs e.g. cockroaches have survived as a species for much longer than humans without developing the sophisticated, rational faculty possessed by man; cockroaches have not, being influenced by the evolutionary need to optimize survival, ever known to debate the existence of God, experience existential crisis, or study the world with such curiosity</p> <p>So why has man evolved to do such things? Our faculties are way beyond what we need to survive and reproduce</p> |
| Question for naturalists | How do nonphysical properties arise from purely physical matter? |
| Occam's razor | <p>Philosophical principle that states that the simplest explanation is most likely the correct one</p> <p>Denying God creates more problems than affirming Him, because God provides the simplest/most comprehensive explanation</p> |
| Limitations of science Pg. 111 | <p>If the universe is dependent, as is proven by the argument from dependency, then it requires something external that is independent and therefore eternal i.e. has no limited physical qualities</p> <p>However science cannot observe/detect something independent because that would indicate a physical limitation</p> |
| Note: Dependency is the same as contingency | <p>* Things that can be sensed, i.e. are empirical, have limited physical qualities which mean they're dependent; science cannot discover an independent thing e.g. the originator of the universe, because it would necessarily be unobservable</p> |
| Hard Problem of Consciousness | <p>How does cold, blind and nonconscious matter give rise to immaterial, subjective consciousness?</p> <p>Nonconscious matter + nonconscious matter \neq conscious matter</p> |
| Emergent materialists Pg. 61 | <p>They argue that complex, physical processes can give rise to properties not existent in the individual components e.g. H₂O is a liquid resulting from two gasses</p> <p>However this doesn't explain nonphysical properties</p> |
| Limit of neuroscience | <p>Brain activity only indicates that something is happening not what it is like for that something to happen (subjective experience)</p> <p>* When we deny God we are denying our subjective conscious experience since it would not exist if God did not exist</p> |
| Euthyphro's dilemma | <p>Is something morally good because God commands it or does God command it because it is morally good?</p> <p>This implies that either morality is arbitrary or independent of God</p> |

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| Muslim response | Because God is Good He only commands good. Moral objectivity stems from Allah's goodness and is thus neither arbitrary nor external (such that He is subservient to it) |
| Natural Selection | This doesn't explain kindness/generosity to those who are not "the fittest", like the elderly or those with disabilities |
| Subjective morality | If an atheist denies objective morality then he/she cannot judge/criticize the actions of any group/society/religion |
| Objective versus absolute morality | Absolute morality entails an act is good or bad regardless of the context Ex: Killing is always bad even in self-defense Objective morality acknowledges the context of the action |
| Criteria for a divine text | 1) Must be consistent with the rational conclusions about God i.e. He is external to the universe and is independent (no limited, physical qualities) 2) Must be consistent in its claims 3) Must contain evidence of having a transcendent source Ex: Qur'an's linguistic inimitability, historical accuracy and unique arrangement |
| Suffering in the world | The Qur'an states the purpose of life is to test us: we can't be tested for patience without difficulty, we cannot be compassionate without people who are in need of it, we cannot be repentant without the avenues to sin and transgress, and we cannot be upholders of justice without the presence of injustice This life was never meant to be perfect and that is why Paradise exists * It is fallacious to reduce God to two attributes i.e. Mercy and Power and ignore His Wisdom |
| Suffering in an atheistic worldview | Without God our pain and suffering is meaningless and there is no good that comes out of suffering "It makes me grateful" → "Okay, but who are you showing gratitude to?" Additionally, that would be a benefit of suffering |
| Inductive arguments | Involve making a conclusion about something unobserved based on limited observations Particular → General; e.g. I have only encountered friendly dogs → All dogs are friendly |

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| Circular reasoning | This presumes that nature is uniform which cannot be argued except by an inductive argument |
| Science | Physical processes do not explain everything * What we are able to explain scientifically is due to God creating the world with physical laws/causes and without God these laws wouldn't exist |
| Testimony | We rely on testimony as a reliable source of knowledge in most domains of our life e.g. textbooks, doctors, experts in any field, parents, reporters, etc. |
| Qur'an's inimitability | Based on inference to the best explanation, it is established that the Qur'an could not be authored by Muhammad ﷺ, an Arab or non-Arab, and thus it was authored by God. |
| Criticism of the Qur'an | Any criticism of the linguistic features of the Qur'an goes against established background history i.e. that it was unchallenged by 7th century Arabs and it was accepted as a masterpiece by all |
| Who authored the Qur'an? لَيْسَ كَمِتْلَهْ شَيْءٌ | When we compare the Qur'an's language and the Prophet's language i.e. style of speech, in the ahadith we see a clear contrast The Prophet ﷺ was not known to have ever engaged in poetry and if he was being taught by another person it would have been eventually discovered over the duration of the 23 years in which verses of the Qur'an were taught orally and immediately dedicated to memory, which prevented editing and amending of the verses * The Qur'an is not poetry, it is in its own literary genre |
| Shakespeare | He has been compared to other playwrights and poets which demonstrates that although his work is considered the best in the English language, it is not inimitable as he relied on conventional rhyme scheme and his work was not considered unordinary by his contemporaries |
| خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا | * To deny God not only requires rejecting reality but is the highest form of ingratitude as everything we rely upon and benefit from was created by Him for us |
| Why did God create us to worship Him? | * It was an inevitable manifestation of Allah's attributes since Allah is the One worthy of worship; He is not, however, in need of it In reality, we will never be able to fully grasp the wisdom of Allah because our knowledge of Him is limited |