

## TOWARDS A PSYCHO-SOCIOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF ALLAH

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**Abstract:** It is not possible to determine whether Allah is inside the universe or outside it. While the traditional understanding is that Allah is “outside” the universe; the “inside” understanding is consistent with the Qur’ān as well as the writings of Carl Gustav Jung, Emile Durkheim, Abraham Maslow, and Philip Goff and can explain the concept and the writ of Allah to the modern mind. We hypothesize that Allah is the name given to the consciousness of every particle in the universe fused into One and called Universal Consciousness. The consciousness is not prior-or after matter but exists in parallel. There is a 2-way give-and-take between Allah and the Universe. The believers have a more direct communication with Allah. Allah rules upon the universe and, at the same time, Allah is constituted of the Collective Consciousness of the same universe. We show this hypothesis is consistent with al-Nūr 24:35 and Sūra al-Ikhlāṣ. This approach can be the foundation on which we can build a concordance between the understandings of Qur’ānic Allah and modern science, thus explain the majesty of Allah to the science-oriented modern mind including the atheists without diluting the spiritual content of the Holy Qur’ān.

**Keywords:** Allah, Carl Gustav Jung, Emile Durkheim, Abraham Maslow, Philip Goff.

**Article history:** Received: 21 September 2021 | Revised: 16 October 2021  
| Accepted: 03 November 2021 | Available online: 01 December 2021

### How to cite this article:

Jhunjhunwala, Bharat. “Towards a Psycho-Sociological Understanding of Allah”. *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf dan Pemikiran Islam* 11, no. 2 (2021): 315–344. <https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2021.11.2.317-346>

## Introduction

I have been inquisitive since childhood as to Who or What Allah was. The Qur'ān gives a number of attributes of Allah but does not define or explain the exact constitution of Allah. In the present times “reason” seems to increasingly dominate the global discourse. We are seeing great numbers of adherents of all religions moving towards secularism, agnosticism or atheism. My quest is to find a common anchor between the believers and atheists. Since Allah has bestowed the faculty of reason upon us, it is imperative that we use it to find such a common anchor. We see the development of reason as a positive step that must be utilized to its full potential.

Scientists have been able to trace the creation of our universe from the Black Hole with some credibility. We use the word “our universe” because a multiverse is also possible about which we know little. However, although the theories of the creation from the Black Hole are often accepted, they do not answer the question as to the state of the universe before the Black Hole; or they do not answer the question “Who created the Black Hole?” Thus, we do not dwell on the nature of Allah or the Universe prior to the Black Hole which is an area of uncertainty. We begin with the existence of the Black Hole and start our inquiry with examination of the position of Allah inside—or outside the Black Hole. We find that the Holy Qur'ān is consistent with both Allah being inside the Black Hole and creating the universe from within, as well as Allah being outside the Black Hole and creating the universe from without. However, the latter possibility is also consistent with the writings of Carl G. Jung, Emile Durkheim, Abraham Maslow, and Philip Goff. Hence, it provides an anchor between the Qur'ān and modern science and requires consideration.

Philip Goff is the major proponent of panpsychism. He says that every particle in the universe has consciousness.<sup>1</sup> The Qur'ān also confirms this in Allah having offered the Trust to the mountain—meaning it had consciousness. Further, both panpsychism and sociologist Emile Durkheim say that consciousness of the parts fuses and becomes more than its constituent parts. We suggest that the consciousness of the infinite number of particles that were created

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<sup>1</sup> Gareth Cook, “Does Consciousness Pervade the Universe?” *Scientific American*, January 14, 2020. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/does-consciousness-pervade-the-universe/>.

from the Black Hole fused into a “collective consciousness” of the infinite particles of the universe, which can thus be called “Universal Consciousness.”

The question arises, what may be the relationship of this Universal Consciousness and Allah.

The Qur’ān consistently speaks of one-way movement from Allah to the universe—as indicated in al-Ḥajj 22:5: “We created you from dust...” We entirely stand with this statement. We then explore the relationship of Allah and the Universal Consciousness. One possibility is that Allah was distinct from the Universal Consciousness and, so to say, continued to rule upon the infinite numbers of particles from the outside. Another possibility is that Allah was and is Himself the Universal Consciousness. We show that this latter possibility is also consistent with the Qur’ān.

This would be the first time in our knowledge that a definition of Allah has been provided that may be consistent both with the Qur’ān and science. It has the potential to bring religion and science on a common platform. The attributes of Allah have been much described. However, we provide a possible solution to the question: “What is Allah made up of?”

This hypothesis is important because large numbers of believers are moving away from religion. They are not satisfied with the explanations provided in the traditional renderings of the texts. This approach lays the foundations on which we may bring Islam and science together on the same platform to develop a mutually acceptable understanding of Allah.

### **The Qur’ān and Science**

The Qur’ān enjoins us to use reason: “Indeed, the worst of living creatures in the sight of Allah are the deaf and dumb who do not use reason” (al-Anfāl 8:22). On the other hand, the Qur’ān also says that it is not possible to perceive Him: “Vision perceives Him not, but He perceives [all] vision...” (al-An‘ām 6:103). Here, Ibn Kathīr explains on the strength of Mother of the Faithful Aishah that the denial was that only of the ability to see His grace *perfectly*.<sup>2</sup> Thus, while it is not possible to perceive Him perfectly, we must use reason and try to perceive Him as much as possible.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathīr, The Qur’ān: Commentaries for 6.103, Accessed June 7, 2021, <https://quranx.com/Tafsirs/6.103>.

The use of reason to explain concepts of the Qur'ān in terms of the modern sciences faces the difficulty of multiple understandings on both sides. There are different understandings of the Qur'ān as well as modern psychology and sociology.

The purpose of this paper is to build a concordance between the understandings of Qur'ān and modern science. Towards this end, we consciously present only such interpretation of the Qur'ān that concords with modern science; and such interpretation of the modern science that concords with the Qur'ān. We deeply recognize that these are only one of the many understandings on both the sides. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss these different understandings. Our humble submission is that the Qur'ān and modern science concord *if* these particular understandings are adopted.

### The Nature of Allah

The Qur'ān says that matter has consciousness:

Do you not see that to Allah prostrates whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on the earth and the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the trees, the moving creatures and many of the people? (al-Ḥajj 22:18, also see al-Isrā' 17:44, al-Ḥadīd 57:1).

Indeed, we offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they declined to bear it and feared it; but man [undertook to] bear it. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant (al-Aḥzāb 33:72).

“Prostration” by the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains; and the decline of offer by the earth and mountains points to their having consciousness and freedom. Ibn ‘Arabī supports this view:

The name Alive [*al-Ḥayy*] is an essential name of God—glory be to Him! Therefore, nothing can emerge from Him but living things. Hence, all of the cosmos is alive, for indeed the nonexistence of life, or the existence in the cosmos of an existent thing that is not alive, has no divine support, whereas every contingent thing must have a support. So, what you consider to be inanimate is in fact alive.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibn Arabi quoted by Mohammed Rustom, “The Great Chain of Consciousness: Do All Things Possess Awareness? *Renovatio*, April 28, 2017, <https://renovatio.zaytuna.edu/article/the-great-chain-of-consciousness>, 9.

Supporting this view, translator of the Qur'ān Seyyed Hossein Nasr says "A stone, because it exists, is a manifestation of Existence and, therefore, has knowledge, will, power, and intelligence like men or angels. However, since at the level of a stone the manifestation of Existence is very weak, these attributes are hidden and not perceptible."<sup>4</sup>

Gigih Saputra says on the pages of *Teosofi*, "The materialization develops just as the universe expands. Nevertheless, the formation of matter is inconsistent. There are locations that are denser and more open. Locations that are more densely populated provides seeds for the formation of celestial bodies with more gravitational bending power than in more tenuous surroundings."<sup>5</sup> Saputra is here telling of grades of matter which we extrapolate to grades of consciousness as well.

Laleh Bakhtiar, whose translation of the Sublime Qur'ān was endorsed by the Chief Advisor for Religious and Cultural Affairs to King Abdullah of Jordan, says: "Not only do we humans have a temperament, but also according to traditional Islamic medicine, every herb, plant, and animal also has a temperament that affects our physical balance and equilibrium when they are part of our diet or the healing process."<sup>6</sup> The result of this discussion is that everything that exists has consciousness and that there are grades thereof.

### **Panpsychism: Every Particle has Consciousness**

Modern scientists say that the universe has emerged with a Big Bang from a Black Hole. Belgian astrophysicist and cosmologist Georges Lemaitre's wrote in 1931: "We could conceive the beginning of the universe in the form of a unique atom, the atomic weight of which is the total mass of the universe ... [and which] would divide in smaller and smaller atoms by a kind of super-radioactive process." English astronomer Fred Hoyle, who first coined the term "Big Bang," postulated that a tiny amount of matter led to the creation of

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<sup>4</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Sadr al-Din Shirazi (Mulla Sadra)," in Laleh Bakhtiar, *Quranic Psychology of the Self: A Textbook on Islamic Moral Psychology* (Chicago: Kazi Publications Inc, 2019).

<sup>5</sup> Gigih Saputra, "Zakir Naik's Concept of Divinity-Cosmology: Criticism-Reconstruction of the Modern Natural-Cosmological Theology", *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf dan Pemikiran Islam* 10, no. 2 (2020), 9. <https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2020.10.2.325-352>.

<sup>6</sup> Bakhtiar, *Quranic Psychology of the Self*, 24.

the universe.<sup>7</sup> Islamic scholars suggest that creation from Black Hole is consistent with the Qur'ān.<sup>8</sup>

The first elements hydrogen and helium formed 380,000 years after the Big Bang.<sup>9</sup> Hydrogen and helium may be the initial varying grades of matter and, in parallel, may have varying grades of the lowest levels of consciousness.

The idea that every particle in the universe has varying grades of consciousness concords with the theory of “panpsychism.” Philip Goff of Durham University says “each of the most fundamental constituents of the physical world, perhaps electrons and quarks, instantiate unimaginably simple forms of experience.”<sup>10</sup>

A lurking danger in this approach is that matter can then be bestowed with consciousness and be invoked in the defence of idol worship. Indeed, the matter of which the idols are made has a *low* level of consciousness. However, the idol is endowed with *high* level of consciousness. The two are fundamentally different. Panpsychism does not justify idol worship since the matter of which the idol is made is at a very low level of consciousness.

## Creation from the Black Hole

Gigih Saputra has discussed the Islamic view of creation from the Black Hole in reference to the cosmological views of Zakir Naik in *Teosofi*.<sup>11</sup> Zakir Naik's concept of the existence of a Nebula before the Black Hole is self-defeating because then the question arises who created the nebula? Furthermore, it cannot be precluded that the universe was created out of nothing because Allah or the Black Hole may not be bound by the physical rules of the material universe such as those of gravity as we know them. Thus. As mentioned by Yogi Prana Izza on the pages of *Teosofi*, Allah may have known His

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<sup>7</sup> Helge Kragh, “Cosmology and the Origin of the Universe: Historical and Conceptual Perspectives”, Accessed September 3, 2020, <https://arxiv.org/abs/1706.00726>.

<sup>8</sup> Alison Klesman, “How Did the First Element form after the Big Bang?” *Astronomy*, January 2019, <https://astronomy.com/magazine/ask-astro/2018/12/the-first-element>. Philip Goff, Panpsychism, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2019, [http://www.philipgoffphilosophy.com/uploads/1/4/4/4/14443634/routledge\\_panpsychism.pdf](http://www.philipgoffphilosophy.com/uploads/1/4/4/4/14443634/routledge_panpsychism.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Goff, Panpsychism, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2019.

<sup>11</sup> Saputra, “Zakir Naik's Concept of Divinity-Cosmology”, 11, 14, and 17.

knowledge before man was created even though we know nothing about how Allah Himself may have come to be created.<sup>12</sup>

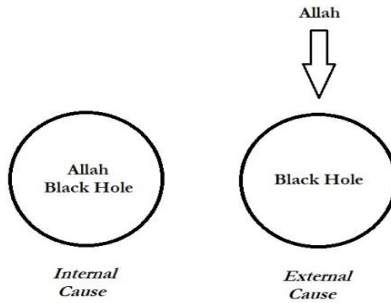


Figure 1: Two Possibilities of Creation

Within this uncertainty, the primeval creation from the Black Hole into the universe can be understood in two different ways as shown in Figure 1. Allah could be outside the Black Hole and He could have triggered the creation from outside as an *external cause*. Alternatively, Allah may be the name given to the consciousness of the Black Hole that triggered its own creation. Allah then becomes the *internal cause* of the universe.

We undertake exegesis of al-Nūr 24:35 to show that an internal cause could just as well be indicated. This *āyat* has a deep spiritual interpretation which we praise. However, our interest here is limited to examining whether the cause of creation was *inside* or *outside* the Black Hole and we restrict our exegesis to the related issues. All references in the following section to Ibn ‘Abbās, al-Asrār, al-Jalālayān, Ibn Kathīr, Abū al-A‘lā al-Mawdūdī, and Sahl al-Tustarī are from Qur’ān<sup>13</sup> and for Seyyed Hossein Nasr from his commentary.<sup>14</sup> We give below the Arabic words of the Ayat, followed by Sahih International translation in brackets, lastly followed by our exegesis.

*Allah Nūr* (Allah is the Light). Al-Jalālayān understands “light” in the sense of physical light of the sun and moon: “God is the Light of the heavens and the earth, in other words, He illumines both of

<sup>12</sup> Yogi Prana Izza, “Dialectic and Intersection of Sufism and Kalam in the First and Second Centuries of Hijri”, *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf dan Pemikiran Islam* 10, no. 1 (2020), 113. <https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2020.10.1.52-80>.

<sup>13</sup> The Qur’ān: Commentaries for 24:35, Accessed June 7, 2021, <https://quranx.com/Tafsirs/24.35>.

<sup>14</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Study Quran*, Commentary on 24:35 (New York: HarperOne, 2015), 803.

them with the sun and the moon.” Now, Allah could be within the sun and the moon or without. Nasr says that these phrases “have been interpreted as a description of the nature of cosmic reality itself...” Now, Allah could be within the cosmic reality or without. Therefore, we suggest that this phrase is consistent with Allah being either *inside* or *outside* the sun and the moon and the cosmic reality.

*Al-Samāwāt wa al-arḍ* (of the heavens and the earth). Maududi says that the phrase “heavens and the earth” in the Qur’ān is generally used for the “universe.” Thus, the verse would mean: “Allah is the light of the whole universe.” Once again, the position of Allah in the universe is not stated. Therefore, we suggest that this phrase can mean that Allah stands *outside* and enlightens all universe; or it can mean that Allah permeates and enlightens all universe from the *inside*.

*Mathal nurih* (the example of His light). The words “mathalu nurhi” or “example light” do not disclose the position of Allah in this verse. The word Allah can be inserted between “example” and “light” and the phrase can then be rendered as “example of His light is XXX” as done traditionally; or word Allah can be inserted before “example” and the phrase can be rendered as “His example is the light which is XXX.” The traditional understanding means that the example XXX is of His light. On the other hand, the alternative understanding means that the example XXX is of He Himself, not of His light. Both views are consistent with the text.

*Ka-mishkah fiha miṣbah* (a niche within [which is] a lamp). The word “fiha” is derived from “fi” meaning “in.” It is followed by “hi” if the following word is masculine and followed by “ha” if the following word is feminine.<sup>15</sup> Since “lamp” is feminine, “fiha” means “in lamp.” In the traditional interpretation it indicates that His Light was in the lamp and Allah Himself may be either *inside* or *outside*. In the alternative understanding it indicates that Allah Himself was *inside* the lamp.

*Al-miṣbah fī zujajah* (the lamp is within glass). We suggest that the “glass,” in addition to being a physical glass of the lamp, also points towards transparency or the nothingness of empty space in which the Black Hole may be situated.

*Al-zujajah ka-annahā kawkab durriy* (the glass as if it were a pearly star). The “glass” points towards nothingness as mentioned above.

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<sup>15</sup> The Muslim, Learn Arabic – Lesson 24, Accessed June 7, 2021, <http://www.the-muslim.com/life/learn-arabic-lesson-24/>.



The word “durriyyum” indicates brilliance and abundance. Thus, *kawkab durriy* suggests a brilliant and abundant star located in nothingness and may point to the explosion of the Black Hole located in nothingness.

*Yūqadu min* (lit from). “*Yūqadu*” means to “kindle, ignite, fuel.” We suggest that here it may indicate “to ignite” an explosion in the Black Hole.

*Shajarah mubārakah zaytūnah* (tree blessed olive). The word “shajara” means “trees” as well as “to branch off, to intertwine, to knit together; to raise”.<sup>16</sup> The word “zaytūnah” means both oil and olive. Thus, we suggest that these words could mean “tree blessed olive.” Alternatively, they could mean “raise blessed fuel,” which could be the blessed fuel of ignition in the Black Hole.

*Lā sharqiyya wa lā gharbiyya* (neither of the east nor of the west). Ibn ‘Abbās, al-Jalayan, Ibn Kathīr and al-Mawdūdī understand “east” and “west” in the sense of the coordinates of the earth. In the cosmic sense, however, read with the word “neither,” we suggest that they may suggest absence of coordinates as in empty space in which the Black Hole may have existed.

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*Yakādu zaytuhā yuḍīu* (whose oil glow). The word “yūdiu” means to “flash, glow, shine, light.” We suggest that here it may stand for the flash in the Black Hole.

*Walaw lam tamsashu nār* (even if untouched by fire). We suggest that “untouched by fire” could mean untouched by an external fire that is created from wood or coal, and may point to self-ignition in the Black Hole.

*Nūr ‘alā nūr* (Light upon light). Commentators have understood the use of the word light two times in different meanings such as (1) the light of Muhammad (Ibn ‘Abbās); (2) “the light of tremendousness and majesty, the light of gentleness and beauty, the light of awesomeness, the light of jealousy, the light of proximity, the light of

<sup>16</sup> Al-Said Muhammad Badawi and M. A. Abdel Haleem, *Arabic-English Dictionary of Qur’anic Usage* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2008).

divinity, the light of the Heness” (al-Asrār); and (3) “faith and deeds of a person,” or “the light of the Qur’ān and the light of faith” (Ibn Kathīr). It appears that the commentators have interpreted the two usages of “light” as per their perceptions. In keeping with this tradition, we propose a fourth understanding that the word “light” two times could be understood as “higher consciousness after the creation from the Black Hole” and “lower consciousness in the Black Hole.”

We now use the alternative meanings of the phrases in this Ayat to render it as per our suggestions as follows:

Allah is the Light [inside] the universe. His example is the light [in] a niche within a lamp, the lamp is within nothingness as if it were an explosion ignited [and] raised from the blessed fuel in empty space whose flash self-ignited higher- upon lower consciousness.

Thus rendered, the Ayat indicates self-creation from the Black Hole or that Allah created from inside the Black Hole. Thus, Stephen Cúrto says in *Teosofi*, “God’s ultimate transcendent reality (*tanzīh*) necessitates, rather than precludes, his immanent presence and self-disclosure.”<sup>17</sup> “Self-disclosure” of Allah from inside the Black Hole is consistent with this understanding.

A possible objection is that Allah could not be inside the Black Hole because that would limit His transcendent, supreme, ultimate and unlimited power. This objection could possibly hold if there existed something outside the Black Hole. In that case, Allah inside the Black Hole would be “limited” to the Black Hole. However, the very idea of the Black Hole is that there was nothing other than the Black Hole. The Black Hole was itself unlimited in its weight. Thus, the consciousness of the Black Hole would have been Alone and could be transcendent, supreme, ultimate and unlimited power within the unlimitedness of the Black Hole.

### Stages of Creation

The Qur’ān tells of stages of creation: “While He has created you in stages?” (Nūḥ 71:14). One way of understanding the stages would be from (1) the Black Hole to (2) matter, (3) life, (4) mind and (5) conscious soul. A parallel psychic understanding would be of five

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<sup>17</sup> Stephen Cúrto, “Sufi Qur’ānic Exegesis and Theomorphic Anthropology,” *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf dan Pemikiran Islam* 10, no. 1 (2020), 43. <https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2020.10.1.134-154>.

stages of consciousness. We provide the possible physical- and psychic stages basing ourselves on certain Ayats and the writings of the eighteenth-century Islamic scholar Shah Waliullah of Delhi.<sup>18</sup>

Stage 1. Physical-Black Hole. “The heavens and the earth were a joined entity” (al-Anbiyā’ 21:30). The Black Hole was fused of matter.

Psychic: Then He intended to create: “When He intends a thing that He says to it, ‘Be,’ and it is” (Yāsin 36:82). The consciousness of the Black Hole could have said “be” to itself.

Stage 2. Physical-Matter. “We separated (the heavens and the earth)” (al-Anbiyā’ 21:30). The Black Hole separated into various particles of matter.

Psychic: The Black Hole separated into different levels of consciousness of the heavens and earth. The consciousness of the heavens is self-evident. That the earth had consciousness is mentioned in al-Aḥzāb 33:72: “Indeed, we offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they declined to bear it...”

Stage 3. Physical-Life: “[He] who has made for you the earth as a bed... and produced... categories of various plants” (Tāha 20:53). Again, “We created you from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then from a clinging clot, and then from a lump of flesh... We bring you out as a child” (al-Ḥajj 22:5).

Psychic: The “lower soul (*nafs*) is responsible for the physical needs” (Waliullah). The consciousness of matter evolved from matter to lower soul in parallel with the evolution from matter to life.

Stage 4. Physical-Mind: “Indeed, the worst of living creatures in the sight of Allah are the deaf and dumb who do not use reason” (al-Anfāl 8:22).

Psychic: “The Intelligence [is linearly associated] with the Rational Soul” (Waliullah). The lower soul evolved into rational soul.

Stage 5. Physical-Conscious Soul: “And He it is Who takes your souls at night, and He knows what you acquire in the day...” (al-An‘ām 6:60-61).

Psychic. “The portion of Nasama which moves towards the brain is known as psychical spirit (*al-Rūḥ al-Nafsāni*)” (Waliullah). The

<sup>18</sup> Azmat Hayat, Mohd Shafai, and Mohammad Hakimi, “Liberalism, Islam and the idea of Mankind,” *Munich Personal RePEc Archive*, 2018, <https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/94084/>.

rational soul lastly evolved into the psychical spirit or the conscious soul.

We see that the physical evolution of matter from the Black Hole to the conscious soul was accompanied with the psychic evolution of consciousness from that of matter to the psychical spirit.

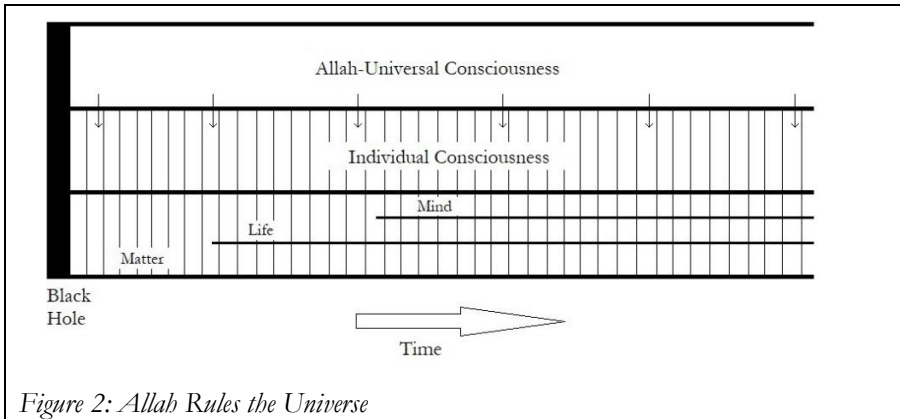
Zafarul-Islam Khan, editor and publisher of The Milli Gazette and who is presently translating the Qur'ān, wrote to us in a personal communication that Allah “was outside the Black Hole or whatever was the building block of this universe.” Masood Alam Hashmi of Peace Foundation Trust, Meerut said that he accepts that there is a power that drives the entire universe but it does not mean that the power was inside the same universe. We honour and acknowledge that these views are consistent with the Qur'ān. At the same time, we submit that the alternative view of Allah being within the Black Hole is also consistent with the Qur'ān.

### **Allah as Universal Consciousness**

A fundamental tenet of Islam is that Allah rules the Universe: “Allah is Able to do all things” (Fāṭir 35:1). This writ of Allah runs upon all the human beings: “And [remember, O Muhammad], when We told you, “Indeed, your Lord has encompassed the people” (al-Isrā’ 17:60). The word for encompassed “*aḥāṭa*” has the sense of surrounding, that is, enclosing or covering; and the word for the people “*bi al-nās*” means mankind. These Ayats clearly indicate that Allah’s writ runs upon the entire universe including all human beings. This thought is reflected in one of the basic principles of *Teosofi* Tariqa that “the absolute existence of God is one with all the components of human life, nature, and all creature.”<sup>19</sup> We have tried to depict the rule of Allah on the universe in Figure 2.

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<sup>19</sup> M. Dimiyati Huda and Nur Chamid, “Teosofi Tariqa and the Principles, Rituals, and Rationality as a Religious Movement”, *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf dan Pemikiran Islam* 10, no. 1 (2020), 161. <https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2020.10.1.110-133>.



*Figure 2: Allah Rules the Universe*

In this figure we have shown that the infinite matter and its consciousness was coalesced in the Black Hole as shown in the black vertical band on the left. Here, the consciousness of the infinite matter in the Black Hole was the same as Universal Consciousness because there was nothing other than the Black Hole at that time. We postulate that the Universal Consciousness self-created the universe from the Black Hole. At that moment, the individual consciousness of each particle—which was till then coalesced into the One Universal Consciousness—acquired its separate existence. This is shown in the vertical lines as we move right with time in the figure. Each block between two vertical lines has infinite numbers of matter which is ruled by Allah-Universal Consciousness from the top. This is shown in the downward pointing arrows. Thus, all particles of the universe within a vertical band were “encompassed” by Allah as indicated in the abovementioned Ayat. Subsequently, Allah prodded the individual consciousness to evolve. This is depicted in the rightward movement with time. In this way evolution took place from Black Hole to matter, life (lower soul) and mind (rational soul) as indicated in the rightward movement. It further evolved into the conscious soul that has not been depicted in the figure.

Now, let us consider the evolution from the beginning once again. The individual consciousness of all particles was fused into one in the Black Hole. Then the particles got separated. The consciousness of the particles got separated at the same time and these particles were ruled upon by Allah or Universal Consciousness. There are two possibilities as to the nature of Allah at this time. One possibility is that Allah was outside the Black Hole and He continued to rule upon the infinite numbers of particles from the outside.

Another possibility is that the now-separate consciousness of the infinite numbers of particles formed a collective consciousness. This collective consciousness of the infinite particles may be called Universal Consciousness since it included all the particles in the universe. We have tried to depict this possibility in Figure 3 by adding upward arrows by the side of the downward arrows.

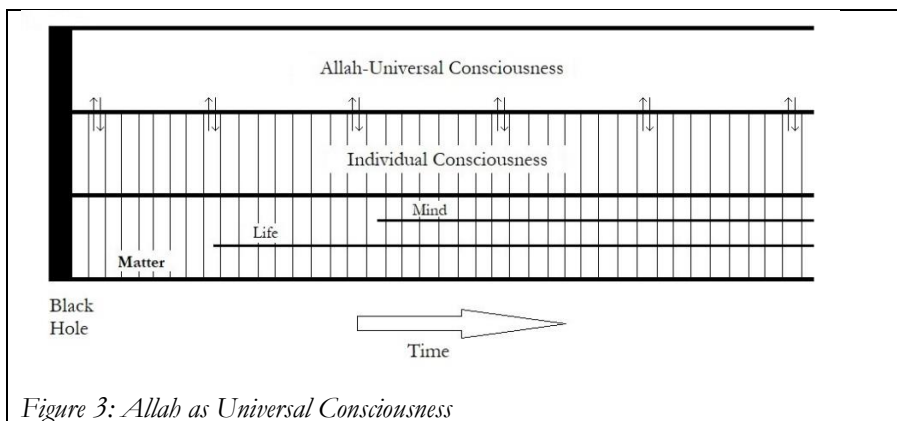


Figure 3: Allah as Universal Consciousness

There could have begun a continual two-way communication between the individual consciousness of the particles and their Universal Consciousness as shown in small double arrows. The Universal Consciousness could be constituted of the fusion of the individual consciousness as indicated in the upward arrows; at the same time the Universal Consciousness could have ruled upon the individual consciousness as indicated in the downward arrows as depicted in Figure 2 above.

To give an analogy, one may say, “the President has encompassed the citizens.” That, although true, ignores the fact that the President was earlier chosen by the citizens and owed his authority to them. Actually, this analogy is not adequate as it stipulates a break in time between the voters electing the President; and the President ruling over them subsequently. The two-way communication suggested by us is a continuum. It is like the voters electing the President every moment and the President ruling upon them every moment. We suggest that Allah may be the name of such Universal Consciousness. Thus, Mohammadullah Khalili of Darul Uloom, Deoband, India said to us that “creation existed in parallel with Allah since its beginning” could be accepted.

Gharamaleki, Eskandian and Udin point in the same direction on the pages of *Teosofi*: “While al-Fārābī tries to explain the revelation based on the prominent role of the Active Intellect, Ibn ‘Arabī pays attention to the issue of divine grace in sending of the revelation and the imagination of the prophets.”<sup>20</sup> Here we may understand al-Fārābī’s idea of intellect to represent the upward movement and Ibn ‘Arabī’s idea of divine grace to represent the downward movement.

Maulana Sameeruddin Qasmi has discussed six different views of Allah which we shall discuss shortly.<sup>21</sup> Mohammadullah Khalili Qasmi of Darul Uloom, Deoband has pointed out that one among these six views is that Allah “positioned Himself on the Throne” (Yūsuf 13:2). This view, he says, does not discuss “where was Allah before making the Throne?” The Qur’ān is silent on this point. We provide a possible answer that Allah-as-Universal Consciousness was inside the Black Hole before He created the universe; then He positioned himself above all individual consciousnesses and this may be the meaning of positioning Himself on the Throne.

Professor of religious studies John Bowker says that “God was invented.” He clarifies through that to invent may “mean to come into something that was waiting there to be found. In that sense, Columbus invented America, but America was there waiting for him to come into it.”<sup>22</sup> We may understand these words as follows: The Universal Consciousness has existed since the Black Hole. Thus, man discovered the Universal Consciousness and gave it the name Allah just as Columbus discovered a land and gave it the name America. In this sense it can be said that “Allah was discovered by man.”

We have received a number of critical comments to the suggestion that Allah was the fusion of individual consciousnesses. However, we find these comments are explained by our alternative understanding as well.

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<sup>20</sup> Ghorbanali Karimzadeh Gharamaleki, Abdullah HosseiniEskandian, and Nur Hidayat Wakhid Udin, “Divine Revelation in the Philosophical Essays of al-Fārābī in Comparison with the Mystical Thoughts of Ibn ‘Arabī”, *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf dan Pemikiran Islam* 11, no. 1 (2021), 122. <https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2021.11.1.122-141>.

<sup>21</sup> Maulana Thamīr al-Dīn Qāsimī, *Thamrat al-‘Aqāid*, trans. Mohammadullah Khalili (Deoband: Darul Uloom, n.d.).

<sup>22</sup> John Bowker, “The Paradox of Religions,” 2011, <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/john-bowker-paradox-religions-5324140.html>.

Professor at University of Malakand, Pakistan Azmat Hayat has said the term “*kun fayakūn*” in al-Baqarah 2:117 refers to inexhaustible the creative powers of Allah. Indeed, the creation of the universe from the Black Hole refers to the inexhaustible the creative powers of Allah. However, that does not deny a parallel upward movement of consciousness from the particles to Allah.

Author of *Atom to Adam* Mahmood Jawaid has drawn our attention to the statement in the Qur’ān that Allah is “the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [all] existence” (al-Baqarah 2:255). Indeed, the Universal Consciousness is the Sustainer of all existence. That statement is silent though on whether there exists a parallel upward movement from all existence to the Universal Consciousness.

Hayati Aydin, Faculty Member in the Faculty of Divinity at the Yuzuncu Yil University, Van, Turkey has said that Allah’s creative powers are repeatedly mentioned, for example, “He begins the [process of] creation” (Hūd 10:4). Indeed, the Universal Consciousness or Allah in the Black Hole began the process of creation.

We honour and agree with these views. Our submission is that these views are also consistent with Allah being the name of the Universal Consciousness constituted continually by the fusion of consciousness of all particles in the universe; and ruling upon them in parallel.

### **Emergent Panpsychism and Durkheim**

We have mentioned above that panpsychists hold that every particle of the universe has consciousness. There are two strands within them. The Constitutive Panpsychists hold that consciousness of the collective is nothing more than the sum of the consciousness of the constituent parts. On the other hand, the Emergent Panpsychists hold that the consciousness of the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.<sup>23</sup> For example, the Emergent Panpsychists say, consciousness of the animal is more than the consciousness of the head and paw; or the consciousness of water is more than that of hydrogen and oxygen. We have relied on Emergent Panpsychism in suggesting that Universal Consciousness is constituted continually by the fusion of consciousness of all particles in the universe. Thus, the

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<sup>23</sup> Goff, “Panpsychism”, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2019.



Universal Consciousness or Allah is greater than the sum of consciousness of the infinite numbers of parts.

Sociologist Emile Durkheim says much the same thing. We give his lengthy quote at the endnote and a simplified rendering in our words here:

The society is collective ideas, beliefs, and sentiments that is produced from the fusion of individual consciences. This “collective consciousness” is *unique*. Just as water is a wholly new entity even though it is a combination of hydrogen and oxygen atoms, so also the collective consciousness is greater than the sum of the individual consciences.<sup>24</sup>

Iranian scholar Ali Shariati also does not have problem with religion being rooted in society as long as it encompasses *all* society (as in “encompassed all people,” al-Isrā’ 17:60). He says: “*Tawhīd* sees the world as an empire; *shirk* as a feudal system.”<sup>25</sup> In other words, encompassing the universe is Tawhid, while encompassing a particular area is “feudal” or shirk. Thus, Allah being Universal Consciousness is consistent with his views.

Noora Kamel of Religious Studies Department, University of California says that Ibn Khaldūn, like Durkheim, held “religion as stemming from and being perpetuated by a collectivity of individuals through their ‘group feeling.’” She also finds that Durkheim’s idea that “individuals were subsumed under the whole of the collective

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<sup>24</sup> “The society is an ensemble of ideas, beliefs, and sentiments of all sorts that are realized through individuals; it indicates a reality that is produced when individuals interact with one another, resulting in the fusion of individual consciences. This fusion of individual consciences is a *sui generis* (*unique*) reality. This means that the social fact, much as water is the product of the combination of hydrogen and oxygen atoms, is a wholly new entity with distinct properties, irreducible to its composing parts, and unable to be understood by any means other than those proper to it. In other words, society is greater than the sum of its parts; it supersedes in complexity, depth, and richness, the existence of any one particular individual. This psychic reality is sometimes... referred to by Durkheim with the term... collective consciousness” (Paul Carls, “Émile Durkheim (1858-1917),” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Accessed September 5, 2020, <https://iep.utm.edu/durkheim/>).

<sup>25</sup> Ali Shariati, *On the Sociology of Islam*, in Younus Ahmed Mushtaq Ahmed and Zulqernain Haider Subhani, “The Methodology of Ali Shari’ati: A Comparison with Durkheim’s and Weber’s Sociology of Religion,” *IJUM Journal of Human Sciences* 1, no. 2 (2019), 29-41.

identity” did not contradict “Ibn Khaldūn’s assertion that religious group-feeling increases social cohesion.”<sup>26</sup>

Clearly this strand of the modern sciences holds that the consciousness of parts fuses into more than the sum in a collective consciousness. We expand this fusion to the entire universe and then suggest that Allah could be the name of the Universal Consciousness so fused. We repeat that this fusion comes along with a parallel rule of Allah upon the universe.

To sum up, the Qur’ān is silent on the origins of Allah. We may fill up the silence in two ways: *first*, we may say that Allah was outside the Black Hole and He existed independent of-, and prior to the creation; *second*, we may say that Allah was inside the Black Hole and He existed in parallel with the creation.

Both statements are consistent with the Qur’ān. However, the latter statement is also consistent with modern science and can explain the majesty of Allah to the modern mind.

An objection to this postulate is:

Not a leaf falls but that He knows it. And no grain is there within the darknesses of the earth and no moist or dry [thing] but that it is [written] in a clear record (al-An‘ām 6:59).

Here, it is said that Allah *knows* every leaf that falls. Al-Jalālayān explains: “the paths that lead to knowledge of it; none but He knows them...” Similarly, Ibn Kathīr: “And with Him are the keys of the Ghayb (all that is hidden), none knows them but He”.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, man cannot know the universe with his limited mind while Allah or the Universal Consciousness permeates all universe and therefore spontaneously knows everything that takes place. We may visualize that the antenna of consciousness embedded in every particle of the universe is relaying the works of the particle to the Grand Receptor or Allah every moment hence it is said that “Not a leaf falls but that He knows it.” This Grand Receptor also has a Grand Transmitter and a

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<sup>26</sup> Noora Kamel, “Locating Durkheim: Exploring the Usefulness of the Sacred and Profane Dichotomy in the Study of Muslim Communities,” Accessed April 3, 2021, [https://www.academia.edu/9321050/Locating\\_Durkheim\\_Exploring\\_the\\_Usefulness\\_of\\_the\\_Sacred\\_and\\_Profane\\_Dichotomy\\_in\\_the\\_Study\\_of\\_Muslim\\_Communities](https://www.academia.edu/9321050/Locating_Durkheim_Exploring_the_Usefulness_of_the_Sacred_and_Profane_Dichotomy_in_the_Study_of_Muslim_Communities).

<sup>27</sup> The Qur’ān: Verse Commentary, Ibn al-Kathir, Accessed June 7, 2021, <https://quranx.com/Tafsir/Kathir/6.55>

Grand Authority which instructs- and rules upon Its constituent parts every moment of the time.

### **Self-creation: Carl G. Jung and Abraham Maslow**

Psychologist Carl G. Jung describes the capacity of animals to self-create:

We would laugh at the idea of a plant or an animal inventing itself, yet... the mind has grown to its present state of consciousness as an acorn grows into an oak or as a saurians [reptile] developed into mammals.<sup>28</sup>

Abraham Maslow has provided evidence from a number of disciplines to suggest that there is an innate tendency for growth among human beings. 1). *Psychotherapy*. The pressure towards seeking better health makes therapy possible. Therapy could not take place if there was no seeking of better health; 2). *Brain-injured soldiers*. A brain-injured soldier tries to reorganize his capacities after injury because he wants to self-actualize himself; 3). *Psychoanalysis*. Neuroses is a distorted version of impulse towards growth, towards perfection of development, towards the fulfilment of the person's possibilities; 4). *Creativeness*. The theory of art calls for a concept of growth and spontaneity; and 5). *Child Psychology*. Healthy children enjoy growing and moving forward, gaining new skills, capacities and powers.<sup>29</sup>

We extrapolate this innate tendency for growth backward to postulate that the Black Hole had a similar tendency that led it to grow into the universe. Thus, when the Qur'ān says: "He only says to it: 'Be', and it becomes" (al-Baqarah 2:117); we may understand the Universal Consciousness of the Black Hole saying to the matter of the Black Hole "Be', and it became" into infinite separate particles. Again, when the Qur'ān says: "God creates what He wills..." (al-Nūr 24:45); we may understand the Universal Consciousness created what it willed.

In an excellent paper Soudeh Ghafouri-Fard of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Tehran and Seyed Mohammad Akrami of Tehran University of Medical Sciences consider various Islamic approaches to the theories of evolution and conclude "although evolutionary theory has been thought by many scientists to

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<sup>28</sup> Carl Gustav Jung, *Man and his Symbols* (New York: Doubleday Windfall, 1964), 81.

<sup>29</sup> Abraham Maslow, *The Psychology of Being* (New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1968), 23.

challenge several religious, ethical, and even scientific beliefs of the time, considering all Qur'ānic verses about creation of man, we found that the Qur'ān will not be encountered by any challenge from it at all. That is because the verses compatible with instant creation of man, rather than gradual one, can be considered as implicit ones, or human beings from generation of Adam can be considered as an exception to this theory. However, Muslim scholars accepting evolutionary theory believe that structural unity of living organisms is a result of divine wisdom rather than a blind chance in nature.”<sup>30</sup> The divine wisdom could be that of the Universal Consciousness.

An explanation is in order on our reference to Jung. Some Islamic scholars look at him with disdain. Our understanding is that Freud considered the unconscious to be an impediment to the fulfilment of the material desires of the conscious. Jung made a break and put the unconscious in the driving seat. This is consistent with the Islamic view. On this point Hayati Aydin quotes Pakistani philosopher Muhammad Iqbal: “It is in the elimination of the satanic from the Divine that the followers of Freud [such as Jung] have done inestimable service to religion.”<sup>31</sup> In another study, a number of scholars of Islam are reported to have said, “Jungian psychology [is] perhaps the closest form of Western psychology to that of an Islamic perspective, but [though] Jung’s ideas were similar, but not entirely the same.”<sup>32</sup> Jung’s view is disclosed in a letter he wrote at the age of 80: “I do know that I am obviously confronted with a factor unknown in itself, which I call ‘God’... God is a circle whose center is everywhere, but whose circumference is nowhere.”<sup>33</sup> The idea of a circle with no circumference concords with Universal Consciousness even though Jung did not give it the name “God.”

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<sup>30</sup> Soudeh Ghafouri-Fard and Seyed Mohammad Akrami, “Man Evolution: An Islamic Point of View,” *European Journal of Science and Theology* 7, no. 3 (2011), 17-28.

<sup>31</sup> Hayati Aydin, “Concepts of the Self in Islamic Tradition and Western Psychology: A Comparative Analysis,” *Studies in Islam and the Middle East* 7, no. 1 (2010), 13.

<sup>32</sup> Abdallah Eric David Rothman, “Building an Islamic Psychology and Psychotherapy: A Grounded Theory Study,” (PhD diss., Kingston University, London, 2019), 122.

<sup>33</sup> Carl Gustav Jung, “Letter to ‘The Listener’ on January 21, 1960,” *Tamboo*, Accessed April 8, 2021, <https://tamboo.co.za/%CE%B2%CE%B9%CE%B2%CE%BB%CE%B9%CE%B1/jung-on-god/>.

### Impersonal and Personal Allah

Iranian scholar Alireza Farhang has pointed out in a personal communication to us that the “god who speaks in Qur’ān is personal god who is anthropomorphic... beyond this personal god, there is informal, impersonal and inexhaustible state which has no attitude... In Qur’ān, both of these states are referred by the holy name ‘Allah,’ which makes complications for us; for example in sura al-Ikhlāṣ (112) we see the impersonal Allah but in surah al-Mujādilah (58:7) we see the personal aspect of Allah.”<sup>34</sup>

We understand the Impersonal Allah to be the Universal Consciousness—inclusive of all matter and life. However, this fusion may not take place in one go. It may take place in stages (Nūḥ 71:14, quoted above). The consciousness of one subset of matter may get fused into a subset of consciousness that we may name as “collective consciousness” in distinction to “Universal Consciousness.” We use the word “collective” for the subset of consciousness since it is not universal. There may be many collective consciousnesses. These collective consciousnesses may then fuse into larger- and yet larger collective consciousnesses sequentially finally fusing into One Universal Consciousness. Thus, there may be a Collective Consciousness of a family, -of the Palestinians, -of the continent Australia, -of the Muslims, -of the planet mars and so on. The Collective Consciousnesses of these subsets may be understood as Personal Allah. We can think of these consciousnesses as a number of umbrellas one below the other. There is an all-encompassing umbrella on the top of these many smaller umbrellas.

Philosopher and theologian John Hick (1922-2012) has proposed a similar two-level model. The higher level was that the ultimate reality while the lower level was that of the experience of the ultimate reality such as, in his words, “Buddha’s experience of enlightenment under the Bo tree at Bodh Gaya, Jesus’ sense of the presence of the heavenly Father, Muhammad’s experience of hearing the words that became the Qur’ān, and also the experiences of Vedic sages, of Hebrew prophets, of Taoist sages.”<sup>35</sup> The “ultimate reality” described by Hick corresponds with the Universal Consciousness

<sup>34</sup> Comment received on April 10, 2021 by whatsapp.

<sup>35</sup> John Hick, “John Hick: the official website Philosopher and Theologian,” <http://www.johnhick.org.uk/jsite/Retrieved> June 21, 2021.

described by us. The particular experience of the ultimate reality may be the experience of a particular Collective Consciousness.

### **Sura al-Ikhlās**

Sura al-Ikhlās gives the most beautiful description of Allah. We find that the Sura can be understood as describing a one-way exercise of authority by Allah on the Universe; or a two-way communication between all particles of the universe and the Universal Consciousness. We give the Ayats followed by our exegesis. We do not repeat the well-known conventional exegesis of Allah being outside the Universe.

*First, Say, "He is Allah, [who is] One."* Allah or the Universal Consciousness is One since by definition it is universal.

*Second, Allah, the Eternal Refuge, all need Him. On Him all depend.* The two-way communication between a particle and the Universal Consciousness helps consciousness of the particle to connect with the consciousness of all the other particles. It can be visualized as one user connecting with the world wide web. There takes place a two-way communication between the single user and all the other users of the web in making a combined web. Thus, every particle connects with every other particle and, being in sync with the universe, begets refuge.

*Third, He neither begets nor is born.* The Universal Consciousness is a continuum. It always existed and will always exist. There is no break in it as is suggested by the terms not begetting or not being born.

*Fourth, nor is there to Him any equivalent.* The Universal Consciousness is unique. There are no two Universal Consciousness because in our humble submission that would stand contra it being "universal."

### **Six Views of Allah**

As mentioned previously, Maulana Sameeruddin Qasmi has discussed six different views of Allah.<sup>36</sup> He has given the Ayats of the Qur'an relied upon by the proponents of the six views and then discussed the points that are not explained. We quote him thus far. Then we show that understanding Allah as Universal Consciousness could explain those unexplained points.

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<sup>36</sup> Qāsimī, *Thamrat al-'Aqāid*.

*First, Allah is omnipresent:* “He is with you wherever you are, and Allah is watchful of whatever you do” (al-Ḥadīd 57:4). “To Allah belongs the East and the West. So, whichever way you turn, there is the Face of Allah. Indeed, Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing” (al-Baqarah 2:115).

Not Explained (according to Qasmi): “With what state He exists, whether He exists with His Self, or with knowledge, power and insight, because Allah is free from dimensions and conditions.”

Our explanation: Allah exists simultaneously as His Self, knowledge, power and insight since the latter are his manifestations. Allah-Universal Consciousness is all pervasive hence It is free from dimensions though there are grades of his existence.

*Second, Allah is on the Throne:* “Allah is the One who raised the heavens without pillars that you can see them. Then He positioned Himself on the Throne” (al-Radd 13:2); “His *Kursī* (Chair) extends to the Heavens and to the Earth, and it does not weary Him to look after them. He is the All High, the Supreme” (al-Baqarah 2:255).

Not Explained: a) They do not discuss the condition in which He is, because Allah is absolutely pure in dimension and condition;

Our explanation: a) Allah is in the all-pervading consciousness just as water vapour pervades the all the sky and the cloud although there are grades of vapour therein. The consciousness, like vapour, is absolutely pure in dimension and condition but its manifestation has grades.

Not Explained: b) Where was Allah before making the Throne? The universe is created by Allah, so how can He be in the universe?

Our explanation: b) Allah was in the form of self-contained Universal Consciousness in the Black Hole before making the Throne. He created the universe from the inside and pervades every particle of the universe. He created the universe and rules upon it just as a mother creates a family and rules upon it.

Not Explained: c) The universe is perishable, so if the Allah Himself is present in it, then Allah Himself will also be perishable.

Our explanation: c) The particular forms of the universe are perishable but the matter of which the universe is made of is not perishable. The forms of consciousness likewise are perishable. The plant may die and level of consciousness of the leaves may decline. But consciousness nevertheless pervades every dead leaf and is not perishable.

*Third, Allah is in the universe with His knowledge, power and insight, not that He is present in the universe with His Self.* “Allah encompasses everything” (al-Nisā’ 4:126).

Not Explained: Where He is then is not mentioned anywhere.

Our explanation: Allah-Universal Consciousness is present with His Self everywhere. Certain component parts of Him evolve and acquire knowledge, power and insight in addition to the low level of consciousness that every particle has.

*Fourth, Allah is at height according to His glory:* “[and it will come] from Allah, the Lord of the stairways, to whom ascend the angels and the Spirit in a day the length of which is fifty thousand years “ (al-Ma‘ārij 70:4); “He manages [every] matter from the sky to the earth, then it [every matter] will ascend to Him in a day the measure of which is one thousand years according to the way you count” (al-Sajdah 32:5).

Not Explained: How high He is?

Our explanation: The height is to be understood qualitatively as the highest grade of His Consciousness or Existence.

*Fifth, Allah is in the heavens according to His glory:* It is narrated on the authority of Mu‘āwiyah ibn al-Ḥakam al-Salāmī (raz), he said: While we were praying with the Messenger of Allah... I had a slave girl who was grazing my goat ... The Prophet said: Bring the slave girl to me. Then I brought the slave girl to the Prophet. He asked the slave girl, ‘Where is Allah?’ The slave said, “In heaven” then asked, “Who am I?” The slave said, “You are the Messenger of Allah.” The Prophet said: Free her free, she is a believer.<sup>37</sup> In this ḥadīth, the slave girl said that Allah is in the sky and the Prophet accepted it.

Not Explained: Allah is the sky, but they do not discuss about the condition in which He is.

Our explanation: The “sky” is the psychic sky. For laymen such as the slave girl it is explained as the physical sky.

*Sixth, issues like where is Allah, descent of Allah, these are all among the mutashabihāt, so it should be said about them that their meaning is known, but the condition is not known, it is obligatory to believe in them, and arguing about them is bidah (innovation in religion).* “It is He who has sent down to you, [O Muhammad], the

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<sup>37</sup> Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 537, *Daily Hadith Online*, Accessed December 23, 2021, <https://www.abuaminaelias.com/dailyhadithonline/2013/02/27/prophet-frees-slave-girl/>.



Book; in it are verses [that are] precise—they are the foundation of the Book—and others unspecific. As for those in whose hearts is deviation [from truth], they will follow that of it which is unspecific, seeking discord and seeking an interpretation [suitable to them]. And no one knows its [true] interpretation except Allah. But those firm in knowledge say, “We believe in it. All [of it] is from our Lord.” And no one will be reminded except those of understanding” (Āl ‘Imrān 3:7).

Not Explained: How to distinguish between *Muḥkamāt* from a *Mutashabihāt*?

Our explanation: We must use reason and endeavor to understand and thereby, as much as possible, convert *Mutashabihāt* into *Muḥkamāt*. The line of distinction between the two will be different for every person.

### A Dialogue with Atheists

We had started this inquiry with the objective of finding a common anchor between believers and atheists. We now explain how the proposed framework can help establish a dialogue with them. The main argument of atheists is in favour of rationality and against God. We quote three atheists on this point.

George H. Smith, author of *Atheism: The Case Against God*, explained in a speech delivered in 1976, “atheism stands in opposition to the wave of supernaturalism and mysticism we are currently experiencing. In other words, irrationalism in any form it may occur.”<sup>38</sup> Smith incorrectly positions rationalism against supernaturalism. There no conflict between the two. They are complementary. The area of knowledge not understood by reason may be attributed to the “unknown.” Different individuals may conceive of the unknown as supernaturalism. The “unknown” of the rationalists then becomes self-known of the believers. However, there is no irrationalism involved.

Professor J. L. Schellenberg, author of *Progressive Atheism*, has similarly argued that the “recent progress in our moral thinking about what counts as a good person and what counts as morally permissible

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<sup>38</sup> George Smith, “How to Defend Atheism,” *The Secular Web*, [https://infidels.org/library/modern/george\\_smith/defending.html](https://infidels.org/library/modern/george_smith/defending.html), Retrieved June 22, 2021.

action strengthen the case for atheism.”<sup>39</sup> In response it must be said that the development of reason is continuously expanding the area of our knowledge. Our understanding of what is “moral” is also changing continuously. However, the unknown will not be eliminated entirely. Therefore, the believers are free to give the name Allah to the unknown just as the atheists are correct to point out that this is the Unknown.

Steven Kettell of Department of Politics and International Studies, University of Warwick describes “New Atheism” as follows:

It “places a strong emphasis on the use of reason... New atheism... maintains that religion is not simply wrong, but irrational, pathological and uniquely dangerous. By promoting beliefs and behaviours that emphasize cosmically ordained rules, sanctions and ways of life, religion is believed to foster divisive tribal mentalities, creating prejudice, discrimination and violence.”<sup>40</sup>

It is true that the “cosmically ordained rules,” or *Mutashabihāt* are interpreted differently by scholars. These disputes cannot be resolved rationally. The framework proposed by us can help in the resolution in two ways. First, the area of agreement can be expanded by clearly delineating the *Muḥkamāt*. Second, a sense of mutual tolerance can be created by agreeing that the unknown areas or *Mutashabihāt* cannot be resolved.

Most prominent among the atheists in the present times is Richard Dawkins. His central argument is this:

The explanation that the complex, improbable appearance of design in the universe could be due to the actual design itself, that is, “God,” is false because “the designer hypothesis immediately raises the larger problem of who designed the designer.” The biological design could be explained by Darwinian evolution by natural selection. However, “We don’t have an equivalent explanation for physics.”<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Egan Wynne and Justin McBrayer, “Progressive Atheism: How Moral Evolution Changes the God Debate,” *International Journal of Philosophy and Religion* 89 (2021), 91-97. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11153-021-09788-w>.

<sup>40</sup> Steven Kettell, “What’s Really New about New Atheism?” *Palgrave Communications* 2 (2016). <http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/palcomms.2016.99>.

<sup>41</sup> William Lane Craig, “#1 Richard Dawkins’ Argument for Atheism in the God Delusion,” *Reasonable Faith*, 2007, <https://www.reasonablefaith.org/writings/question-answer/richard-dawkins-argument-for-atheism-in-the-god-delusion/> Retrieved June 22, 2021.

The question “who designed the designer?” presupposes that the designer and the design are distinct. This is resolved by stating that the designer self-designed Himself just as, in the words of Jung, an acorn self-designs itself into an oak.

Regarding having explanation for physics that is equivalent to Darwinian evolution, the answer lies in panpsychism. Every particle of the universe self-designed itself and, in the process, influenced the design of others just as every person on the world wide web influences every other person on the web without any one person designing the world wide web.

### **Concluding Remarks**

We have shown that the understanding of Allah as the all-encompassing Universal Consciousness that exists perpetually in a two-way communication with Its infinite parts is consistent with the Qur’ān and also concords with the modern writings of Emile Durkheim, Carl G. Jung, Abraham Maslow, and Philip Goff. It is possible to explain the Qur’ān to the modern mind basing ourselves on the writings of these scholars.

More importantly, it delineates the areas of knowledge that are accessible by reason; and the areas of the supernatural that are beyond reason at the present time. By accepting the power of reason we can establish a dialogue with the atheists. We may point out that there are certain the areas beyond reason. We can agree to leave those areas for future resolution and to live and let live on those issues for now. The challenge facing mankind today is to synchronize theology with science. We make a small humble effort in that direction.

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