

The Story of Creation

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Introduction

This topic relates to the development of the history of human thought on which several books have been authored. I will begin by citing a verse from the Quran:

They have no knowledge of this; they only follow conjecture (45:24)

Literally, the verse above indicates the human tendency of formulating opinions on the basis of conjectures. It is also important to understand that explanation of a Quranic verse may be two fold – one being the immediate or particular reference and the other being a general reference. In the context of the above verse, the immediate reference is that people believed that angels were daughters of God and consequently worshipped them. In a general way, the verse highlights how man may chose either to formulate opinion basis established knowledge or putting up with conjectures.

Throughout human history, man has only surmised about the history of creation. These conjectures can be classified into two broad categories – shirk and philosophy. The propagators of shirk assumed that many gods were involved in the functioning of this world and therefore awe-arising natural phenomena like the stars, planets, mountains etc began to be worshipped. This led to emergence of shirk or polytheism.

Philosophy claimed itself to be a rational discipline but its foundation lay in the concept of monism, which believes in the same concept of god that Haegel described as the “world spirit”. Monistic concept reduces the existence of god to an idea which manifests itself through its creation.

Referring to these ideas, the Quran says that they have no knowledge of the creation and they have formed opinion basis guesswork. The concept of polytheism ascribed divinity to the stars and planets and monism thought everything was god. These ideas hindered the development of nature and superstition flourished in the world for a long time.

The Quranic concept on the contrary, is of a personal God, who is different from His creations.

Islam leads “global interaction”

As the message of Islam spread, gradually the whole of Arabia came under the fold of Islam. In his last sermon, the Prophet Muhammad enjoined the Companions to spread to lands and disseminate the message of God. Upon receiving his instructions, the Companions travelled to far and wide lands with the message of God. The increased interaction opened up immense opportunities for dawah work. Let me quote examples of how interaction brought superstition to an end and advanced scientific thinking. In Egypt, it was customary to sacrifice a young girl into River Nile each year so as to placate the River. The Companions brought this sacrificial ritual to an end. Similarly, knowledge of astronomy became so advanced that for the first time, an observatory was constructed in Baghdad to observe the movements of heavenly bodies, which until then were mere objects of worship. The studies unveiled that the heavenly bodies were not “gods” but creations themselves.

Enjoining the Companions to reach out to lands, far and wide, was not a simple matter. In doing so, the Prophet Muhammad paved way for global interaction to take place. And in the absence of a medium of communication, the process of travelling and spreading the message of God, initiated a global dialogue in continents as far as Asia, Africa and Europe. Global dialogue and interaction paved way for development and civilisational progress, and the process which began in Mecca and Medina eventually culminated in the form of Renaissance in Europe.

The history of man moved from the period where conjectures and superstitions formed opinions to a period where researched facts became the basis of formulating opinions. In fact, it will be correct to say that Galileo, Newton and Copernicus were not really the originators of modern science but were the culmination of the process which had begun post the Islamic revolution.

Concept of creation after scientific discovery

As per science, the process of creation can be divided into six broad periods through which life came into existence on Earth. These eras are namely - Big Bang; Little Bang; Water Bang; Plant Bang; Animal Bang and the Human Bang. Let me briefly introduce these eras.

Big Bang

According to scientific research, 14 billion years ago, a super atom exploded in the universe. The discovery of this explosion, which is also referred to as the Big Bang was made during the first quarter of the twentieth century; this discovery corroborates exactly with the following verse of the Quran, which was revealed almost 1,400 years ago:

**The heavens and the Earth were joined together and that We then split them asunder?
(21:30)**

And as these particles condensed and coalesced, it led to the formation of stars, planets, mountains and seas. This marked the beginning of the formation of the universe.

Little Bang

As the universe started developing, there occurred a *Little Bang*, which led to the formation of the solar system. The explosion in stars led to the formation of the sun and the planets – one of which was the planet Earth.

Water Bang

At the time of its formation, many gases surrounded the planet Earth. However, as a matter of exception, two of these gases - oxygen and hydrogen combined to form water. Thereafter, the precipitation cycle came into being and water bodies such as the seas came into existence.

In order to preserve water from spoilage, nature by way of intervention mixed ten percent salt into the sea-water. But salty water was not palatable and could not support the thriving of a species. To address this, God instituted the rain cycle, through which water evaporated from the oceans due to the heat of the sun. Salt being heavier sunk behind and through a natural process of distillation, fresh water reserves were returned to Earth. Water became the most important constituent of the body of living organisms; for example, seventy to eighty percent of human body is water. Fourteen hundred years ago when no one knew this fact, the following verse was revealed in the Quran

And that We have made every living thing out of water? (21:30)

Plant Bang

The creation of water made the soil fertile and led to growth of plants. Foliage covered almost one-fourths of Earth and variety of trees and foodcrops were produced. After exhaustive researches, man was able to discover crops, fruits and vegetables and the science of agriculture and horticulture came into being.

Animal Bang

With the appearance of foliage, conditions became suitable for fauna to develop. In this regard, I do not conform to the idea propounded by the evolutionists. According to Islamic belief, every creation is a special creation. From the super atom to the stars and planets, the fauna and the flora, everything was created by God as a special creation. Those who believe in the theory of evolution do so because they do not want to believe in God.

But the purposefulness of creation is so glaring that it is impossible to deny it. Let us take an example. Insects for instance are so important for man's existence that if they were not there, man would have ceased to exist. Insects work as natural scavengers ensuring cleanliness at all times.

Human Bang

From the big bang to the animal bang, God created such conditions as would be favourable for man's existence. The Earth on which man was inhabited was potentially capable of all development but it was left upon man to convert this potential into actual. God chose the discovery method for man so that during his journey to uncover the realities of life, man may develop intellectually and attain God-realisation (*marefat*). Angels unlike man, do not need to discover God; neither do stars, plants or animals – none have to discover God. God therefore sought a creature who realises and discovers the greatness of God without actually seeing Him.

God – realisation

A verse pertaining to God-realisation in the Quran is as follows

I created the jinn and mankind only so that they might worship Me (51:56)

According to a Hadith tradition, the term “worship” in the above verse denotes God-realisation at the level of discovery. One approach is that you are told about the faith; another is that you think and discover God at the level realisation. The biggest joy that man experiences is the joy of making a discovery and realisation of God arouses such a thrill within man.

Angels and other creations were told about their Creator and realisation therefore did not become a thrilling experience for them. God did not wish to create another being like the angels. Instead he wanted man to be such that he would realise and acknowledge God at the level of discovery and undergo a thrilling experience. In other words, God destined the “Eureka” marefat for man. Such form of discovery is a great blessing and arouses unparalleled love for God. The worship done after such realisation is no longer a technical or ritualistic one, it becomes a living form of worship.

The role of Prophets

According to the below mentioned verse of the Quran, all creations save man already worship God,

Do you not see that all those who are in the heavens and the earth praise God...Each knows his own mode of prayer and glorification. (24:41)

With the creation of man, God initiated the phenomena of Prophethood. The Prophets were men who were chosen to be messengers of God and were sent with the aim of warning mankind and guiding them to the path of God-realisation. According to a verse in the Quran

We sent Our messengers in succession. Every time a messenger came to a people, they rejected him. (23:44)

Once a group of Christians came to Prophet Muhammad to understand the message of Islam. As the Prophet recited the verses of the Quran, the members of this group started weeping: their tears testifying the veracity of the Truth they had discovered. Quran therefore, is a guide to *marefat-e-haq*.

In other words, the Prophets were sent so that man may learn to recognise the blessing of God and exalt His greatness. People who discover God such will find a place in God's neighbourhood that is, paradise. Paradise is not destined for a mountain or tree but for man because paradise is for those who make a thrilling discovery of God.

Unfortunately, man remained so densely conditioned that the message of the Prophets only fell on his deaf ears. For thousands of years, man lived in polytheism (due to superstition) and monism (due to philosophical interpretation) Then three thousand and five hundred years ago, God inhabited Hajra, the wife of Prophet Abraham and their son Ishmael in the uninhabitable deserts of Arabia. Away from the influence of culture and civilisation, a de-conditioned group of people arose in this region. Although as time elapsed, the veil of idol worship did shroud their but even then their nature persisted. That's why these men were responsive to the call of the Prophet Muhammad. Unlike Muhammad, all previous Prophets were mocked at because their contemporaries were highly conditioned and did not lend them support. But this generation of Arabs, which were free of conditioning joined hands with the Prophet Muhammad and gave a new direction to the world. This is best described by the French writer, Henry Pirenne in the following words:

Islam changed the face of the globe. The traditional order of history was overthrown.

Secular and religious aspect of Islam

Islam broke apart the erstwhile traditional culture. It initiated a process which culminated in the form of a revolution in Europe. This was the secular aspect of the Prophetic mission. The religious aspect of the Prophetic mission was adopted by the Muhadditheen (teachers of Hadith), tabaieen (companions of the companion) and Jurists (teachers of Fiqh).

Two streams arose as a result of the Prophetic mission – religious and secular. The religious stream led to institutionalisation of Islam; the secular aspect pertained to what the scientists

did – researches and discoveries that led to the scientific revolution. According to a Hadith in Al-Bukhari, God will ensure support to the religion even through people with secular intentions. For example, the scientific revolution revealed the divine signs that were hidden in nature. Referring to these signs, the Quran says,

We shall show them Our signs in the universe and within themselves, until it becomes clear to them that this is the Truth. (41:53)

Some erroneously consider science to be synonymous to atheism. They must realise that while atheism is a philosophy; science is neither philosophy nor religion. It merely discovers the signs of God in nature, which can also be inferred from the Hadith which says, that God will support His religion even through the secular individuals. In other words, both religious and secular (non-religious) groups will discharge their duties and support the religion of God.

In other words, there arose two streams – one, pertaining to the preservation of the Quran (run by religious people) and the other, pertaining to discovery of facts (run by secular people).

A verse in the Quran states

Is there any doubt about God, the Originator of the heavens and the earth? (14:10)

This verse was revealed at a time when no one knew about the Big Bang. But scientific advances, led man to discover that prior to this Bang, there existed a super atom where particles were compact and in highly condensed form. According to laws of physics, particles in condensed form travel inwards only. But contrary to the laws, these particles started their outward journey and exploded. This means that an external intervention took place. This proves the existence of an intervener (or God). The above verse therefore indicates that when man came to know about the intervention, why did he remain oblivious of the existence of the intervener?

The Quran tells us that this world is not an eternal one. A final – Super Bang – is about to happen. The outcome of this final bang will be a world comprising Hell and Paradise, which will be assigned after each man appears before God with his life's record and is assigned a judgement. This is the Creation Plan of God which is clearly conveyed by the Quran since it is the only revealed Book which stands preserved.

May God grant us the wisdom to understand His Plan and pass the message to other men!