

God's Existence: Philosophical Discourse Between New Atheists and Muslim Scholars

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Abstract

This article seeks to explore how Muslim scholars are responding to modern atheism that is known as 'New Atheism'. Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett and Christopher Hitchens are considered as the founding fathers of new atheism. New atheists use philosophical, scientific, moral and historical arguments to refute religion as well as God's existence. This study highlights their especially their philosophical arguments and Muslim scholarly response in this regard. They draw on science as alternative of religion in twenty-first century. Moreover, they suggest that empirical science is sufficient for genuine knowledge for humanity and there is no need to take guidance from religions. They conclude that religions are unscientific and irrational and it is satisfying to live without religion on the basis of scientific discoveries and secular moral values. The refutation of new atheism came from different religious scholars of Judaism, Christianity and scholars of other religious beliefs. Muslim scholars have also refuted atheism in its philosophical, scientific, moral and historical dimensions but this refutation is still unknown in academic community. This study will fulfill that gap. This write up is based on a qualitative research study. The data was collected through library research. Muslim scholars show that philosophical viewpoints support God's existence and authenticity of religion as well.

Key Words: *Islam, Muslim scholars, New Atheism, Philosophy, God's existence*

Introduction

Atheism and theism are two opposite ideologies. Atheists deny the existence of God whereas theists strongly advocate it and spend their lives according to God's commandments. Historically, atheism remained in minor form and was not an issue of central debate as it has become in post-modern era. At present, atheism is rising in different parts of world rapidly. The reason behind this rise is the aggressive campaign of new atheists such as Sam Harris (b. April 9, 1967), Richard Dawkins (b. March 26, 1941),

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Daniel Dennett (b. March 28, 1942) and Christopher Hitchens (d. December 15, 2011). New atheism in form of an organized movement begins from the first decade of 21st century.

Sam Harris is considered as the initiator writer and public speaker of the campaign. He published the book *'The End of Faith: Religion, Terror and the Future of Reason'* in 2004. After the incident of 9/11, Harris criticized all the world's religions especially Islam. He portrayed Islam as the religion of terror and violence. The second most influential academic writer of this campaign is Richard Dawkins who published his bestselling book *'The God Delusion'* in 2006. Richard Dawkins is professor of Biology in Oxford University. He takes active part in the debates and discourses with religious scholars and leads different campaigns against religious beliefs worldwide. Third influential writer is Daniel Dennett who is basically a philosopher. He wrote his bestselling book, *'Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon'* in 2007. Another most renowned new atheist writer is Christopher Hitchens. He wrote the book, *'God is not Great: How Religions Poisons everything'* in 2007. These four books are considered as the foundation of new atheism. These new atheist added scientific explanation of universe and struggled for establishing scientific moralities to remove religion from all walks of life.

In addition to these new atheists, some other atheists like Lawrence M. Krauss (b. May 27, 1954), Polly Toynbee (b. December 27, 1946), Philip Pullman (b. October 19, 1946), Martin Amis (b. August 25, 1949), Jerry Coyne (b. December 30, 1949), P.Z. Myers (b. March 9, 1957), Victor J. Stenger (d. August 25, 2014), Bill Maher (b. January 20, 1956), Robert L. Park (b. January 16, 1931), Stewen Weinberg (b. May 03, 1933), Ian McEvan (b. June 21, 1948), Peter Sloterdijk (b. June 26, 1947), Philip Moller, A. C. Grayling (b. April 03, 1949), Michael Schmidt-Saloman (b. September 14, 1967), Piergiorgio Osifreddi (b. July 13, 1950), Michael Onfray (b. January 01, 1959), ex-Muslim atheists Salman Rushdie (b. June 19, 1947), Ayyan Hisrsi Ali (b. November 13, 1969), Ibn e Warraq (b. 1947) have also become the part of new atheist campaign and considered the proponents and supporters of new atheism.

In English literature, some studies have been carried out by Muslim scholars that claim the new atheists' major positions illogical and unscientific. Hamza Andreas Tzortis (2018) refuted major scientific, philosophical and moral arguments of new atheists. AbulFeda bin Masood (2016) responded Richard Dawkins' scientific argumentation. Theory of evolution is considered as the base of scientific atheism. Harun Yahya (2019)

claimed evolution theory as unscientific. This paper specifically focuses on philosophical arguments of new atheists and Muslim scholarly response in this regard.

God's Existence and Philosophy: New Atheists' Perspective

Philosophy is study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence, especially when considered as an academic discipline. Philosophy is the practice of making and assessing arguments. An argument is a set of statements (called premises) that work together to support another statement (the conclusion). Making and assessing arguments can help us get closer to understanding the truth. At the very least, the process helps make us aware of our reasons for believing what we believe, and it enables us to use reason when we discuss our beliefs with other people.

Sam Harris points out that religion talks about the premature inquiry about the universe which does not fulfill the requirements of post-modern era. According to him, if the world situation continues then one day our civilization can confront with Islamists armed people with biological and nuclear weapons which are terrifying for the modern world³. He argues that to win the war of ideologies scientists, philosophers and other intellectuals' people require to work on new methods of developing spiritual experience and moralities.

Harris considers religion dangerous for modern world. He argues that "our species may eradicate itself via war among different religions. This very thing is not written in stars above us but it is written in our books; the words like "sin", "paradise" and "God" will determine our future".⁴ He generates hate in his readers about the holy books and divine message in this way.

Harris discusses that there is no rational justification for the God's existence. He argues "let's say that I believe that God exists, and some impertinent person asks me why. This question invites, indeed, demands, an answer of the form, I believe that God exists because, I cannot say, however, I believe that God exists because it is prudent to do so".⁵ According to him, there is no logical justification for God's existence, but it is a trend in human civilization to have belief in divine.

Richard Dawkins not only examines the religious beliefs critically, also describes their negative effects on humanity. Dawkins use aggressive language and rhetorically writes

³ Sam Harris, *A letter to a Christian nation*, (USA: Hardcover Publishers, 2006) p. 17.

⁴ Sam Harris, *The end of faith: religion, terror, and the future of reason* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004) p. 12.

⁵ Ibid., p.61.

that, “the God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control freak; a vindictive, blood thirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully”.⁶ Our world has good and evil. Dawkins makes responsible for all kinds of evil to God; however he does not describe the billions of religious people who are good because of practicing on scriptures and share goodness in their communities. The religion motivates human towards caring other and creates feeling of altruism.

Richard Dawkins quotes George Bernard Shaw's words, “the fact that a believer is happier than a skeptic is no more to the point than the fact that a drunken man is happier than a sober one”.⁷ Religious people live more satisfactory life than the non-religious ones. Religion gives hope for reward of goodness in last life. In atheistic ideology there is no motive for doing good in this world as well as no reward of goodness in last life. In this perspective, religion has strong impact on man for spending a satisfactory life. Richard Dawkins attacks on the validity of Bible and argues that:

*The most part of Bible is not systematically evil but just plain weird, as you would expect of a chaotically cobbled-together anthology of disjointed documents, composed, revised, translated, distorted and improved by hundreds of anonymous authors, editors, and copyists, unknown to us and mostly unknown to each other, spanning nine centuries. This may explain some of the sheer strangeness of the Bible*⁸.

Dennett is basically a philosopher, that's why he argues philosophical aspects of religion more than scientific, historical or moral. He argues that if God can be self-caused then universe can also be self-caused. He argues that, “Philosophy is questions that may never be answered, religion answers that may never be questioned”.⁹ He points out the critical thing about religion that religious people belief without and evidence and they do not feel good to ask a question about any of their belief. Dawkins and Harris also make the same argument that religions have no evidence for their authenticity and validity. New atheists actually borrow many things from each other with their slight or more additions.

⁶ Sam Harris, *The end of faith: religion, terror, and the future of reason*, p.31.

⁷ Ibid., p.167.

⁸ Ibid., p.237.

⁹ Denial C. Dennett, *Breaking the spell: religion as a natural phenomenon* (USA: Penguin Group, 2007) p.17.

Daniel Dennett describes religion as natural phenomenon which is found in human nature. According to him, religion is natural food which is healthy, tasty, organic, unadulterated that at any rate is myth¹⁰. Muslim scholars argue that the God's presence is found in human nature (*fitrah*). Dennett has also similar thought but he is not agreeing that these feelings of satisfaction while practicing religion are from God. Rather, he describes this natural or not supernatural. Dennett describes religion as natural that is opposed to supernatural and links it with purely human effort excluding God from picture. Religion is composed of human phenomenon such as objects, organisms, events, patterns and structures¹¹. Dennett argues in philosophical manner about the widely asked question that who created God. He argues that:

*The Cosmological Argument, which in its simplest form states that since everything must have a cause the universe must have a cause-namely God- doesn't stay simple for long. Some deny the premise, since quantum physics teaches us (doesn't it?) that not everything that happens needs to have a cause. Others prefer to accept the premise and ask: What caused God? The reply that God is self-caused (somehow) then raises the rebuttal: If something can be self-caused, why can't the universe as a whole be the thing that is self-caused?*¹²

He doubts the cosmological argument that support the religious claim that our universe has and external cause that is God. He claims if we accept the religious claim that God is self-caused then we may have Darwinian belief that universe is also self-caused.

In his book '*God is not Great*', Christopher Hitchens argues for the strict separation of the state and Church and not interference of the religions in public and private matters of any society¹³. He demonstrates that his book is a complete criticism of religion and claims it a 'New Enlightenment'¹⁴. He adds that "indeed, many authorities agree that the Koran is only intelligible in Arabic tongue which is itself subject to innumerable idiomatic and regional inflections. This would leave us, on the face of it, with the absurd and potentially dangerous conclusion that God was monoglot"¹⁵. This is unjust claim of Hitchen because

¹⁰ Denial C. Dennett, *Breaking the spell: religion as a natural phenomenon*, p. 24.

¹¹ Ibid., p.25.

¹² Ibid., p.242.

¹³ Christopher Hitchens, *God is not great: how religion poisons everything*, (Toronto: Emblem, 2007) p. 6.

¹⁴ Ibid., p.85.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.124.

Qur'an says: "If we had made it a foreign Qur'an, they would have said, 'If only its verses were clear! What? Foreign speech to an Arab?'" (Qur'an: 41:44). Allah responds this objection of Hitchens almost 1400 years ago that the first addressee of Qur'anic message was Arabic people and rationally they could understand better the message in Arabic. Otherwise people blame that Qur'an is not in our language that is why we cannot understand and practice on its message. This argument of Hitchens shows that he is unknown to Qur'an and comments about religious faiths without having sufficient knowledge of the scriptures.

Christopher Hitchens claims that religious people ask that what stops a person from doing murder, rape and lying if some doesn't believe in God. The answer is simple that desire for the respect of others and self-respect stops an atheist for committing such kind of crimes¹⁶. According to him, if any one provides food, water and shelter to dogs and cats, these animals think their owner as they are God. The same situation is in the case of religious beliefs. The people think that water, food and shelter are given by the creator. He says God's existence is exceptional claim and exceptional claims needs exceptional evidences which religion does not have¹⁷. He does not agree to accept different kinds of religious evidences in support of God's existence and he does not explain anything about the nature and characteristics of his required exceptional argument.

Christopher Hitchens adds that "the Bible have a command for human trafficking, slavery, indiscriminate massacre and the bride price. We are not bound of Bible because it was collected by uncultured and crude human mammals".¹⁸ He also claims that the religion is irrational, violent, adverse to open inquiry, contemptuous to women and coercive about the matters relevant to children.¹⁹ He expresses that when a man prays to God, he considers that God has put the matters wrongly then through prayer actually he instructs the God how to make them right. Like Richard Dawkins and Sam Harris, he also criticizes the religious concept of pray.

New atheists deny the self existence of God and argue that if God can be self existent then, the universe can also be self existent. Moreover, they oppose the religious education of children. They demonstrate religion and God's existent dangerous for humanity and suggest

¹⁶ Christopher Hitchens, *Portable atheist: essential readings for non believer*, (USA: Paperback Publishers, 2007) p.137.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.21.

¹⁸ Christopher Hitchens, *God is not great*, p.142.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.29.

non-interference of religion in state matters. To portray the religion against phenomenon in the mind of peoples, they use aggressive and uncivilized language about God and Holy scriptures. New atheists believe that there is no God, no accountability after death, no hope, no purpose and eternal happiness. Atheism rejects the supernatural belief, so as religious people hope that one day they will get place in paradise, the people who do wrong in this world, will be accountable to God.

God's Existence and Philosophy: Muslim Scholars' Perspective

Islamic philosophy is a development in philosophy that is considered by coming from an Islamic tradition. Two main terms usually used in the Islamic world are sometimes translated as philosophy. The First, *falsafa* (literally: "philosophy"), which refers to philosophy as well as logic, physics and mathematics, and second is, *Kalam* (literally "speech"), which refers to a rationalist form Islamic theology. Early Muslim philosophy began with al-Kindi in the second century of the Islamic calendar (early 9th century CE) and ended with Averroes (Ibn Rushd) in the 6th century AH (late 12th century CE), broadly coinciding with the period known as the *Golden Age of Islam*.

The Muslim philosopher Abu Ali Sina (980-1037) is also known as Avicenna. He proved the existence of God philosophically in early Islamic history. According to him, since a contingent thing on its own merit could either exist or not exist, it must have some external cause that made it exist. For instance, a human is contingent, meaning that he is the sort of thing that could easily have failed to exist. In fact, at one time he didn't yet exist, and in the future he will cease existing, that proves he is not necessary. So there must have been a cause, maybe his parents, who brought me into existence. Now Avicenna observes that the aggregate whole of all contingent things, in other words the physical universe, is also contingent. After all, everything in the universe is contingent, so taken all together as one thing, it too must be contingent. Thus it also needs an external cause, just like a human does. Since that external cause has to be outside the whole aggregate of contingent things, it cannot itself be contingent. So it is necessary. This fact proves that there is a necessary existent which causes all other things, and this is God.²⁰

Hamza Andreas Tzortis (1980-) is a British Muslim scholar. He is famous for his debates with renowned new atheists. He has written the book, '*The Divine Reality: God Islam and the Mirage of Atheism*', in which he responds to atheists in Islamic perspective.

²⁰ Peter Adamson, Adamson, *Philosophy in the Islamic world: A history of philosophy without any gaps*, vol: 3 (UK: Oxford University Press, 2017) p.41.

He argues that like atheism philosophical naturalism also rejects God's existence. Mostly new atheists like, Richard Dawkins adopts the philosophical naturalism as a worldview. Philosophical naturalism is a view that describes that all phenomena related to universe can be explained through physical processes. He quotes Dawkins who says "there is nothing beyond natural, physical world".²¹ Hamza shows that atheism provides no hope for a bright future ahead²².

According to Hamza, atheism provides no fundamental basis for justice because it does not have the concept of afterlife. However religious belief gives the concept of accountability of every one in front of God. Tzortis writes rhetorically that "atheism is like a mother giving her child a toy then taking it back for no reason".²³ A man feels happiness, love and other good feelings in this world. Religion gives hopes for the continuation of these joys in the paradise which atheism snatches without any alternative idea or hope.

Like many other philosophers, Ludwig Wittgenstein did not answer to the question about the purpose of life, however he indicated that life is not a game. Some philosophers argued that the question is false and human should not bother about anything. Human should continue living without the thinking of their objective of living (Tzortis, 2016, P. 51). Tzortis quotes noble prize winner Albert Camus who says: "you will never live if you are looking for the meaning of life" (Andreas, 2016, P.51). Camus says that important thing is to live without worrying about the purpose of living. Tzortis counter these arguments with an example:

*"If you see anybody sitting on a chair and reading a book while wearing some clothes, someone may ask you questions that for what purpose you have chair and why you are wearing clothes? Your answer will be that chair allows me to sit down while supporting my weight and clothes keep me warm and save me from nakedness. So, when lifeless object can have a purpose how can be the human without any purpose?"*²⁴

Hamza uses philosophical argument to refute atheistic perspective:

Atheist: "There is no evidence for God's. Belief in God is irrational".

²¹ Hamza Andreas Tzortis, *The divine reality. God, Islam & the mirage of atheism*, (USA: Paperback Publishers, 2016) p.24.

²² Ibid., p.41.

²³ Ibid., p.44.

²⁴ Ibid., p.52.

Muslim: "That's an interesting assertion. Before we continue, can I ask you, do you believe that you have rational faculties? In other words, do you believe you can reason?"

Atheist: "Obviously. Any rational person would deny God. There's simply no evidence."

Muslim: "Okay, great. So can I ask, how do you explain your rational faculties under atheism?"

Atheist: "What do you mean?"

Muslim: "Well, do you believe all phenomena can be explained via physical stuff? And do you believe that there is no supernatural?"

Atheist: "Sure."

Muslim: "Physical stuff is just non-rational and blind. So how could rational thinking emerge from non-rational thinking? How could a thing come from something that does not hold it or have the capacity to develop it? How could mental insights form via blind physical processes? In this light, how can you explain your ability to reason?"

Atheist: "Well, we have a brain that has evolved."

Muslim: "Okay, and according to atheism an evolved brain is based on physical stuff too, no?"

Atheist: "Yes, but our brains have evolved to be rational, because the more you know about the world the more likely you are to survive."

Muslim: "That's not true; holding irrational ideas can also lead for survival too."

Atheist: "So what? We both assume reason to be true, so it's not an issue."

Muslim: "Well, for me it isn't. But under atheism your ability to reason does not make sense. Atheism has invalidated the very assumption that it claims to use to deny God. So it is absurd to be an atheist since atheism nullifies reason itself."

Atheist: "No, you have to prove God to me first."

Muslim: "That's a cop-out, because your use of the word 'proof' assumes your ability to reason. However, you are not justified in making such an assumption because rationality is nullified under atheism. Rationality cannot come from non-rationality. From this perspective, atheism is irrational. However, rationality can come from rationality. This is why Islamic theism

explains best why we can use our reason, as it came from the Creator Who is All-Seeing, The-Knowing and The-Wise."²⁵

Hamza argues that there are ample evidences about the existence of God. The question does God exists should be replaced with why do you reject the existence of God? The atheism is unnatural and irrational.²⁶ The evident truth of God is in nature which is explained by Islamic theological concept regarding '*fitrah*'. This word originates from the trilateral stem of Arabic 'fa' 'ta' 'ra', which means a made or created thing. Lexical explanation shows that the word '*fitrah*' refers to something that has been created within us by God. Theologically, the word refers to the innate position or a natural state of humans with the inborn knowledge of divine and the natural liking to worship God. The same concept is described by Prophet Muhammad (SAAS): "Every child is born in a state of '*fitrah*'. Then his parents make him a Jew, a Christian or Magian"²⁷. Ibn Tamiyya describes that: "the existence of a perfect Creator is known from the '*fitra*', and this knowledge is ingrained, necessary and obvious."²⁸ Al-Ghazali explains '*fitrah*' as the source of acquiring the truth of Allah's existence and knowledge of God is in depth of consciousness of every human being.²⁹

Tzortis argues "the guidance only comes from God, and no amount of rational evidence can convince one's heart to realize the truth of Islam"³⁰. He quotes the Qur'an: "You [Prophet] cannot guide everyone you love to the truth; it is God who guides whoever He will: He knows best those who will follow guidance" (Qur'an, 28:56).

Tzortis argues that atheists claim that our universe has come from nothing. He deals this matter with a rational example. If someone in a room, the door of room is now closed and there is no space to enter or exit from that room. If that person asleep and then awakes after some time, then he finds a computer and desk in the middle of room that in the middle of room. The person cannot imagine that the desk and computer have come from no prior activity. Then if he rationalizes his intuition, he can think about three choices. First, the computer has come from nothing, second it could have caused or created itself, and third it

²⁵ Hamza Andreas Tzortis, *The divine reality. God, Islam & the mirage of atheism*, p. 65-66.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., p.101.

²⁸ Ibid., p.102.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid. p.105.

has come by some prior cause. Intellect says that the third option is more suitable.³¹ Qur'an says: 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: 52:35-37). According to Tzortis, Qur'an mentions four possibilities:

- i) *Created by nothing: "or were they created by nothing?"*
- ii) *Self-created: "or were they the creators of themselves?"*
- iii) *Created by something created: "or did they create the heavens and the Earth?", which implies a created thing being ultimately created by something else created.*
- iv) *Created by something uncreated: "Rather, they are not certain", implying that the denial of God is baseless, and therefore the statement implies that there is an uncreated creator³².*

According to Sidi Ali Ataie, the evidentialist approach is used to prove the existence of God. In this approach logic, reason, philosophy and science, deductive and syllogistic arguments are used to prove the existence of God. These arguments are not strictly theological but may have strong theological implications. Syllogism is an argument that was presented by Aristotle. He said three things make an argument strong. First, 'logos' (logic or knowledge of an argument), second 'ethos' (Character of one who is making the argument) and Third is 'pathos' (effect on listener). Often, we find the atheists they don't have knowledge of the topic, they don't have good character but they a lot of 'pathos' for example they are good speakers like Christopher Hitchens.³³ Ataie proves the existence of God through syllogistic arguments:

Premise 1: All men are mortal

Premise 2: George Washington was a man

Therefore conclusion from this argument which is inescapable is that George Washington was mortal. A sane and sincere person will say that this is a logical argument.

Another kind of argument is:

Premise 1: The universe is ordered

³¹ Hamza Andreas Tzortis, *The divine reality. God, Islam & the mirage of atheism*, p.107.

³² *Ibid.*, p.110.

³³ Sidi Ali Ataie, Does God exists? A Muslim response to atheism with Sidi Ali Ataie, www.youtube.com, Accessed on 21 Apr 2019.

Premise 2: This is either by chance or by design

Premise 3 This is not by chance therefore our inescapable conclusion is that this is by design. Another argument is:

Premise 1: All donkeys speak English

Premise 2: Garry is my pet donkey

Therefore conclusion is Garry can speak English³⁴.

New atheists arguments against God are primarily revolve around issues of social impact of religion. Religion people are bad, so God does not exist. For example Hitler was a catholic, suicide bombers and ISIS shows that God does not exist. According to Ataie (2014) atheists argue:

Premise 1: Theists say God is good.

Premise 2: God created man

Premise 3: Man does evil

Therefore God does not exist³⁵

This argument is illogical, people like Sam Harris and Bill Maher argue that Muslim have ISIS which is violent thus Islam is violent. ISIS is few thousand people and atheists blame on this base that 1.5 billion Muslims are violent. Ali argues in responses of this atheist argument that five of the last ten noble peace laureate were Muslims therefore all Muslims are peaceful. The atheist would not accept this argument. Similarly, the mother of Sam Harris is ethnically Jewish, the mother of Bill Maher is ethnically Jewish, therefore all ethnic Jewish are full of hate. According to Ataie, atheists would not accept this argument too:

Cosmological argument also proves the God's existence.

Premise 1: Whatever begins to exist has a cause

Premise 2: The universe began to exist

Therefore the universe has a cause.

This argument is not strictly theological but it has theological implications³⁶

If someone says that universe has been created itself, it is supernatural claim. Only a non-contingent being (one who is not subject to causality, the one who is not subject to infinite

³⁴ Sidi Ali Ataie, Does God exists? A Muslim response to atheism with Sidi Ali Ataie, www.youtube.com, Accessed on 21 Apr 2019.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

regress because he is eternal, the one who is necessarily space less, timeless and immaterial) can bring a universe into being from nothing. He is so powerful and intelligent that he created space, time and matter. At this point atheists say that who caused God? It is God very nature to be pre eternal. Whatever begins to exist has a cause and God never began to exist. If we start asking that question then we question the very existence of the universe. For example:

*If I am standing in a line and there is brother in front of me and I tell the brother I really want to hug you. And brother says ask the guy behind you. I ask the guy behind him, he says ask the guy behind me. Can I give him a hug, he says ask the guy behind me. And this goes on ad infinitum. My giving the guy ahead represents the big bang, the universe. Will I ever give him a hug? No, because you cannot traverse an actual infinitude. If you ask the question who created God then you have not solved infinite regression.*³⁷

According to Ataie (2014) the argument for design is:

Premise 1: The fine tuning of the universe is either due to physical necessity or it by chance or it by design?

Premise 2: It is not due to physical necessity or chance therefore it is due to design.

*William Lain Craig said that there are fifty constants are present in the big bang that must be fine-tuned in this way. Their ratio to one another must also be fine-tuned to allow for life permitting universe.*³⁸

Shabir Ally is a renowned Canadian Muslim scholar. His specialization is in Qur'anic exegesis. He is also among those Muslim scholars who keep engage themselves in the debates and discourses regarding atheism. He argues that atheism is a growing trend in the world. It has always been there but now it is emerging more as a bold subject. This is the reason the debate has now been shifted between the people with a faith and the atheists instead of between Muslims and non-Muslims. The questions that why God exists. Who created god and why is there evil etc. Such types of questions are increasing in the environment with the increasing number of atheists. The presence of God is very difficult to determine and only those who believe in his presence and look upon the clues can determine

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

the presence of God but the atheists find it difficult because they are blinded towards the clues and are in an intellectually inadequate position.³⁹

Ally responds that atheists generally believe that the presence of suffering and evil is an indication towards the fact that God does not exist. Many atheists are former Christians and hence they keep aside their religion and reply in the light of atheism. Christians firmly believe that God loves everyone and so does everyone who has some faith believe this but atheists argue that if God truly existed and loved his people he should not have created evil. Muslims believe that the test is taken by every creature to check his firmity in the faith and these tests bring the believer closer to the God. God looks at eternity. He looks at the big picture i.e., not only at this world but at the afterlife too. He counts the outcomes more and has set the good prevails for those who have suffered. Allah has set outcomes for every suffering the human has faced in this life and that outcome is better.⁴⁰

Shabir Ali argues that atheists do not have a good point about denying the existence of God apart from their own belief. Philosophers have offered different arguments but the most powerful are the following. Each of these points proves a specific point about the existence of God. According to Ali:

- *The universe exists and no one will deny it. But how did this came into being. Either it came into chance as the result of some random event or it came out as a result of a necessity or it was created by someone. And the last point that that someone created it suits the intellect the most.*
- *Everything that surrounds us has a specific purpose. And all this points us towards a designer who designed all these purposeful things. From a wooden stick to the solar system, all the systems are created by a creator that is Allah.⁴¹*

Abul Feda Masood responds logically to the following premises of Richard Dawkins about the God's existence:

Premise 1 The creation of the world is the most marvelous achievement imaginable.

³⁹ Shabir Ally, *Does God really exists? An answer to atheism in a Godless society*, www.youtube.com, accessed on 19 Oct 2018.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

Premise 2 The merit of an achievement is the product of (a) its intrinsic quality, and (b) the ability of its creator.

Premise 3 The greater the disability (or handicap) of the creator, the more impressive the achievement.

Premise 4 The most formidable handicap for a creator would be nonexistence.

Premise 5 Therefore if we suppose that the universe is the product of an existent creator we can conceive a greater being-namely, one who created everything while not existing.

Premise 6 An existing God therefore would not be a being greater than which a greater cannot be conceived because an even more formidable and incredible creator would be a God which did not exist.

Ergo:

Premise 7 God does not exist.⁴²

Masood responds this as;

Premise 1 is true

Premise 2 is absolutely true

Premise 3 Reason rejects that the creator is limited in any way as man is limited. The handicap and disability is form which the creator has created in this universe. So it is not rational that our universe is a work of a handicap being. Therefore the whole argument collapses. The conclusion is also false because the most formidable of handicap is not non-existence, non existence is known as nothingness which is not an attribute to be impressed by.⁴³

Muslim scholars refute the atheistic arguments in philosophical perspective and show the position of atheism illogical. Religion makes people moral, happy, purposeful and hopeful for the eternal rewards.

Conclusion

New atheists deny the self existence of God and argue that if God can be self existent then, the universe can also be self existent. Moreover, they oppose the religious education of

⁴² Richard Dawkins, *The God delusion*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006) p.125.

⁴³ Abul Feda Masood, *Blasting the foundation of atheism*, (USA: Kindle Edition, 2016) p.93.

children. They demonstrate religion and God's existent dangerous for humanity and suggest non-interference of religion in state matters. To portray the religion against phenomenon in the mind of peoples, they use aggressive and uncivilized language about God and Holy scriptures. New atheists believe that there is no God, no accountability after death, no hope, no purpose and eternal happiness. Atheism rejects the supernatural belief, so as religious people hope that one day they will get place in paradise, the people who do wrong in this world, will be accountable to God. An age old philosophical atheist objection that who created God is repeated by new atheists too. Muslim scholars argue that God is not a created being. According to Qur'an God is eternal. Muslim scholars argue that the God who has designed the universe does not need anything to be designed. The question is self-contradictory and inherently false. For instance, for the sake of argument if it is told someone created God, then the next question would be who created that someone? And so on ad infinitum, that is impossible and irrational. Atheists believe on the concept of pre-eternity. They argue that matter was pre-eternal and no one created matter. They cannot answer who created matter? Muslim scholars argue that Allah created the matter and everything and Allah is pre-eternal. This argument is logical and rational but atheists deny it. For instance, if someone see a train and asks who is pulling the last wagon? The answer would be the front one wagon. Again he asks who pulls that one and this answer goes up to the first wagon. Then the question is who pulls the first wagon, the answer would be the locomotive which is run by machine and steam. Then a rational person cannot ask the same question repeatedly who pulls the locomotive or first wagon. Moreover, God is believed with its attributes. One of God's attribute is that he is pre-eternal. If some has created Him, then by definition, he cannot be God. So, this question is illogical and self-contradictory with all logical and philosophical measures. New atheists argue religious belief is irrational and dangerous for humanity. However, Muslim scholars construct the argument that religion is good for humanity regarding every aspect of life. Religion fulfills the social and psychological needs of human. Atheism provides pessimist view of life without any objective or goal; however, religion provides moral values and hope to humanity.