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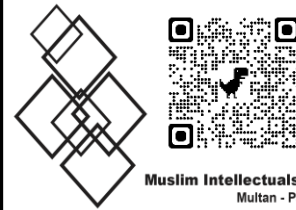
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### TOPIC

**ATHEISM IN MUSLIM SOCIETIES: PROBLEMS & SOLUTIONS W.R.F TO THE PAKISTANI  
EX-MUSLIM ATHEISTS' LITERATURE**

### AUTHORS

**Sana Rasool**

MPhil Scholar

Sheikh Zayed Islamic Centre, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.  
[sanarasool291@gmail.com](mailto:sanarasool291@gmail.com)

**Ayesha Shabbir**

Lecturer

Institute of Arabic & Islamic Studies, The Govt. College Women University Sialkot, Punjab, Pakistan.  
[ayesha.shabbir@gcwus.ed.pk](mailto:ayesha.shabbir@gcwus.ed.pk)

**Aqsa Hussain**

MPhil Scholar

Sheikh Zayed Islamic Centre, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.  
[heyitsmeaqsa@gmail.com](mailto:heyitsmeaqsa@gmail.com)

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## ATHEISM IN MUSLIM SOCIETIES: PROBLEMS & SOLUTIONS W.R.F TO THE PAKISTANI EX-MUSLIM ATHEISTS' LITERATURE

**Sana Rasool**

MPhil Scholar

Sheikh Zayed Islamic Centre, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

sanarasool291@gmail.com

**Ayesha Shabbir**

Lecturer

Institute of Arabic & Islamic Studies, The Govt. College Women University Sialkot, Punjab, Pakistan.

ayesha.shabbir@gcwus.ed.pk

**Aqsa Hussain**

MPhil Scholar

Sheikh Zayed Islamic Centre, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

heyitsmeaqsa@gmail.com

### Abstract

Although Atheism cannot be considered a modern phenomenon, to say that it has never reached its current level is not hyperbole. This is obvious that Atheism has now become a serious challenge ideologically and morally for Muslim societies. Atheism among Muslim-born populations has historically been of minor importance. It appeared especially negligible during the surge of Islam liking over the past half-century. But no longer, Atheism has turned into a significant force with the potential to affect not just the lives of individuals but also societies and even governments. As a Muslim, it's our duty to eradicate anything that is harming Islam or Muslims, and indeed, there is no harm greater than snatching someone's faith and life ideology.

**Keywords:** Atheism, Ex-Muslims, Atheist, Islamophobia, God's Existence.

### "THE CURSE OF GOD: WHY I LEFT ISLAM."

**The Curse of God: Why I Left Islam** is a book written by Pakistani-born Australian Ex-Muslim Atheist **Harris Sultan**. It was published by Xlibris Au Publishers in December 2018. As the name suggests, this book describes the author's journey out of Islam and discusses in depth many common misconceptions about Islam that are prevalent both within and outside the Islamic world.

Sultan's book provides a critical analysis of religion in general and Islam in particular. It covers some common misconceptions about Islam that both Muslims and non-Muslims have. (Amazon. 2023) The purpose of this book is not to discuss the lack of possibility of the existence of any particular god but of all gods, whether Zeus or Yahweh, Vishnu or Allah. (Harris Sultan.2018)

This book was highly complimented by "**Richard Dawkins**"; he said on his Twitter account that:

*"It is a fine critique of Islam, including a chapter on the Character of Muhammad, and the fatuous claim that Quran anticipated embryology and other modern sciences."(Richard Dawkins. 2021)*

Similarly, **Ali Amjad Rizvi** said in the foreword of the book "The Curse of God: Why I Left Islam":

*"This book is much more than just a riveting account of why a once-believing young Muslim man lost his faith in pursuit of truth and moral consistency; it is also an opportunity for Muslims to engage in the kind of dialogue they are widely thought to be incapable of."*

Sultan's book consists of Nine (9) chapters covering three major discussions regarding God, the Holy Prophet Muhammad S.A.W and the Holy Book Quran. This book starts with the author's introduction about how and why he left Islam.

In his first three chapters he focused on how we should use critical thinking to broaden our view. He also discussed the importance of God & Religion in maintaining the morality of society and the baggage that comes with religion.

In further chapters, he critically discussed the Character of Allah and called him an angry God who is evil, vengeful and hates Women. Moreover, he criticised Holy Prophet Muhammad S.A.W and portrayed him as a violent Womanizer, tyrannical and cult leader. To make his accusation believed by everyone, including Muslims, he took references from the Holy Quran, Hadith and the Biography of Muhammad S.A.W. He discussed the scientific flaws in the Holy Quran and argued that it looks like a book written by an Arab militant of the seventh century instead of the creator of the billions of galaxies. In the last part of the book, he discusses Islamophobia in the Western World and instructs others on how to put up a debate with Muslims using some common arguments and techniques.

## **THE CURSE OF GOD: WHY I LEFT ISLAM - A PRECISE ANALYSIS**

It is obviously impossible to analyse the whole book as it will be a lengthy work. Therefore, here we will discuss some of the arguments Harris Sultan has put forward in his book and unfold the truth regarding his intentional criticism of Islamic values.

### **ANGRY GOD**

In chapter 4, under the name "The God Hypothesis", Harris discusses the character of GOD and calls him an "Angry God". This is one of the reasons he held animosity against God, as he believes that God is an angry God who will put everyone in Hell without any reason.

At the beginning of his argument, he said:

*"Is my God not an angry God? Does your God not get angry when someone doesn't do what he has asked them to do through scripture? (Harris Sultan.2023) Then, by giving an example of people who have sex outside marriage (Zina), he raises the question of getting angry with an individual so much that God (Allah) chooses to stone, one of the most barbaric and*

*violent punishments on Earth and Hellfire in the afterlife. How can one argue that God isn't angry? After all, what is so wrong with sex outside of marriage? (Haris Sultan. 2023)''*

Firstly, we will discuss Sultan's statement regarding God's mercy and anger. By reading the Holy Quran, we have come to know that there are many verses regarding the wrath of Allah and the torment of Hell promised to sinners, but there are also many verses about Allah's reward and his promise of Jannah.

Allah Almighty says in the Holy Quran:

**(Quran)"نَبِّئْ عِبَادِي أَنِّي أَنَا الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ۖ وَأَنَّ عَذَابِي هُوَ الْعَذَابُ الْأَلِيمُ"**  
*Declare (O Muhammad SAW) unto My slaves, that truly, I am the Oft-Forgiving, the Most-Merciful. And that My Torment is indeed the most painful torment.*

In this verse firstly, Allah is ensuring his men that he is most Merciful and benevolent. This statement will encourage them to do good deeds and, at the same time, to do Justice with people; he is also reminding the sinners that he is not only Merciful but also the most painful tormentor to stop them from doing anything wrong. This is the beauty of Quranic verses that it does Justice on both sides.

The word "عِبَادِي" in this verse is translated as enslaved people, but it is not an actual translation of this Arabic word. Therefore, slavery that is affiliated with God is absolutely not equal to the concept of slavery in human societies.

Then Sultan gave the example of marriage and adultery to show that God is angry without any reason. He raised the question of why God is so angry about doing it before marriage. Why a single piece of paper is so important?

The answer is very clear: it's because Allah and Islam have put great emphasis on Marriage and Family, which are very important for a peaceful society. Marriage is not a piece of paper to fulfil devilish desires but it's a spiritual relationship.

Allah says in Surah Rum:

**(Quran)"وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ"**  
*And He has put between your affection and mercy. Verily, in that are indeed signs for a people who reflect.*

Here, Allah Almighty not only used the word affection but also mercy. No doubt affection is for sexual love and pleasure, but mercy specifies the spiritual relation between couples that will help them to form a happy family in which they care for each other and protect each other. Without it their relationship will be like an empty shell.

Now we can understand that in Islam, marriage is not simply a worthless piece of paper like the Sultan believes, but it has a vast concept which includes love, protection, safety, rights and spiritual connection. On the other hand, having a physical relationship without marriage is worthless and harmful to the concept of a happy family, which will eventually end up in a Dubious & Atrocious society because this freedom of having a physical relationship ends in the form of a single parent relationship which is dangerous for future generation because it will harm them not only physically but also mentally. So, we cannot say that freedom, in this sense, has any benefit to anyone. This shows that obeying Allah's command will eventually give more benefits than any demerits.

Sultan's statement regarding God's anger is illogical and one-sided. He has focused on God's torment but ignores his Mercy. He emphasises freedom but ignores its drawbacks.

### **THE CHARACTER OF MUHAMMAD: VIOLENT**

In the fifth chapter, Harris discussed a very sensitive topic of the Character of Muhammad (S.A.W). He said that the Last Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (S.A.W) has a violent personality, and to prove his claim, he stated a couple of examples.

In the beginning, he discussed how the story of Muhammad S.A.W and a rubbish-throwing woman is fake.

"This story of a wicked woman who used to throw rubbish at Muhammad every day, who suddenly falls ill, does not exist anywhere, even in the most biased of Islamic literature" (Haris Sultan.2023)

However, I also have not found a basis for this specific incident in any reliable book, and it looks like a story that became popular on the tongues of people without any source, and Allah knows best. However, there are so many true incidents other than this, mentioned in reliable sources, that can display the Prophet's clemency and noble character.

Then, out of nowhere, Harris claimed that " Muhammad was a great writer as well as he started one of the greatest revolutions in human society by writing a five-hundred-or-so-page book: the Quran." (Haris Sultan. 2023)

He didn't give any proof, reason or logic to justify his claim. But to counter his statement, we can simply say that Muhammad (S.A.W) was an illiterate person who could not read or write, so it's not possible for him to write a whole book full of knowledge; it's an illogical statement.

To show the violence in the Prophet's life, Harris talks about the people who were beheaded after the battle of Badr or killed afterwards under the order of Muhammad (S.A.W), such as Al-Nadr bin al-Harith, Uqba bin Abu Muayt, Kab bin Al-Ashraf, etc. He then claimed that they were killed because of their opposition and fierce criticism of Islam and Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W). To unfold the truth behind these examples, we will analyse some of them carefully.

Harris gave the examples of Al-Nadr bin al-Harith and Uqbah ibn Abi Mu'ayt. He declared that in

the battle of Badr, they were captured and ordered to be beheaded because they used to criticise Muhammad S.A.W. (Haris Sultan. 2023)

But it is a one-sided story. Actually, they were ordered to be beheaded because they had persecuted the Muslims in Makkah and harboured deep hatred towards Allah and His Messenger. They were staunch enemies of Muslims and Islam. (Safi Ur Rehman Mubarakpuri. 2021) Moreover, we can say that they were criminals of war according to modern terminology, and the Prophet has never taken Al Nadir as a serious rival or executed him for his storytelling.

Harris believes that Muhammad (S.A.W) used violence to suppress criticism against him:

"The murder of Al-Nadr started a chain of events where Muhammad systematically shut down all his opposition and critics through violence."

(Haris Sultan. 2023)

It seems that he is determined to prove that Muhammad (S.A.W) was a violent person and has oppressed his enemies through it. Harris has chosen some specific examples to prove his stance, which shows that he was not interested in seeking truth but in accusing Muhammad S.A.W. of being a violent person. As an author, he remembers Al-Nadr bin al-Harith and Uqbah ibn Abi Mu'ayt, but he forgets to mention those 70 polytheists captured in the battle of Badr who were not killed but freed in return for ransom. Even though there were two views to either kill them or set them free in return for ransom, Prophet S.A.W chose to set them free. Likewise, there are multiple other examples in which Muhammad S.A.W. shows kindness, forgiveness, and clemency to not only his companions but also to his enemies.

On one occasion, Prophet Muhammad S.A.W was going to visit a sick companion. When on his way, he came across a group of people in which Ibn Salul passed some offensive comments toward Prophet S.A.W. (Ibn e Hisham. 2006). There, he insulted Muhammad S.A.W. not only as an individual but also as a Messenger of Allah and the leader of Madina. Prophet Muhammad S.A.W could have easily retaliated against Ibn Salul. But instead of it, he chose to stop the argument and left the scene.

Ibn Salul took the lead in many incidents, causing conflicts and tension, including a slander incident where the Prophet's wife, Aisha, was accused of being unchaste. Despite all the unrest caused by Ibn Salul, the Prophet forgave him and even wanted to lead Ibn Salul's funeral prayer when he died.( Suleyman Sertkaya, Zuleyha Keskin.2020)

It was a gesture that went beyond seeking peace and justice and demonstrated forgiveness to such a point that he wanted to lead the funeral prayer of someone who had not only insulted, offended, and ridiculed him but also accused his beloved wife of doing something she did not do.

Above mentioned examples are clear proof that Hazrat Muhammad S.A.W has a very kind, loving, forgiving and compassionate nature. He never hurt someone just for his self-satisfaction or any

personal reason. Even if someone hurt him, he just Forgives him for Allah Almighty. Therefore, Harris Sultan's claim regarding the character of Hazrat Muhammad (S.A.W) is baseless and biased.

### **"THE ATHEIST MUSLIM: A JOURNEY FROM RELIGION TO REASON"**

The book "**The Atheist Muslim: A Journey from Religion to Reason**" was written by Pakistani-born Canadian Ex-Muslim Atheist Ali Amjad Rizvi and published by St. Martin's Press in the year 2016.

Rizvi's book is highly praised by different authors. In the year 2016, his book received the "**Forkosch Award**" for best book from an organisation known as Center4Inquiry. (Dave.2017)

**Raheel Raza**, President of The Council for Muslims Facing Tomorrow and author of the book "Their Jihad...Not My Jihad!" highly praised Rizvi's book. He said:

“Ali A. Rizvi has written a book which is a much-need discourse for the Muslim world today as Muslims struggle globally with issues of radicalisation and modernity. Rizvi has documented his personal journey with reason and logic, offering empathy for those following a different path.”(Ebooks. 2023)

**Steven Pinker**, Johnstone Family Professor of Psychology at Harvard University and author of the book "The Better Angels of Our Nature", highly acknowledged Rizvi's work. He said:

*“Ali Rizvi’s Atheist Muslim is an intelligent, heartfelt, and honest examination of a pressing issue in today’s world. A humanistic, ecumenical, and secularised version of Islam will be among the most important movements of the 21st century, and Rizvi’s book is an invaluable guide to the challenges and opportunities in advancing it.” (Macmillan. 2023)*

Suleyman Sertkaya, Zuleyha Keskin

The atheist Muslim is a partial wrestling match with the beliefs of Rizvi's community and partial meditation on Islam and its discontents. (Fiona Capp. 2017) This book is Rizvi's personal narration as an apostate Muslim in which he discussed Islamic beliefs that he finds repugnant and repressive.

**Richard Dawkins** said:

"It is One man's epic struggle to climb out of the pit of dogmatic religion into the sunshine of enlightenment." (Ali Amjad Rizvi,2016)

The title of Rizvi's book "**The Atheist Muslim: A Journey from Religion to Reason**" has done quite a justice to it as it is just the same as what the title promises. It describes the author's journey from a believing Muslim to an atheist. He did not jump directly from being a Muslim to an Atheist. Rather, his journey has different phases. First, he became a sceptical Muslim, then an agnostic and finally, an atheist.

Though he considers himself now as an Ex-Muslim atheist, he follows different cultural aspects of Islam and calls himself a "Cultural Muslim", which is evident in his book.

The biggest problem with Islam, as he sees it, is the belief that the Quran is the word of Allah and must be read literally, and he finds hope in Muslim reform movements.

Rizvi believes that there is a clear distinction between "Muslims" and "Islam". This distinction is the main theme of his book. According to him, Muslims are also people, so they deserve the same respect as people from any ethnic or cultural background. Islam is a religion that everyone should be free to accept, criticise or even mock that religion as they might have any set of ideas. It means people have rights and are entitled to respect, but beliefs and books do not have rights and are not entitled to have the same respect.

He tried to convince others that Muslims could join the modern world by viewing Islam as a culture without the need for religion. At the beginning of his book, he discussed the inequality, violence and lack of freedom he observed in the Muslim world. Most Muslims believe that the problem is not with their faith or religion; it is with themselves, but Rizvi holds an opposite stance. He put the blame largely on religion.

Most of Rizvi's arguments given in his book are quite similar to the arguments given by an atheist, Bertrand Russel, in his famous essay "Why I Am Not a Christian", as well as Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins.

Rizvi's book consists of Nine (9) chapters. The first few chapters documented his journey from being a Muslim to an atheist. In his book, he narrated different things that he experienced during his stay in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Canada, which led him to Atheism.

Ali did not believe in the afterlife or the concept of heaven or hell. But According to him, the law of conservation of energy is believable, and there is a possibility that we humans are living in a multiverse. However, he is cautious to connect the ideas of experience of human existence, or the process of human death. But this idea is more compelling for him than the concept of Heaven and Hellfire. (Ali Amjad Rizvi, n.d)

He believes that morality has nothing to do with any religion. It is in human nature which they have inherent by birth.

He has declared that in the Western world, there are two types of wings. One we can say is the left side; they are Western liberals, and to protect the Muslim minority, they often call criticism of Islam "Islamophobia" and have apologetic behaviour in regard to any extremist activity. On the other hand, there is a group of Conservatives on the right side who are opposite to the left side. They simply paint every Muslim with the same brush. They portray all Muslims as Terrorists and followers of violent beliefs.

According to Rizvi, these contradictory reactions do not portray the complicated reality and obstruct

authentic critique of Islamic extremism while fostering intolerance against Muslims. There is a distinction between Muslims as people and Islam as a religion. We cannot compare all of them just because they follow the same religion.

Rizvi criticises religious texts. He believes that religious scriptures contain commandments that are contrary to the modern idea of humanity, freedom and equality. In his opinion, religion is the main cause of the increase in violence and other Jihadist activities. He refutes the myth that violence in Muslim countries is solely because of a lack of economic opportunities or some other injustice.

In his book, he pointed out that many Jews and Christians have retained their cultural heritage without believing in their God, then he insists Muslims take the same path, secularise their culture and leave behind the religious aspects of Islam.

### **THE ATHEIST MUSLIM: A JOURNEY FROM RELIGION TO REASON- A PRECISE ANALYSIS**

Several things need to be analysed, but it's obviously impossible to examine the whole work so that we will discuss a few of them precisely.

#### **WOMEN RIGHTS**

Rizvi believes that due to bad treatment toward women in religion, many people have abandoned their religion. He stated that:

"The abhorrent treatment of women in religion is by far the most common reason cited for abandoning it." (Ali Amjad Rizvi, 2016)

In his opinion, Islam has taken away freedom and several other rights of women. They are forced to wear hijab, abayas or body cloaks before going outside. He thinks that this "cultural misogyny" is all due to religion. It is not only exclusive to Islam, but it is also the same in the Old Testament. When he talks about Islam, he agrees that before Islam, women were not in good condition. He stated that:

Pre-Islamic Arabia was not known to be kind to women.  
(Ali Amjad Rizvi, 2016)

On the one hand, he agreed that Islam had given them Rights. On the other hand, he claimed that though the verses in Makkah regarding women were acceptable and beneficial, the verses revealed in Madinah were harsh and took away many women's rights, one of which was their freedom by giving them the command to wear a veil.

As Allah says in Holy Quran:

”وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا  
وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ” (Quran)

And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and be modest, and to display of their adornment only that which is apparent, and to draw their veils over their bosoms-

This is contradictory; he is saying that Islam has given them rights that they didn't have in the era of ignorance. Then, he is also saying that in Madinah's verses, their rights were taken away by Islam. Rizvi talks about abayas, hijab, etc., and he declares that hijab or abayas contradict their freedom or hinder them from achieving any achievements. But this is a miserable excuse. It has arisen a question that Is hijab or other commands of Allah for women are really an obstacle in giving them freedom to express their views or to give their opinions, the freedom of possession or choosing a suitable husband or a cultural freedom. Does Allah prevent women from seeking knowledge or competing in diverse fields or her right to possess wealth? There is not a single thing in which Allah has restricted women from achieving something. Yes, Allah asked them to wear a veil or Hijab, but it is for their protection.

### **HOLY QURAN: BOOK OF ALLAH**

Rizvi believes that the Holy Quran is not a book of Allah but written by his Prophet (S.A.W).

He argues that earlier Quranic verses about women were better than later verses after migration, and this is all because of the change in power.

He claimed that before migration, verses were better than after migration just because Muhammad (S.A.W) was not powerful enough in Makkah. Still, after he migrated to Madinah, he became a powerful leader. In other words, he thinks that the Holy Quran is not a book of Allah but a book written by Muhammad (SAW) himself. In his opinion:

"Muhammad (SAW) is the same as those revolutionaries who were idealistic in their beginning, but after they gain power, they become part of the same corruption." (Ali Amjad Rizvi, 2016)

Rizvi totally ignores the fact that the Last Prophet was an illiterate person, so how can he write remarkable verses of the Quran? Even Rizvi believed that the verses revealed in Makkah were admirable. He said:

"These verses were relatively broad, idealistic, and somewhat philosophical." (Ali Amjad Rizvi, 2016)

Then the question is how an illiterate person can write verses that are "idealistic" and "philosophical". Then he said that the verses in Madinah become political, legalistic, and militaristic. Hence, it proved that his claim that the Holy Quran is not a word of Allah but written by the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) is baseless and illogical.

### **COMMON ARGUMENTS, DIFFERENCES, PROBLEMS AND THEIR SOLUTIONS**

Different people have different ways of seeing truth and reality. The same goes with atheists; although they have different perspectives, they still have some common arguments about the same

thing. Here, we will discuss atheists' common arguments, their differences, problems in their beliefs and solutions.

## **COMMON ARGUMENTS**

There are some common arguments we have observed in almost every atheist. Here we will discuss those common beliefs and arguments briefly.

### **NO PROOF OF GOD'S EXISTENCE**

One of the most common beliefs we have observed in Atheist literature is their denial of God's existence. Atheists do not believe in God; in fact, they simply deny the existence of God, and they have used every means to prove the reliability of their argument regarding God's non-existence, whether it's through philosophy, history or morality.

Atheists have assumed that the most reasonable belief is the one that has the best evidential support. They have argued that the evidence in favour of God's existence is too weak, and instead, the arguments which are in favour of God's non-existence are more compelling.

When we talk about the evidence of God's existence, we can simply observe our universe and everything around us. When we observe the universe, we can see that heavenly bodies are moving in a circular path, the Sun is rising from the East and setting in the West, and plants and trees are growing according to their season. Even after observing these too many things, can we declare that these are occurring themselves? And there is no God; who is responsible for these actions? The fact is that these things are actual proof of God's existence that we cannot deny.

As Allah Almighty has stated in the Holy Quran:

الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا مَا تَرَى فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِنْ تَفَوتٍ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَى مِنْ  
فُطُورٍ " (Quran)

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?

Here Allah Almighty is also asking the same question through which he is clarifying that there is indeed God who has created this universe and everything in and out of it.

Once, a Bedouin got some information about the existence of Allah Almighty, and then he reflected on the existence of God. He said, "Greatness be to Allah Almighty! If the droppings vouch of a camel is the proof for the existence of the camel, and the impressions vouch is the proof of the walker, then why a sky full of stars, and the Earth which has fairways, and an ocean that has waves cannot be the proofs for the existence of the Almighty Allah and the Creator of the heaven and the earth? (Ismail Ibn Umar Ibn Kaseer, 1998) Even the ignorant ones know that Earth, sky, and sun are the proof of God's existence.

These atheists usually question the evidence of God's existence or even his activity. Still, when presented with evidence of God's activity in the world, these same atheists roundly reject them, regardless of the scientific or intellectual soundness of the evidence. The problem is not with the evidence but with how we interpret the evidence, and the atheist will interpret evidence according to their unbelief.

## **GOD IS EVIL & NON- OMNIPOTENT**

One argument atheists have put together commonly to prove God's non-existence is God's evilness and suffering of mankind. They have argued that if God is all-knowing and powerful, then why all the horrible things are happening in the world? Why is he not doing anything about the suffering of human beings? Why is our world full of evil, suffering and misery? In their opinion, these sufferings actually contradict the existence of God. These horrible things are evidence that God does not exist. But if we think carefully, we come to know that actually, Intense human and animal suffering is in itself bad and evil, even though it may sometimes be justified by virtue of being a part of or leading to some good which is unobtainable without it. It means that evil may sometimes be good as a means because it leads to something that is good in itself.

For example, during childbirth, a mother suffers a lot of pain, but it is a process to bring a life into existence. Similarly, sickness actually strengthens our immune system. There are a lot of examples that can show that evil, something bad, or someone's suffering can make way for something exceptionally good and worthy. Moreover, someone's suffering can be their test from Allah Almighty.

As Allah says in Holy Quran:

(Quran) "كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَنَبْلُوكُم بِالشَّرِّ وَالْخَيْرِ فِتْنَةً وَإِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ"

Every soul will taste death; and We test you with evil and with good as a trial, then to Us you will all be returned.

Killer argues that the existence of evil does not disprove God's existence. In other words, they correctly point out the logical problem by arguing that the existence of evil is proof of atheism. (Timothy J. Keller, 2013)

Therefore, if someone believes that evilness in this world is evidence of God's non-existence, then can virtue be evidence of God's existence? As we all know, there is not only evilness and misery in this world but also goodness, morality and kindness. Hence, their argument related to evilness cannot determine God's non-existence.

## **IF GOD CREATED THE UNIVERSE, WHO CREATED GOD?**

When believers claim that God has made this universe and everything in it, only God is required for the existence of the universe. Some atheists then shift the weight over to them, saying, "Well

then, who created God? We called this the "Cosmological Argument".

Now, if we think of it in the 'Cosmological Argument' sense, it means whatever begins to exist must have a cause. It is not the case that this world came into being without any cause or reason. It is also not possible that this universe made itself. So, the only argument that can be put forward is that the universe began to exist; therefore, it had a cause. Likewise, if God exists, then there should be a cause or a reason for his creation. But the fact is that God never began to exist; He always was, i.e., eternal.

As Allah says in the Holy Quran:

"هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ" (Quran)

He is the First and the Last, and the Manifest and the Hidden, and He has knowledge of everything.

This verse means that when there was nothing, Allah was, and when there will be nothing, He will be. This shows that Allah was not created by anyone, but he was always Eternal.

Not only the Holy Quran but the previous holy books also have the same statements. In the Bible Book of Romans, it is stated that:

"But now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith." (Romans)

Here, notice that He is called the "eternal" God. This word shows that God was never in non-existence. Furthermore, God is the Creator of all things, so He existed before all things in Creation.

## **MORALITY DOES NOT COME FROM GOD**

An atheist believes that our morals don't come from any God or religion; they come from the human mind and evolve over time. They claim that there is no connection between morality, God or religion.

In their opinion, people have a general sense of right and wrong, but if we carefully analyse their beliefs, then we come to know that it is quite a possibility that they would engage in immoral behaviour because they do not believe in the monitoring of God or any retribution. Since atheists reject God, atheists can have no basis for morality.

Immanuel Kant has stated in his book "**Critique of Practical Reason**":

"Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the more often and steadily we reflect upon them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me." (Immanuel Kant, 1999)

The soul of this moral argument is that the religious viewpoint offers a better, more credible overall explanatory account of the justification of this objective moral order than the secularist or atheist.

Morality depends on God because only God is one who can assure that justice is done, namely that in the next life, one receives good and evil in proportion to the good and evil one has done. Atheists should know that God takes no notice of human behaviour, either to reward or to punish. Then, as a result, wicked ones may do as they please. They will not fear that God will observe or take action against them, which will make immorality prevail in society. In other words, morality can be fully actualised only if God exists.

### **HOLY TEXTS AND SCRIPTURES ARE MAN-MADE**

One of the common arguments is about the authenticity of holy texts and scriptures. Atheists claim that these holy books, including the Quran, are man-made; it is not genuine and revealed by Allah Almighty as claimed by Muslims but written by Muhammad (S.A.W) himself. They use this argument to prove God's non-existence.

In their view, though believers claim that God's existence is proven by holy scriptures, actually, these scriptures are not authentic because if it's God's word, then why are there so many internal errors and blunders in it? It must be that these are man-made and consist of fictional stories compiled by human beings. Therefore, if these scriptures are not words of God then it means the claim mentioned in it about God's existence is also not reliable.

But the fact is that these Holy scriptures, specifically the Holy Quran, are the words of Allah and are not written by His Last Prophet because it is uncovered the truth that Muhammad (S.A.W) was illiterate, and it's not possible for him to create scientific content or historical stories by himself.

### **RELIGION IS NOT NEEDED**

Atheists believe the least needed thing in this universe is a religion. They believe that our world is perfect without any religion, but it is quite an illogical argument.

Religion helps in creating an ethical framework and also a regulator for values in day to day life. If we put aside religion from our lives, then we cannot imagine the chaos and turmoil which mankind will certainly plunge into. There will not be any society. Instead, there will be a multitude of people. In such an atmosphere, every individual will be at liberty to do whatever he wishes.

The atheist claims that there is no God and no life hereafter, and they have come into being by the chance of a blind nature; the span of life is very short. So, they naturally will be overcome by the desire to enjoy this life as much as possible without any regard to anything else. Their only consideration will be to avoid being caught red-handed or detected by the government law. And whenever they feel safe, they will not stop at any crime to fulfil their desires, how heinous that desire may appear to others. Therefore, religion is a much-needed thing in an individual's life because only then will they know how to live their life without harming others and also, if they have harmed anyone, they will be punished in their afterlife. This will keep them in check and also

provide a sense of comfort to those who are weak and victims.

"Ara Norenzayan" has stated that:

"Scholars have long argued that belief in a powerful deity can provide a sense of compensatory control and comfort during times of suffering and existential uncertainty." (Ara Norenzayan, Will M. Gervais. 2013)

## **DIFFERENT ARGUMENTS**

Most atheists have similar perspectives about religious beliefs, but some have different opinions. We will discuss their point of view briefly:

### **RELIGION AS A CULTURE**

Most atheists claim that religion is not needed in an individual's life. They totally deny the importance of any religious belief. In their opinion, there shouldn't be any religion in this universe, and if it's possible, then this world will be a better place to live.

However, some atheists have different opinions. They believe in religion but only as an idea or a culture. For Example, Ali Amjad Rizvi, who is an Ex-Muslim atheist, claimed that he is a "**Cultural Muslim**". He follows atheist beliefs, yet he is also culturally committed to Islam, commemorating Eid and participating in Ramadan feasts. This is all because he thinks that there is a clear distinction between "Muslims" and "Islam". Muslims are also people, and they deserve the same respect as people from any ethnic or cultural background. And Islam is a religion that everyone should be free to accept, criticise, or even mock that religion. It means people have rights, but books and beliefs don't have rights and are not entitled to any respect.

He tried to convince others that Muslims could join the modern world by viewing Islam as a culture without the need for religion. But it is a misconception because Muslims and Islam are connected; they cannot be separated, nor Islam is a culture.

Though some atheists see Religion as a culture, there are clear conceptual differences between them. Culture is a body of knowledge that people acquire through years of being together in one society, while religion is the belief system directed towards the supreme deity, both cannot be connected.

### **QURAN'S MISINTERPRETATION**

Some atheists have different views about Quranic interpretation. They think that the content of the Quran should be in its literal meaning. There shouldn't be any interpretation.

They claim that the interpretation of the Quran is simply an excuse to bail out from any blame in case any claim mentioned in the Holy Quran is proven false. It means if any scientific content claimed to be in it is later proved wrong, then Muslims will only use this excuse that Allah's wording is right, but its verse was misinterpreted.

## PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

The first problem I have observed is that most atheists have doubts about their Ex religious beliefs, but to clear their doubts, they asked people who were not religious or aware of any religious belief.

In the case of Ex Muslim atheists, if they have any doubts regarding God's existence or religion, they should have gotten help from religious scholars. They should read the Holy Quran, Hadees, Islamic History and especially the Life of Muhammad (S.A.W) written by unbiased authors. But it is seen that to clear their doubts, they read books of other atheists such as Bertrand Russel, Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins, who themselves have their doubts.

Secondly, most of the atheists are rigid in their beliefs. They continuously ask others to prove their beliefs, but when presented with the facts, they simply reject them. This shows that they have made up their mind that they will not listen to others and follow their own beliefs, whether they are right or wrong.

Although atheists believe in nature and claim that they will only accept things that can be seen and are logical, when believers try to prove the existence of God by giving examples through nature and science, they simply do not believe them.

The solution to these problems is very simple, which is the correct use of Allah's blessings. Although atheists have taken an evidentialist approach to the question of God's existence, Allah Almighty has also given human beings different things through which they can conceive any truth. These blessings include our five senses, intuition usually known as the sixth sense, our intellect, vision and insight. We can use these blessings of Allah to observe, explore, and think to perceive any truth.

Allah says that there are signs of Truth in the world and in human beings themselves, but the thing is that they have to use Allah's blessings to uncover this truth.

As Allah says in the Holy Quran:

(Quran) "سُرُّهُمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ"

We will soon show them Our signs in the horizons and in themselves until  
it is evident to them that it is the Truth.

This verse demonstrates that there are signs of Allah's existence all around us, and he has also given us means through which we can feel his existence.

## CONCLUSION

After our observation, we know that everything present in this universe is made by someone. When we see the sun, moon, and stars shining in the sky and when we see plants and trees growing on Earth and flowers blooming, we can easily conclude that there is someone who has created them and who created them is no doubt a God. In fact, our own existence is concrete evidence of God's existence for wise people. There is so much evidence pointing to the existence of a Creator that the evidence is hard to deny.

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