

The Dialectic of Eternity, Creation and Panentheism
in the Qur'anic Context

Towards an Ontological Reading of the
Unity of Existence Without Immanentism or Reductionism

Ziad A. W. Khalifeh



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DEDICATION

To

Dr. Medhat Jada'an and Fadia Khalifeh

To

Sarah, Arwad and Nour Khalifeh

Luna Currie and Ashton Currie

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In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.
And there is none comparable to Him.
There is nothing like Him.
And He is severe in punishment.
Do you know of any equal to Him?
So do not set up equals to God.

And there is none comparable to Him. (Al-Ikhlās 112:4)

The Originator of the heavens and the earth. He has made for you from yourselves mates and from your offspring mates. He creates livestock in pairs, multiplying you thereby. There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing. (Ash-Shura: 11)

He is the Lord of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them, so worship Him and be patient in His worship. Do you know of any equal to Him? (Maryam: 65)

And the thunder glorifies Him with praise, and so do the angels, out of awe of Him. He sends thunderbolts and strikes with them whom He wills while they dispute. (In God, and He is severe in punishment.) [Ar-Ra'd: 13]

(So do not set up equals to God. Indeed, God knows, and you do not know.) [An-Nahl: 74]

(Is He who creates like one who does not create? Then will you not remember?) [An-Nahl: 17]

Introduction

Since the dawn of human thought, the questions of God, existence, time, and consciousness have remained among the most complex, unsettling, and astonishing. Does the universe have an absolute beginning? Is creation a transition from nothingness to existence, or a transformation from one state to another? Is consciousness a characteristic exclusive to humankind, or does all of existence possess some degree of perception and meaning? And how does divine discourse—the Qur’an—manifest itself within this vast horizon that encompasses the eternal and the temporal, the absolute and the relative, the unseen and the seen?

This book is an attempt to reflect on these questions from within the Qur’anic context, not as a closed theological text, nor merely a book of ethics and rhetoric, but as an ontological text open to questions of existence, reason, and consciousness. The Qur’an does not exclusively provide moral and legal guidance to humanity; it paints a comprehensive cosmic picture: heavens and earth, sun and moon, mountains and trees, animals and humankind—all sharing a pattern of presence before God and a cognitive and existential relationship with Him, expressed in verses of glorification, prostration, obedience, speech, and reverence.

This work begins with simple yet profoundly significant hypotheses concerning the concepts of time, creation, and consciousness in the Holy Qur’an, comparing them to the most prominent scientific and philosophical theories on these concepts, about which there is no consensus within any of these branches of knowledge regarding the true nature of any of them. In the Qur’an, consciousness is not

exclusive to humankind; rather, it is an existential characteristic of varying degrees, encompassing all of existence with different levels of perception, response, and meaning. This hypothesis does not imply that nature is God, nor that all beings possess human intellect. Rather, it means that existence is not inanimate matter, and that the relationship between the Creator and creation is not a cold, mechanical one, but rather a relationship of presence, encompassing, and omniscience.

This highlights the fundamental difference between the concept of Pantheism (monism), where everything is God, and Panentheism, where everything exists within God without being God itself. This book does not advocate immanentism or union, nor does it equate the Creator with the created. Rather, it seeks to understand the meaning of God encompassing all things, of existence being encompassed by His knowledge, word, and will without being dissolved by Him, and that existence derives consciousness from the source, which is God.

This work also delves into the concept of creation itself, which has long been understood as a transition from nothingness to existence. Some have viewed matter as eternal, uncreated, and constantly changing. Shedding light on contemporary scientific theories concerning the origin of the universe, it is essential to study the relevant Qur'anic text and reflect upon the verses that reveal the near absence of the term "nothingness," and that creation is presented as a continuous act:

"Every day He is engaged in some affair," "Be, and it is," "He created the heavens and the earth in truth," "And the heaven We constructed with might, and indeed, We are expanding it," and "Do you not see that God created the heavens and the earth in truth? If He wills, He can do away with you and bring forth a new creation." "With a new creation."

This opens a different horizon for understanding the relationship between eternity and time, between perpetuity and history, and between God's eternal knowledge and the manifestations of this knowledge in successive historical events.

In this context arises the question of the Qur'an itself: Is it eternal or created? Is the word of God bound by time or transcendent to it? This question has transformed in Islamic history into a doctrinal and political conflict known as the "Inquisition of the Creation of the Qur'an", (Mihnat Khalq al-Qur'an – "Ordeal/Inquisition of the Createdness of the Qur'an"). However, this book does not treat this ordeal as merely a sectarian dispute, but rather as an expression of a profound philosophical tension between the eternal and the temporal, between essence and manifestation, between the absolute and the relative. It proposes a synthetic reading that sees the Qur'an as eternal in that it exists in God's knowledge, and temporal in that it was revealed and manifested in history, without this implying any contradiction or duality in reality.

This book pays particular attention to the problem of "metaphor" in interpreting verses that attribute perception, glorification, and speech to the heavens, the earth, and inanimate objects. Many commentaries have reduced these verses to rhetorical figures of speech, arguing that consciousness is exclusive to humans. However, this work attempts to question this very assumption: Is metaphor a textual necessity, or a pre-existing philosophical assumption imposed upon the text? Is it permissible to reduce an entire system of verses to a single rhetorical function, given that the Qur'an presents these meanings in a recurring and consistent declarative form? And why shouldn't we reduce the language of the Qur'an to metaphor?

It is important to note that this book does not begin with a denial of metaphor in the language of the Qur'an, nor with a rejection of rhetoric as a tool of expression. Rather, it begins with a critique of transforming metaphor into a comprehensive interpretation that negates the ontological dimension of the text. The Qur'an does not use language for mere embellishment, but to construct a conception of existence and the relationship between the Creator and the world. When verses about creation, glorification, obedience, speech, and testimony are reduced to mere didactic metaphors, we are not interpreting the text so much as imposing upon it a preconceived philosophical notion that views the universe as inert matter and consciousness as the exclusive domain of humankind.

The fundamental principle of language is literal meaning, and metaphor is only resorted to when a rational or linguistic impediment prevents a literal interpretation. There is nothing in these verses that precludes understanding them as allusions to a mode of perception and response appropriate to the nature of existence. Acknowledging a gradual consciousness within the universe does not imply God's indwelling in things, nor does it equate inanimate objects with humans. Rather, it is an acknowledgment that existence itself is in relation to the divine command, and that meaning is not extraneous to the world but is rooted in its very structure.

Therefore, this reading does not aim to disable rhetoric, but rather to liberate it from reductionism and reconnect the language of the Qur'an with the question of existence, as a discourse that reveals a living world of relationship and meaning, not merely a symbolic text reduced to metaphor.

The book does not confine itself to Islamic heritage alone, but rather engages with modern philosophical and scientific debates about

consciousness and the universe: from the idea of panpsychism, to theories of social consciousness (Marx and Mannheim), to the unconscious (Freud), to questions of modern cosmology concerning the beginning of the universe, its expansion and contraction, and the fine design of its physical and biological laws. The question is posed not as a conflict between science and faith, but as a shared search for the meaning of existence and the source of order and meaning within it.

The aim of this book is to open a new contemplative horizon that connects God, the universe, and consciousness; eternity and creation; science and revelation; reason and experience; and humanity and the cosmos.

It does not call for the demolition of faith, nor for its complete reconstruction from scratch, but rather for a rethinking of some of its major concepts in light of the Qur'anic text itself, moving beyond rhetorical reductionism, detached materialism, and the pantheism that dissolves the distinction between Creator and creation.

This work is an attempt at intellectual humility before it is an intellectual project: humility before the vastness of existence, before the depth of the Qur'anic text, and before the limits of human intellect. It is an invitation to see the universe as an open book, the Qur'an as a mirror of this book, and consciousness as a bridge between humanity, the world, and its Lord.

From here this journey begins: from questioning, not from answering; from contemplation, not judgment; from inclusion, not exclusion.

A journey into the dialectic of eternity and creation, into the universality of consciousness, and into the Qur'anic space as a horizon of meaning, not a prison of interpretation.

Chapter One

Between Eternity (Sarmad), Perpetuality (Azal), and Time (zaman)

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Distinguishing between eternity, beginningless, and time is a pivotal issue in understanding the relationship between God and existence. Many theological and philosophical problems have arisen from confusing these concepts, or from projecting concepts of time onto that which transcends it, or from attempting to conceive of the eternity using the limited tools of temporal reason.

I will not define time as something that passes, but rather as a method of ordering change. I will not treat science as an adversary to revelation, but rather as a descriptive path, which is countered by a path of meaning. I will not reduce the text to metaphor, nor impose a preconceived philosophy upon it.

1. Eternity, Perpetuity, and Beginningless

Three seemingly similar but semantically distinct terms are used in Islamic tradition:

Beginningless: the negation of a beginning, that is, that which cannot be conceived as having a beginning.

Perpetuity: the negation of an end, that is, that which cannot be conceived as having an end.

Eternity: existence that is not subject to time at all; it has neither beginning nor end, and neither before nor after applies to it.

Eternity is not a length of time, but rather a transcendence of time itself. If time is a series of successive moments, then eternity is a complete, indivisible, and ungradual presence. Hence, describing God as the Ever-Living (Al-Hay), the Self-Subsisting (Al Qayyoom), the First (A Awal), and the Last (Al Akher) is not a temporal description, but rather a description of an existence not governed by the concepts of succession and change:

“He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden.” (Al-Hadid 57:3) This verse does not place God within the timeline, but rather elevates Him above it, encompassing it from all sides.

2. Time as a characteristic of existence, not a framework for God.

Views on time vary. In the Qur’anic perspective, time is not an independent substance, but rather a characteristic of the created world. Night and day, succession, and change are all signs of existence, not attributes of the Divine Essence. ﴿ He created the heavens and the earth in truth. He wraps the night around the day and wraps the day around the night, and He has subjected the sun and the moon, each running [its course] for a specified term. Unquestionably, He is the Exalted in Might, the Perpetual Forgiver﴾. (Az-Zumar 39:5)

﴿ Every day He is engaged in some affair﴾. (Ar-Rahman 55:29)

﴿ Do they not see that Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth, is able to create the like of them? And He appointed for them a term

about which there is no doubt, but the wrongdoers refused except disbelief ﴿﴾. (Al-Isra: 99)

﴿﴾ The angels and the Spirit ascend to Him in a Day the measure of which is fifty thousand years ﴿﴾. (Al-Ma'arij: 4)

﴿﴾ And it is He who created the heavens and the earth in truth. And the Day He says, "Be," and it is. His word is the truth. And His is the dominion on the Day the Trumpet is blown. [He is] the Knower of the unseen. And the testimony. And He is the All-Wise, the All-Aware ﴿﴾. (Al-An'am 6:73)

﴿﴾ Indeed, your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and the earth in six days and then established Himself upon the Throne. He covers the night with the day, [the night] pursuing it rapidly; and [He created] the sun, the moon, and the stars, subjected by His command. Unquestionably, His is the creation and the command. Blessed is Allah, Lord of the worlds ﴿﴾. (Al-A'raf 7:54)

These verses do not describe a change in the essence of Allah, but rather describe Divine action is renewed in existence. Change is a reality in the world, not in the absolute. Thus, time is not a vessel prior to creation, but rather a consequence of creation itself. Creation does not occur within a pre-existing timeframe; rather, time is born with creation as a pattern of existence.

This view aligns with modern science. The beginning of time is linked to the emergence of space with the Big Bang approximately 13.8 billion years ago. It is not absolute, as Newton believed, but a fourth, relative dimension that merges with the three spatial dimensions to form "spacetime." It is affected by speed and gravity. Einstein's theory of relativity demonstrated that time slows down as speed increases,

making it a flexible fabric rather than a static flow. It is part of a mental and perceptual experience linked to movement and consciousness. Within the physics of fundamentals and cosmology, there are approaches that question time as a primary entity, treating it instead as a relationship between events/emerging quanta (quantum mechanics). Some physicists even question its fundamental nature, considering it merely a connection between events or a perceptual illusion.

Leibniz, however, spoke of time as a relation, not a substance (Relational Time). Time is not something existing in itself, but rather a measure of change and a consciousness of transition from one state to another. Things move, and the previous position that we remember is what we interpret as time. Without movement, change, and memory, there is no such thing as "before" and "after."

For Husserl and Bergson, time is a product of consciousness and memory (phenomenologically speaking), and time is an internal experience: where memory equals the past, attention equals the present, and expectation equals the future. Without consciousness, there is no "time" in the sense we know it but rather change without a narrative.

Albert Einstein likened time to a "stubborn illusion" in a condolence letter related to Michel Bessot, offering solace to the bereaved wife by suggesting that the distinction between past, present, and future is merely a persistent "stubborn illusion." It's as if he wanted to convey that Bessot might still be alive, albeit in a slightly different spacetime coordinate system. I don't know if this theoretical consolation resonated with the wife's heart and mind! This quote is important to mention as a philosophical context within the framework of relativity, not as proof of the "non-existence of time."

Einstein is also credited with saying, "Nothing begins until something begins to move." However, this doesn't imply that time is unreal; rather, it removes the attribute of "absolute" from time and integrates it with spacetime into a fixed "cosmic block."

As for Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, he believed that time is created and limited, not eternal, as it is linked to the existence and movement of the world. For Al-Ghazali, time is a "new creation" in which the believer awakens to do good. He considers the present to be the only truly available time, thus necessitating its utilization and vigilance against neglecting its lessons.

Al-Ghazali's concept of time can be summarized in the following points:

-The creation of time and the denial of eternity: Al-Ghazali opposed the philosophers who asserted the eternity of the world and its time, emphasizing that time has a beginning (creation).

-Time is an event by the will of God: He believes that God created time along with the creation of the world, and that God's eternal will determines the time of occurrence. Therefore, the cotton not burning, for example, is not due to the absence of a natural cause, but rather because God is the Creator and Agent of the thing, not nature or inanimate objects.

-The present moment is reality: Al-Ghazali emphasizes the importance of "living within the limits of your day," considering each new day an opportunity to be seized for obedience, while everything else is either past and gone or a future shrouded in the unseen.

-Time as a lesson: He sees time as a means of destroying civilizations and eroding humanity, and as an opportunity to seize life, while the heedless one lets time pass without benefit.

Al-Ghazali's vision is based on the Ash'ari theological perspective, which rejects necessary causality between things and makes every event directly linked to God's creation.

For Ibn Arabi, the concept of time is an integral part of his Sufi worldview. He sees it as something nonexistent or "illusory," lacking independent, objective existence. Rather, it is a "fluid space" resulting from the succession of movement and the renewal of archetypes in the Preserved Tablet (al-Lawh al-Mahfouz), and it is closely linked to the "unity of existence" and the manifestations of Truth.

One of the most important pillars of Ibn Arabi's concept of time is the inseparability of time and space: time is considered fluid space, and space is frozen time, both being manifestations of Truth. Time, as "renewing time," is the measure based on the rotation of celestial bodies (the heavens); it is not absolute but relative, and it disappears when movement ceases. Ibn Arabi believed that the universe is renewed every moment, and time is the narrative of this continuous renewal of existence within the "Universal Soul," which he termed "continuous creation." He distinguished between types of days, including original days (related to existential speed) and witnessed days, referring to "the Day of the Lord" and "the Day of the Ascending Pathways" (a thousand years/fifty thousand years). The concept of manifestation and time is expressed as the emergence of existence through the continuous writing by the First Intellect on the Preserved Tablet, and this is time.

Ibn Sina defined time as "the measure of motion," inseparable from it, so time without motion is inconceivable. For him, time is a measure of the unstable state (motion), a means of measuring change in the universe, and a psychological and philosophical extension connected to the existence of the world. He linked motion, space, and time in his Peripatetic¹ natural philosophy.

Among Ibn Sina's most prominent concepts of time is the concept of the measure of change. He defines time as a measure of motion, specifically the number of movements in respect of "before" and "after", which is how change in things is perceived. Ibn Sina emphasizes the psychological aspect, linking the perception of time to the soul. He cites the story of the People of the Cave to illustrate that the perception of time depends on movement and sensory experiences, and how our psychological perception of time can contract or expand. For Ibn Sina, time is an integral part of the natural world and the understanding of existence, distinct from stillness, as there is no time in a static universe.

It is worth highlighting here the Peripatetic definition of time in general: time is the measure of motion in terms of what precedes and follows; it does not exist independently but is dependent on matter and its motion. Time is not a temporal creation but rather a "creator" that progresses by its "essence" (causality), not by duration. Time is

¹ The Peripatetic school was an ancient Greek philosophical school founded by Aristotle in Athens (335 BCE). It employed a rational, deductive method and was named after Aristotle's teaching style, as he circled the Lyceum, a covered portico. It focused on the natural sciences, logic, and metaphysics, and was later adopted and developed by Muslim scholars (Al-Kindi, Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Rushd), becoming a cornerstone of Islamic philosophy.

considered a measure of change, and all movement in the universe is linked to a First Mover.

The following is a detailed explanation of the Peripatetic concept of time:

-Time and Motion: There is no time without motion; motion is what creates the awareness of time.

-The Relationship between "before" and "after". : Time is the way we arrange events (past, present, future) based on the motion of objects.

-Time as "Now": The present or "now" is the only real, material point in time, while the past and future are mental concepts.

-The Beginningless Time: Ibn Sina believed that time has no beginning; otherwise, there would be a time prior to the beginning of time, which Peripatetic logic rejects, considering it an eternal creation.

-Time and Spirit: In Islamic Peripatetic philosophy, time is seen as linked to matter, while spirits may exist outside the realm of this material time.

This concept is characterized by a rigorous rational and deductive approach, distinguishing itself from other cosmological explanations by its focus on physics and logic to explain change.

The philosophy of metaphysics and the philosophy of space and time are considered the true essence of the concept of time, as they study its ontological nature—whether it is real, objective, or imaginary—and

its independent existence or its relation to motion. The most prominent conceptions include Aristotle's (time as a measure of motion), Kant's (time as a mental framework), and relational time (time as it relates to events).

Aristotelian Philosophy (Relational Realism): As mentioned earlier, Aristotle considers time to be "a measure of motion in terms of what is prior and subsequent," meaning that there is no time without motion or change.

Kantian Philosophy (Transcendental Idealism): Kant sees time not as something external, but rather as an "a priori forms which are innate, subjective structures of human cognition—specifically space, time, and the categories of understanding—that exist independently of experience", (a priori form, intuition, that is, a mental framework imposed by the mind to organize experience, and a real existence within our consciousness.) Modern metaphysical philosophy focuses on the "essence of time" (as seen in the later works of Fakhr al-Din al-Razi) and debates whether time exists independently of the mind (objectively) or is merely an imaginary construct.

Existential philosophy focuses on time as a real existence linked to Becoming; time destroys things as a means of their Becoming and Existence.

Time in the philosophy of science and physics connects the reality of time in physics (such as the theory of relativity, which considers it a fourth dimension) with its philosophical essence as a tool for ordering events.

In short, the study of "the philosophy of time" as part of metaphysics is the core that explores the "reality" of time from different

perspectives: Aristotelian (kinetic), Kantian (mental), or relational (related to existence).

One of the most important definitions of time is that of the French philosopher Henri Bergson. For him, time is synonymous with "duration" (*La durée*), which is lived and internal time that flows continuously and is indivisible, unlike scientific time measured by clocks, which Bergson considered spatial and illusory. Bergson emphasized the qualitative nature of time, viewing it as a vital flow intertwined with consciousness.

Key points of Bergson's philosophy of time:

-Duration (*La durée*): Real time is not the sum of separate moments, but rather a continuous, interconnected, and overlapping flow where the past dissolves into the present.

-Critique of scientific time: Bergson argues that clocks measure "space," not time. They divide time into separate moments (seconds and minutes), transforming time into a spatial line, which distorts its flowing reality.

-Personal (subjective) time: Duration is personal, with its rhythms varying from one individual to another. It is linked to our consciousness and psychological states, while scientific time is uniform and mechanical. Memory and the Past: Bergson considers memory the means by which the past remains in the present, where time flows as an indivisible whole, not as isolated moments.

-Intuition: Duration is perceived through direct "intuition," not through rational analysis, which freezes movement.

Bergson's philosophy included a confrontation with Einstein, as Bergson considered "Einstein's time" to be the time of clocks (physics), while his own time is the time of consciousness and life (metaphysics).

The concept of time in Saint Augustine's "Confessions" is considered a revolutionary subjective view, where time is a divine creation that did not exist "before" creation, and is merely an "extension" of the human soul (*Distentio animi*), not an external material reality. The past and future do not exist; time is concentrated in the "present," which we perceive through memory, attention, and anticipation.

Augustine's key ideas about time:

-Time as a subjective experience: Augustine views time as a measure of what we perceive in our consciousness, an impression left by the past (memory) and the future (expectation) on the present.

-The creation of time: Time is created along with the universe, and God could not have created anything "before" time because God is outside of time in eternity.

-God's eternity versus the temporality of creation: Augustine sees changing time as a characteristic of creation, while God is the eternal and everlasting "now."

-The Inability to Define Time: His famous phrase is: "What is time? If no one asks me, I know; if I wish to explain it to someone, I do not know."

Augustine linked time to the history of salvation, where time moves toward an ultimate goal: the triumph of the divine city over the earthly one.

In Martin Heidegger's philosophy, particularly in his book "Being and Time" (1927), time is considered a fundamental condition of Being (Dasein), not merely a physical measurement. Heidegger connects human existence to "temporality," where the past is a point of reference, the present is engagement, and the future is possibility. He argues that understanding Being requires recognizing human finitude and mortality.

The most prominent dimensions of time in Heidegger's work:

-Being and Time (Sein und Zeit): This is considered his seminal work, in which he analyzes human existence, considering "being" to be inextricably linked to the concept of time, where being-in-the-world is temporal being.

-Time-structure/Temporalization: Time is not external, but rather an internal structure of Dasein² "being-there" (*da* = there; *sein* = being), which is timed in its own existence; that is, humanity itself is time.

² Dasein is a central concept in Martin Heidegger's existential philosophy, literally meaning "being-there" or "presence." It refers to the human being as a conscious existence, questioning its own being and constructing its meaning through engagement with the world and time. Dasein is not merely a biological being, but a being-in-the-world that possesses the potential for authenticity or inauthenticity.

- Finite Temporality: Heidegger asserts that "time is inherently finite," and that awareness of this finitude (death) is what gives existence its true and authentic meaning.

The Three Dimensions (Being as Temporality):

-The Future: Represents possibility and openness to what will be.

-The Past: Not merely a passing away, but the "reference point" upon which humanity constructs its identity.

-The Present: Not a static moment, but the realm of action and engagement with the world.

Heidegger revolutionized his philosophy, transforming the question of Being from an abstract, metaphysical question into an existential one linked to time and lived reality.

Albert Einstein revolutionized the concept of time through his two theories of Relativity (Special and General), transforming it from an absolute quantity into a fourth, relative dimension intertwined with space in a single fabric called "spacetime." For Einstein, time slows down with high speeds (time dilation) and is distorted by gravity. Therefore, there is no absolute "now" for the universe, but rather a variable time that depends on the observer and their speed.

Key concepts of time according to Einstein:

-Spacetime: Einstein combined the three spatial dimensions with time into a single four-dimensional entity, where space and time cannot be separated.

-Time Dilation: Time slows down for an object moving at a speed close to the speed of light compared to a stationary object.

-General Relativity and Gravity: Massive objects (such as stars and planets) distort the fabric of spacetime, and time slows down further as the object's mass increases or as it approaches strong gravity.

-Absolute Speed of Light: The constancy of the speed of light led to the understanding that time and space are relative quantities, not absolute as previously believed.

-Rejection of Absolute Time: There is no single "now" for the entire universe; What we see of distant planets is their past, not their present.

This concept makes time a flexible quantity that contracts and expands, influenced by speed and gravity.

3. Creation: From Nothingness or from Potentiality?

It is common in rhetoric to say that God created the world "from nothingness." However, reflection on the Qur'anic text reveals that the concept of "nothingness" (al a'dam) is almost entirely absent as an explicit philosophical concept. The Qur'an uses: creation, origination, establishment, creativity, and the command (Be, and it is), and does not use the term "nothingness" as the opposite of existence.

❖ God is the Creator of all things. ❖

❖ He created the heavens and the earth in truth. ❖

❖ Every day He is engaged in some affair. ❖

❖ And the heaven We constructed with might, and indeed, We are expanding it. ❖

❖ And it is He who created the heavens and the earth in six days - and His Throne was upon the water - that He might test you [as to] which of you is best in deed. And if you say, "Indeed, you will be resurrected after death," they will surely say... Those who disbelieve say, "This is nothing but clear magic." ❖ Hud 7

This opens a different horizon for understanding creation, not as an event that occurred at a specific moment in time and then ended, but as an ongoing process and a constant renewal of existence. Creation is not a transition from “nothing” to “something,” but a transition from potentiality to actuality, from knowledge to manifestation, and from word to form.

4. Eternal Knowledge and Temporal Manifestation

If God is eternal, and His knowledge encompasses all things, then all of existence is present in His knowledge in a timeless way. However,

this presence does not mean that things actually exist in time, but rather that they are known before they come into being. Herein lies the difference between existence in knowledge and existence in time. A thing may be eternal in knowledge but temporal in existence.

God's knowledge is not "expectation" within time (because expectation is inherently time), but rather a timeless encompassment. This encompassing knowledge is not necessarily equivalent to the "compulsion of will" in humans, because compulsion is one thing, and the revelation of the known in encompassing knowledge is another. "We are successive" because our consciousness is limited and perceives existence from within; and "He is all present" because His presence is not inherently within succession.

This distinction liberates us from the apparent contradiction between the eternal and the temporal. Time does not negate eternity; rather, it is one form of manifestation within the world of creation. (It is not right that presence in God's knowledge from eternity be equal to nothingness or non-existence!).

5. Time, Resurrection, and the Hereafter

The nature of time undergoes a radical transformation in the Qur'anic discourse when discussing the Hereafter:

﴿ The Day We will fold (*natmi*)³ the heaven like the folding of a scroll for writings.﴾ Qur'an 14:1. Time here is not a familiar physical time, but a different existential time. The folding of the heavens is not merely a spatial end, but the end of one mode of existence and the beginning of another. This confirms that time is not absolute, but relative, linked to the nature of the world in which it unfolds: ﴿ And indeed, a day with your Lord is like a thousand years of those which you count.﴾ 22:47

6. Towards a Synthetic Vision

Through this distinction between the eternal and the temporal, knowledge and manifestation, possibility and determination, we can understand creation not as a rupture between God and the world, nor as a direct extension of the divine self, but rather as a continuous relationship between the absolute and the relative.

Existence is sustained by God, encompassed by His knowledge, manifested by His command, changing in its forms, and constant in its essence.

This understanding opens the door to the question of cosmic consciousness: If existence is sustained by God, encompassed by His knowledge, and renewed by His command, is it a silent existence, or an existence imbued with meaning? Is perception limited to humankind alone, or does the universe itself possess a mode of presence and response?

³ In Arabic, the word '*tawa*' means "to fold", but also it connotes meanings: 'be past'; elapse; wear; of time; go by; be over; move lightly, softly, rapidly.

These questions will lead us in the following chapter to the concept of the universality of consciousness and to a reconsideration of humanity's place within a universe that is not inanimate matter, but rather a living arena of the relationship between Creator and creation.

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter does not aim to definitively resolve the question of creation or time, but rather to establish a conceptual framework that liberates the discussion from the confusion between the eternal and the temporal. When we understand that God is not contained within time, and that creation is not merely a past moment, it becomes possible to consider the Qur'an, consciousness, and existence as manifestations of a meaning broader than the categories of beginning and end.

From this perspective, the real question arises: Is consciousness a local phenomenon within humanity, or a universal characteristic that permeates all of existence? This is what we will explore in the next chapter.

Chapter Two

The Holism of Consciousness: From Humanity to Existence

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In this chapter, I borrowed the concept of “Logos”—as it appeared in Greek and Stoic philosophy—as the name for a simple idea: that the world is not a deafening chaos, but rather comprehensible, and that behind phenomena lies an order that makes meaning possible. However, this book does not adopt Logos as an alternative frame of reference, but rather uses it as a comparative mirror, then returns it to its Qur’anic lexicon: to the “command” by which existence comes into being, to the “truth” by which it is upheld, to the “balance” by which relationships are balanced, and to the “Book” which reads existence as signs. If Logos in philosophy is a “universal intellect” that weaves order, then the Qur’an presents a deeper order: an order that is not content with mathematical regularity, but adds the semantic dimension—that is, the world being a “place of discourse” and presence, not merely a stage for action.

Logos and consciousness represent two fundamental and interconnected aspects of reality. Logos is the objective, universal principle of rational structure, order, and meaning, while consciousness is the internal, subjective, and experiential awareness that perceives or embodies this structure. Logos is often viewed as the divine or cosmic intelligence that guides nature, while consciousness is the active, witnessing, and personal function.

-Logos: The structure of reality, referring to the "rational principle" that moves and organizes the universe, a "hidden harmony," that structures reality and connects human reason to the natural world. It is

a definition derived from Greek philosophy (especially Stoicism). Logos is often equated with "the Word," the cosmic order, and the underlying logic that makes the universe comprehensible. It is the active force that separates and structures, allowing for differentiation, logic, and meaning. In psychology, logos is associated with masculinity, "solarity," or conscious thought.

-Consciousness: The internal, subjective experience of being and observation. It is a personal function, or "internal witness," that enables us to perceive, interpret, and adapt to the environment. It acts as a recurring loop capable of tracing interconnectedness and organizing structure. While logos represents the framework, consciousness is the process by which this framework is perceived and understood.

The main differences and intersections between logos and consciousness lie in the distinction between the objective and the subjective: logos is the objective order; consciousness is the subjective experience. Then comes the concept of "structural interaction," where consciousness uses or works with logos to understand the world, suggesting that they are two sides of the same coin. In some views, logos and consciousness are integrated to produce the highest forms of consciousness by balancing the organized and rational logos with eros (emotional and associative energy). From an evolutionary perspective, some modern perspectives view logos as the "recurring witness" that allows the conscious system to adapt and persist.

In short, logos provides the rules of the game, while consciousness is the player who navigates them.

When discussing pantheism/immanentism, the focus shifts to the convergence of logos, monism, and consciousness. This convergence offers a worldview in which the universe is not merely matter, but an

intelligent, coherent, and interconnected system. This philosophical framework posits that the universe is a living, divine entity (pantheism), governed by a rational principle or universal mind (the Logos), of which human consciousness is a part or expression. The Stoics believed that "all is God," meaning that God and the universe are one. Reality is a single, integrated system, and the universe is intelligent. The Logos is the "spirit" of existence, a divine force that permeates and governs everything, thus establishing pantheism. This unity is not merely a fixed law, but an active, driving force (like fire or the soul) that propels growth and connects all parts of the universe.

Therefore, unlike personal, transcendent deities, the pantheistic God is impersonal, fully rooted in and interconnected with the world. Because all things are part of this single system, all things are interconnected manifestations of God.

Consciousness as Cosmic and Individual Consciousness

-Cosmic Consciousness: Many pantheists and Stoics view the universe not as "inanimate matter," but as a conscious and perceiving entity. Humanity as Self-Awareness: A key perspective is that humanity is the "self-conscious universe." Individual consciousness is seen as a part or "branch" of the cosmic mind (Logos).

-Pan-consciousness/Pan-being: Some pan-monistic views align with pan-consciousness, the idea that consciousness is an essential property of matter, and that the universe operates as a conscious "top-down" entity.

Integration: The Living, Thinking Universe

-Stoic Perspective: Marcus Aurelius and other Stoics saw the human mind as part of the cosmic mind (Zeus/Logos). Our goal is to align our individual consciousness with the rational flow of the universe.

-Modern Synthesis: Modern pan-monism is often blended with scientific naturalism, where the "Logos" is seen as the inherent order discovered through science (mathematics, physics), and consciousness as an emerging property of the complex and ordered universe.

-Key Analogy: The relationship is often described as being like the neurons in a giant, conscious body (the universe). In short, this triad describes a self-sufficient, rational (Logos), divine (Pantheism), and conscious (Consciousness) universe, where the individual finds meaning through realizing his role within the whole.

This book adopts the idea of a holistic consciousness without pantheism or immanentism, considering God as transcendent to the universe and creation, yet the source of consciousness. This view is closer to panentheism than to monism/pantheism. Our research here focuses on the evidence for the holistic nature of consciousness in the Qur'anic verses.

Throughout history, the concept of consciousness has been linked to humankind as the rational, conscious being capable of thought and reflection. This conception has become entrenched in modern philosophy and science, to the point that consciousness is often defined as a product of the brain or a higher function of the nervous system. However, this confinement of consciousness to humans alone

raises profound questions when we read the Qur'an comprehensively. We find that the Qur'an attributes cognitive and volitional actions to non-human entities: to the heavens and the earth, to the mountains and trees, to birds and animals, and indeed to the entire universe.

Are we dealing with a poetic metaphor? Or are we encountering a different conception of consciousness as an existential characteristic that cannot be reduced to the human mind?

What is consciousness, and what is the role of the brain and the heart?

The Holy Qur'an does not explicitly mention the "brain" using its physical term. I do not know why the Qur'an does not refer to it as the centre of conscious activity and thought, except for the traditional interpretations which state that the Qur'anic discourse focuses on spiritual and cognitive functions (such as contemplation, reasoning, and faith) that are usually attributed to the "heart" in the Qur'anic context, considering it the centre of the mind, spirit, and reflection, and not merely an organ for pumping blood. Furthermore, the Qur'an addresses the conscience and insight, and the heart is the seat of tranquillity and guidance.

The reasons can be summarized in the following points:

The heart is the seat of reasoning: The Qur'an indicates that "reasoning" comes from the heart, as in the verse: {Have they not travelled through the land so that they may have hearts by which to reason?} Surah Al-Hajj: 46.

The spiritual versus the physical function: The Qur'an focuses on the heart as the source of emotions and faith (faith resides in the heart), while the brain (not mentioned in the Qur'an) is a physical organ

responsible for bodily functions, making the heart more expressive of the spiritual and faith-based aspect.

The universality of the concept: In the Qur'an, the heart refers to the centre of "intellect" in its comprehensive sense, encompassing human thought, insight, and spirit, not merely abstract logical reasoning.

The origin of intellect in the heart: Some commentators (such as Ibn al-Qayyim) state that the origin of intellect is in the heart, and its fruit is in the head (brain), illustrating a functional integration.

Thus, the Qur'an uses the "heart" as a symbol of perception, awareness, faith, and emotion, which transcends the purely biological function of the brain.

Ancients held varying views of the brain. While the ancient Egyptians considered the brain a superfluous organ to be removed during mummification (liquefied through the nose) because they believed the heart was the centre of emotion and intelligence, Greek philosophers like Aristotle considered it merely a "radiator" for cooling the blood. Galen later described it as the centre of thought, with early references to it in the Edwin Smith Medical Papyrus.

Here are the details of ancient civilizations' views on the brain:

Ancient Egypt: The brain was considered unimportant and was removed through the nose using a hook, or by "liquefying" it and removing it for mummification, due to the belief that the heart was the centre of intelligence and emotion.

Greeks and Romans: The ancient Greeks' view of the brain evolved from considering it a secondary organ to the centre of perception. Alcmaeon of Croton (5th century BCE) proposed that the brain was the centre of intelligence and consciousness, and that it was connected to the body's extremities via canals (poroi). The Hellenistic period witnessed significant advancements, thanks to Herophilus of Chalcedon (3rd century BCE), who distinguished between the cerebrum, cerebellum, and ventricles. Erasistratus of Citium (3rd century BCE) conducted studies on brain and nerve functions, linking brain complexity to intelligence. Galen (170 CE), drawing on Greek anatomy, established the conclusion that the cerebrum (the "soft") processes the senses, while the cerebellum (the "dense") controls the muscles, and he proposed the theory of "animal souls" residing in the ventricles.

Unlike Alcmaeon, Aristotle (335 BCE) believed that the heart was the centre of sensation and intelligence, and that the brain merely functioned as a radiator to cool the heart and blood—a view that influenced understanding for a considerable period.

In the Arab-Islamic culture, Arab and Muslim scholars revolutionized the understanding of the brain, transforming it from a mere "cranial stuffing" or secondary organ into a primary centre for perception, intelligence, and neurological functions. They developed brain anatomy, described neurological and psychological diseases, and contributed to the science of narcotic pharmacology and surgical anaesthesia, surpassing the theories of the ancient Greeks.

In his book "The Canon of Medicine," Ibn Sina (Avicenna) affirmed that the brain is the centre of the nervous system and the source of the senses and movement. He divided it anatomically into three main lobes or regions, each associated with different cognitive functions: the

anterior lobe, which includes the common sense and imagination, where sensory information is gathered and stored; the middle lobe, which is responsible for thinking and idea (when the mind processes stored images); and the posterior lobe, which is dedicated to memory and retention. He described the cerebral membranes and ventricles, considering the brain a cold and moist organ and the cornerstone of psychological and mental functions. This made him a pioneer in linking anatomy to physiological functions. He discussed diseases such as stroke, epilepsy, paralysis, and amnesia, attributing them to an imbalance of humors of the body or compression of the ventricles. Ibn Sina's vision was distinguished by combining precise anatomical observation with psychological philosophy, making the brain the supreme manager of human psychological and physical actions.

Ibn al-Nafis performed the first known dissection of the human brain, correcting the erroneous theories of Galen and Ibn Sina.

Ibn Zuhr (1072–1162 CE) provided a detailed description of neurological disorders, including intracranial thrombophlebitis and mediastinal germ cell tumours.

Ibn Rushd (1126–1198 CE) noted the existence of Parkinson's disease and the characteristics of retinal receptors, while Maimonides wrote about neurological and psychological disorders and rabies.

A theological and medical debate ensued regarding whether the intellect resided in the heart (as some suggested based on the Qur'an) or in the brain (as Ahmad ibn Hanbal stated, "The intellect is in the head"). "Lightness of mind" was linked to intelligence and mental processes.

Two levels of consciousness can be initially distinguished:

Conceptual human consciousness: This is the consciousness associated with language, abstract thought, memory, planning, and moral judgment.

Existential or cognitive awareness: This is a mode of presence, response, and meaning that does not require conceptual thinking. Rather, it is based on the relationship of the individual to their surroundings and to the source of their existence.

This distinction allows us to understand awareness not as a binary state (existence or non-existence), but as a spectrum of varying degrees, differing among different beings. Humans are not the only beings who "exist" in existence, but rather the beings who are aware of their own presence and reflect upon it.

Consciousness as an existential characteristic, not a human privilege

When the Qur'an attributes glorification, prostration, and obedience to the heavens, the earth, and all of creation, it is not speaking of blind, mechanical behaviour, but rather of a conscious, existential relationship with God:

“And there is nothing that does not glorify Him with praise, but you do not understand their glorification.”

“Each [of them] has already known its [way of] prayer and glorification.”

“And the stars and the trees prostrate.”

“Then He turned to the heaven when it was smoke and said to it and to the earth, ‘Come [into being], willingly or unwillingly.’” They said, “We have come willingly.” Fussilat 41:11

“Do they not see what Allah has created of things whose shadows incline to the right and to the left, prostrating to Allah while they are humbled?” An-Nahl 16:48

“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-Ahzab 33:72

These verses presupposes perception, relationship, knowledge, and response. Even if this perception is unlike human perception, it is not negated simply because of its dissimilarity. A difference in degree does not negate the essence.

Between the Holism of Consciousness and the Unity of Being

A common objection arises here: Does asserting the holism of consciousness mean that the universe is God? Or that God is the universe? The answer is no.

The essential distinction in this book is between:

Pantheism/Monism: Everything is God

Holism of Consciousness/Panentheism: Everything is in God without being God.

Cosmic consciousness does not mean immanentism, the indwelling of the divine essence in existence, nor its union with it. Rather, it means that existence is sustained by God, encompassed by His knowledge, dependent upon His command, and present before Him. Consciousness here is not an independent entity, but rather an effect of the relationship between the Creator and the created.

Consciousness can be conceived as layers or levels: Human consciousness: thought, language, contemplation, choice. Animal consciousness: perception, fear, desire, learning. Plant consciousness: response, growth, orientation. The consciousness of inanimate objects: order, obedience, and glorification. This does not imply equating these levels but rather acknowledging that existence is neither silent nor neutral but rather possesses a mode of presence before God.

To say that existence is “encompassed by consciousness” does not mean that beings possess a human intellect, nor that the universe is a single psychological entity, nor that the Creator dissolves into creation. The meaning here is more precise: the Qur’an describes the universe as existing within a relationship—a relationship of knowledge, response, and submission—that transcends blind mechanism. Mountains do not “think” like humans, but they are not outside of meaning; stars do not “speak” our language, but they are not outside of glorification. The criterion of this book is that the difference in modes of perception does not justify denying the origin of perception;

because denying it does not stem from the text, but from a preconceived philosophical assumption that confines consciousness to the cerebral cortex alone. Thus, the universality of consciousness here becomes a result of a Qur’anic ontology that sees the world as existing by God—not as God—and surrounded by knowledge, will, and command that gives existence the character of “presence” and not the character of “silence”.

Consciousness and Meaning in the Universe

If all existence is sustained by God, then the universe is not merely moving matter, but becomes a realm of meaning. Natural laws are not interpreted simply as mathematical relationships, but as an order indicative of wisdom. Here, the question of consciousness intersects with the question of purpose: Is the universe merely blind chance? Or is it a meaningful structure?

The Qur’an answers this question in a non-reductionist way:

“We did not create the heavens and the earth and that between them in play.”

“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves.”

A sign is not merely a physical phenomenon, but a meaningful symbol.

The universality of Consciousness and Modern Science

The question of consciousness is no longer confined to philosophy and religion, but has become central to neurophysics, cosmology, and the philosophy of mind. Recent trends have emerged that view consciousness not as a mere incident in the universe, but as an integral part of its deep structure, as seen in panpsychism. However, this book does not adopt these theories as definitive truths, but rather as indications that reducing consciousness to the brain alone is no longer sufficient to explain the phenomenon of meaning and subjective experience (qualia).

Is consciousness an inseparable part of the fabric of the universe? The theory of pantheism suggests that consciousness is a fundamental aspect of reality. Galileo realized, more than 400 years ago, that while many phenomena are governed by mathematical laws, qualities such as colour and taste exist only in consciousness. Modern science explains physical mechanisms, but it is unable to explain subjective experiences, which is known as the "hard problem" of consciousness.

Recent years have seen seminars and conferences discussing whether consciousness is a fundamental property of reality, like mass or charge. This idea, championed by thinkers such as Plato and Bertrand Russell, has garnered renewed attention, particularly after the publication of Philip Goff's "Galileo's Error" (2019), which revived the debate surrounding alternatives to materialism in explaining consciousness.

Pantheism offers an alternative explanation for how minds arise from matter, suggesting that consciousness has always existed.

However, mainstream science and philosophy typically view consciousness as emanating from complex systems like the brain. Most academic philosophers support this materialist perspective, while others favour alternatives such as pantheism. The debate continues,

with some suggesting that the universe itself is conscious, or that the brain uses consciousness rather than producing it. Others point to consciousness beings that transcend the limitations of space and time. While these ideas challenge traditional views, materialism remains dominant due to its support for Empiricism.

Main Arguments in Conferences and Debates in Recent Years

1. **Panpsychism: Consciousness as a Fundamental Element:** Panpsychism proposes that consciousness is a fundamental property of reality, like mass or electric charge. This idea has ancient roots and has been revived in modern philosophical debates, notably by Philip Goff.
2. **The Hard Problem of Consciousness:** Modern science explains physical phenomena but struggles to explain subjective experiences (such as the redness of sunsets and the bitterness of lemons). This challenge is known as the "hard problem of consciousness," as David Chalmers termed it.
3. **Materialism vs. Panentheism:** The prevailing view in science and philosophy is materialism: consciousness arises from complex systems like the brain. Most philosophers support this view, but a significant minority favour alternatives such as panentheism.
4. **Criticisms of Panentheism:** Critics argue that panentheism fails to explain how simple forms of consciousness combine to form complex ones (the problem of combination) and lacks testable predictions.

5. Alternative Theories: Some suggest that the universe itself is conscious, or that the brain uses consciousness instead of producing it. While others suggest that consciousness may be linked to beings that transcend space and time.

6. Ethical Implications: Our understanding of consciousness affects ethical issues, such as the suffering of animals. Pantheism shifts the focus from observable behaviour to internal experience.

7. Empirical Support: Despite philosophical interest in pantheism, materialism remains dominant due to its stronger empirical foundation.

In my books “The Masks of Delusion” and “The Thoughton”, I discussed the concept of the field⁴ of consciousness or the cosmic field of consciousness and some theories that adopt this concept, inspired by quantum physics. These theories posit cosmic fields from which atomic particles, photons, and various components of existence emanate. My view was clear: I favour this concept, considering universal consciousness, associated with God, to be pervasive throughout existence and connected to all beings. The human mind derives consciousness and perception from this universal consciousness through the brain, which acts as a receiver, not a generator of consciousness. The Thoughton is a quantum of abstract information that possesses properties of both abstract and concrete,

⁴ Cosmic field theories are a physical framework that describes the universe through pervasive fields in which particles interact. The most prominent of these are Quantum Field Theory (QFT), which integrates quantum mechanics with relativity, and the Big Bang theory as a model for the origin of the universe, along with unification attempts (such as String Theory) to unify the fundamental forces. Quantum Field Theory (QFT): This is the modern physical formulation that describes elementary particles as excitations (vibrations) in fundamental fields that permeate spacetime.

like the photon and other particles, according to quantum theory. However, this topic is not among the topics of this book, so I have limited myself to a brief reference to it as a comprehensive awareness material that this book adopts.

Humanity Within a Conscious Universe

If consciousness is a gradual property of existence, then humanity does not stand outside this universe, but rather at its very heart. Humanity is not an isolated being, but a point of convergence between matter, life, intellect, and divine discourse. This transforms the image of humanity from absolute master of nature to witness within a system larger than itself, responsible for its relationship with existence, not its owner.

Conclusion of the Chapter

The universality of consciousness does not mean that everything thinks as humans do, nor that the universe is a conscious entity in the psychological sense. Rather, it means that existence is not a silent mass, but a realm of relationship, meaning, and response. In this perspective, consciousness is not a selfish privilege or a purely material property, but an existential dimension that extends from inanimate matter to humanity. From this perspective, the following question becomes essential: If existence is encompassed by consciousness, how does the Qur'an express this consciousness? Is its discourse on the glorification, prostration, and response of beings merely rhetorical, or a description of an ontological reality? This will lead us in the next chapter to study the Qur'anic verses related to creation and the universality of consciousness, before we face the big rhetorical question: Are we facing a metaphor ... or a new cosmic vision of existence?

An Interpretive Application: The Light Model

My interpretation of the verse "Light" might be the best example to complete this brief overview. Here is an excerpt from the book "The Masks of Delusion", Chapter II; Part 4 - Light Upon Light: The Architecture of Illumination in a Dual-State Universe:

"Humanity witnesses vivid images that transcend the boundaries of language, geography, and beliefs. Among the greatest of these is the Qur'anic metaphor of light:

"Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. His light¹ is like a niche in which there is a lamp, the lamp is in a crystal, the crystal is like a shining star, lit from 'the oil of' a blessed olive tree, 'located' neither to the east nor the west, whose oil would almost glow, even without being touched by fire. Light upon light! Allah guides whoever He wills to His light. And Allah sets forth parables for humanity. For Allah has 'perfect' knowledge of all things." al-Nur 24:35

This verse is not dogma. It is cosmology. It is psychology. It is metaphysics. It is the physics of consciousness expressed in symbolic language.

Symbolic Interpretation

1. The Architecture of Inner Illumination

Light → metaphorically representing absolute, all-encompassing knowledge, meaning, consciousness and background reference for qualia. The source of existence.

Light → Symbol of energy becoming particles. Embodiment of the abstract. Fundamental Fields excitations transforming fields into bundles of energy / material particles with mass, the physical universe.

Niche → cosmic vacuum, the constant positive space-time curvature of the universe, the human body, the physical vessel (mass) prepared to receive light.

Lamp → the flame of consciousness, enlightenment, the transformation of the Field of Consciousness into discrete informational quanta in the form of Thoughtons.

Glass Globe → The human brain and its network of neurons where "quantum collapse" occurs, information is exchanged, and meaning is given to personal experience. Interface for Consciousness and Qualia – the communication interface between the field of consciousness and the body. Like glass globe magnifies, spreads and directs light, the brain directs, amplifies, organizes, and distributes the information that moves the body; the instrument of causality, the place where knowledge or abstract thought meets physical matter.⁵

Bright Planet → the mind, intellect and awareness that possesses knowledge.

Lighted from a blessed olive tree → The Field of Consciousness, the source of knowledge and the wellspring of perception.

Neither Eastern nor Western → Indicating the neutrality of the field of abstract Consciousness (Information), the properties of fields from which stimulations all material particles emanate.

⁵ The concepts introduced in this chapter are philosophical and interpretive in nature; they are not proposed as physical mechanisms or scientific explanations, but as conceptual tools for thinking about the relationship between consciousness and its neural correlates.

Its oil would almost glow even without being touched by fire → this represents the comprehensive knowledge inherent in the Field of Consciousness, the stimuli within the field, and the possibility of quantum collapse (stimulations within the field in the form of superposition, i.e., the principle of superposition to wave function probabilities, to their collapse into Thoughtons carrying quanta of information), in the human brain. Comprehensive knowledge, or pure knowledge in this sense, exists within the field and is not limited to interaction with the brain. (The fields that fill the vacuum are constantly teeming with pairs of particles-antiparticles popping up into existence then collide, annihilate, and so on, all the time. The vacuum is not absolute emptiness or nothingness.)

Light upon light → All Existence, “matter upon mind”, originates from one reality (light, energy-physically, abstract and metaphorically). Communication and exchange between abstract thought and mass, that is, the material and the metaphysical; both have the same source, two sides of one truth: the universe is illuminated from without, and the mind is illuminated from within.

This architecture mirrors the structure of consciousness described earlier: Vessel, mediator, field, source. It is a metaphysical diagram encoded in holy scripture.

The Quran is a book of ethics, not physics. I am not presenting this verse and interpretation here to prove scientific miracles in the Quran, but rather to illustrate how deep insight of prophets and great minds penetrates through layers of reality which most of us cannot.

2. The Metaphysics of Reflection: How the Universe Sees Itself

Light has one extraordinary property: it reveals both the object and the observer. Your face in a mirror is only possible because photons carry

information in both directions. Consciousness behaves exactly the same way. It reveals the world and the one who perceives the world. This is why every mystical tradition arrives at the same realization: the universe knows itself through consciousness, consciousness knows itself through the universe. Light upon light.

3. The Human Being as a Luminous Node

Humans occupy a unique position in the cosmos made of matter, animated by energy, illuminated by consciousness, capable of moral reflection, capable of self-awareness.

We are the only known species that can reflect on equilibrium itself. This is why religious texts emphasize the human role as: Khalifa (trust-bearer), imago dei (reflection of the divine), bodhisattva (awakened caretaker), the one who “names” creation. Not because we are biologically superior, but because we are light-receiving vessels capable of generating secondary illumination: knowledge, art, ethics, meaning, civilization. Just as stars create light, humans create meaning.

This is **“light upon light.”**

The union of physics and metaphysics.

The merging of destiny and will.

The structure of consciousness.

The architecture of meaning.

The law of equilibrium made luminous.

Chapter Three

The Universe Between Beginning, Perpetuity, and Consciousness

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1. Modern Cosmology and the Question of Beginning

The question of creation is no longer confined to philosophy or theology; it has become central to modern science, particularly cosmology, which investigates the origin, structure, and destiny of the universe. The development of modern physics has led to the re-examination of these age-old questions in new forms:

Does the universe have a beginning? Did it originate from a moment of initial explosion? Is it accidental or eternal in some way? Does the regularity of its laws indicate a purpose or mere chance?

However, these questions, no matter how scientific they may appear, remain laden with philosophical and ontological implications that transcend the limits of equations and experiments.

A. The Big Bang Theory and the Beginning of the Universe

The prevailing theory in cosmology suggests that the universe originated from a state of extremely high density and temperature in what is known as the "Big Bang." This moment is often understood as the beginning of both time and space.

However, this "beginning" is not an absolute beginning in the metaphysical sense, but rather the beginning of a specific mode of existence that can be described mathematically. Science does not describe what came before this moment, nor can it answer the question: Why did there be a "Bang" in the first place? Or why does a law exist that allows it to happen?

Thus, the Big Bang theory remains a description of a stage in existence, not a definitive explanation of its meaning.

B. The Universe Between Creation and Possibility

In contrast to the concept of a universe with a single beginning, theories have emerged that speak of multiple universes:

The cyclical universe (expansion and contraction), a universe that is constantly being created and dying. These conceptions attempt to transcend the idea of an absolute beginning, but they do not eliminate the fundamental question: Why do laws exist that allow for multiple universes? And why does an order exist that allows for cosmic transformation and rebirth?

Even in the hypothesis of an infinite number of universes, the question remains open about the origin of the law itself, and about the meaning of existence in a universe that is not entirely arbitrary and has no clear purpose.

C. Fine-Tuning and the Problem of Design

One of the most intriguing issues in modern physics is what is known as the "fine-tuning" of the laws of the universe. If the fundamental constants of nature (gravity, electric charge, basic masses) had varied

by even the slightest degree, stars, atoms, and life itself would not have been possible. This has opened the door to three major interpretations:

1. An interpretation that posits intelligent design. 2. An interpretation that posits chance within an infinite universe. 3. An interpretation that sees the universe as having a structure with profound internal order. However, these interpretations, despite their differences, share the acknowledgment that the universe is not simple, blind chaos, but rather a highly precise system.

D. The Limits of Science

Science describes how the universe expands, how stars form, how elements originate, and how life evolves, but it does not answer: Why is there something rather than nothing? Why this system and not another? Why this law and not another? Here, science does not contradict faith, but rather stops at its natural limits, leaving the door of meaning open to philosophical and religious contemplation.

2. Creation in the Qur'anic Vision: From Event to Perpetual Action

While science describes how the universe came into being, and philosophy questions the meaning of existence, the Qur'an presents a cosmic discourse fundamentally different in nature: a discourse that views the entire universe within a relationship with God, not as inert matter, but as a realm of signs, glorification, obedience, and return.

The Qur'an does not present creation merely as an event in time, but rather within an ontological vision encompassing existence, time, consciousness, and destiny, and as a perpetual mode of being in which existence itself is sustained by continuous divine action. The universe is not something that came into being and then became independent with its own laws, but rather a continuous relationship between will, meaning, and existence. In this sense, the universality of consciousness in the Qur'anic sphere does not imply God's indwelling in the universe, nor does it equate the universe with God, nor does it reduce the Qur'anic discourse to poetic metaphors about nature. Rather, it sees existence as created and sustained by God, and consciousness as not a purely neurological property, but rather an aspect of the relationship between creation and the Creator. Existence itself is open to meaning.

From this perspective, we can speak of a Qur'anic realm of existence that is not limited to humankind, but encompasses the heavens, the earth, and all that lies between them.

A. Continuous Creation, the Renewing Universe, and Sustainability

Creation in the Qur'anic vision is not merely a physical event, but an act imbued with meaning:

“We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them except in truth.”

“Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth are signs for those of understanding.”

The universe is not simply an object of measurement, but a subject for contemplation.

When physics speaks of the expansion of the universe, the birth and death of stars, and the transformations of energy and matter, it unintentionally approaches the concept of continuous creation. The universe is not a static mass, but an ongoing process. This is consistent with the Qur'anic vision: "Every day He is engaged in some affair" - "Say, 'Is there among your partners one who originates creation and then repeats it?' Say, 'Allah originates creation and then repeats it, so how are you deluded?'" - "And the heaven We constructed with might, and indeed, We are expanding it." So, creation is not just a past event, but a continuous act that is renewed in endless forms.

Verses on Creation: Existence as a Continuous Act

From a doctrinal perspective, the Qur'an presents creation as a renewed act. The act of creation and bringing into existence is a requirement of the perfection of Lordship and an effect of God's Most Beautiful Names, such as "The Creator," "The Originator," "The Fashioner," "The One Who Made Things," and "The One Who Sustains."

This continuity can be illustrated in the following points: Continuous Creation (Provision After Origination): Existence is never independent of the Creator, not even for a single moment. God Almighty does not merely bring creatures into existence, but also sustains them with sustenance, provision, and life at every moment. This is what is referred to as "Sustaining."

The Renewal of Events: The universe is in a constant state of change and transformation. Every moment witnesses the birth of stars, the demise of others, the creation of new cells, and the giving and taking of life. {Every day He is engaged in some affair.} Al-Rahman: 29

Infinity: God's power and will are limitless, and His creation is inexhaustible. {Say, "If the sea were ink for [writing] the words of my Lord, the sea would be exhausted before the words of my Lord were exhausted."} Al-Kahf 109

{And if all the trees on earth were pens and the sea [were ink], replenished by seven more seas, the words of God would not be exhausted. Indeed, God is Exalted in Might and Wise.} Luqman 27

After the Hour: The act of creation does not cease with the Hour, but rather transitions to a new and eternal phase. God creates Paradise and Hell and creates for the inhabitants of Paradise an ever-renewing and unending bliss, thus confirming that the attribute of creation is an inherent and permanent attribute of perfection.

God is the Creator of all things.

He created the heavens and the earth in truth.

Every day He is engaged in some affair.

His command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it, "Be," and it is.

In the Qur'anic perspective, creation is not simply a past event, but an ongoing process, a continuous renewal, and an enduring relationship between the divine will and existence. This makes the universe more

akin to a living, transforming entity, not a static machine operating according to self-contained laws: {Every day He is engaged in some affair} Qur'an 55:29.

B. Verses of the Word and Command: Creation through Discourse, Not Just Matter

In the Qur'an, creation is linked to the "Word" and the "Command":

"And the word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and in justice."
(Al-An'am 6:115)

"If the sea were ink for [writing] the words of my Lord, the sea would be exhausted." (Al-Kahf 18:109)

"Our command is but one word, like a glance of the eye." (Al-Qamar 54:50)

This indicates that existence is not merely matter, but a manifestation of meaning, the Word, and the Will. The universe is not simply something that exists, but a divine, expansive statement.

C. Verses of Resurrection and Immortality: A Shift in the Mode of Consciousness

The Hereafter is not merely a return of bodies, but a transformation in the mode of existence:

“And the Trumpet will be blown, and at once they will rush forth from the graves to their Lord.” Ya-Sin: 51

“They will not taste death therein except the first death.” Al-Dukhan 56

Immortality here is not simply an unending time, but a new existential state.

D. The Unity of the Qur'anic System

When these verses are brought together, a coherent system emerges: creation is a continuous act, existence is established by the Word, the universe glorifies and knows, the earth bears witness, the heavens obey, and destiny is transformation, not annihilation. This system cannot be reduced to a fleeting rhetorical metaphor; rather, it presents a complete cosmic vision.

3. Humanity Between Vastness and Meaning

If the universe is so vast, and if its beginning and destiny are constantly being questioned, then humanity's position changes radically. Humanity is no longer the geometric centre of the universe, but it may be the centre of meaning within it, as the being that questions its origin and destiny. Here, science and consciousness converge in a single question: What does it mean to exist in a universe of such vastness and precision? In contrast, the Qur'an answers this question with certainty, affirming in its verses that the reason for the creation of the universe

is to glorify God, demonstrate His power, and worship Him. The heavens and the earth were created with truth and for a specific purpose, with all that is within them made subservient to humankind. Numerous verses in the Holy Qur'an explain the wisdom behind the creation of the universe, which can be summarized in the following objectives:

A. Knowing God, His Power, and His Knowledge

The most important goal is for humankind to realize the greatness of the Creator: {Allah is He Who created seven heavens and of the earth, their like. [His] command descends among them so that you may know that Allah is over all things competent and that Allah has encompassed all things in knowledge.} Qur'an 65:12

B. Worshipping God alone

The universe was made subservient to be a stage for the worship of God: {And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.} Qur'an 51:56

C. Trials and Tests

God created life, death, and the universe to test humankind's actions: {He Who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is best in deed} Al-Mulk: 2

D. Establishing Truth and Justice

God created the universe to be based on truth and just recompense: {And We did not create the heavens and the earth and that between

them in play. We did not create them except in truth, but most of them do not know} Al-Dukhan: 38-39

E. Subjugating the Universe for Human Benefit

The Qur'an states that everything in the universe is subjugated to serve humanity: {Do you not see that God He has subjected to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Surat Luqman: 20

Chapter Conclusion

Modern cosmology, however precise, remains within the bounds of description. It reveals a universe astonishing in its vastness, precise in its laws, mysterious in its beginnings, and open in its ends. It neither denies nor affirms creation in its metaphysical sense but rather presents us with a universe that demands an explanation deeper than mere mathematical description, while the Qur'an opens the horizon of meaning. Between description and meaning, the ontological question arises: Is the universe merely a physical fact, or is it an existential discourse?

If science teaches us how the universe began, the Qur'an asks us: Why does the universe exist? And why is this existence capable of being understood, praised, and witnessed? Hence, the question of cosmic consciousness becomes not a rhetorical one, but a question about the very nature of existence: Is it silent or does it speak with meaning?

This is what we will discuss in Chapter Six: *Against Rhetorical Reduction: A Critique of Reducing Cosmic Consciousness to Metaphor.*

Chapter Four

Verses on Creation Without Mention of Nothingness: Existence as a Renewed Act, Not an Emerging from Emptiness

The concept of creation is one of the most central concepts in the Holy Qur'an. However, the way the Qur'anic text presents the act of creation differs profoundly from later philosophical conceptions, particularly the idea that creation is an emergence from "nothingness" into "existence."

A careful examination of the Qur'anic verses reveals the absence of the term "nothingness" as an explicit ontological concept, in contrast to the frequent use of other terms such as: creation, command, word, bringing into existence, truth, proportioning, predestination, and transformation. This absence is not accidental; rather, it reveals a different conception of existence and creation: a conception that sees creation as a continuous act, an ongoing relationship between God and the universe, not a closed event that occurred in the past and then ended.

Thus, it can be said that the Qur'an does not establish an ontology of nothingness, but rather an ontology of action, transformation, and meaning.

1. Creation by Truth, Not from Nothingness

The Qur'an always links creation to "truth":

“He created the heavens and the earth by truth.” Al-An'am 6:73

“And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them except by truth.” Al-Hijr 15:85

Creation here is not arbitrary, nor random, nor does it originate from nothingness. Rather, it is based on meaning, order, purpose, and regularity. Describing creation by truth shifts our understanding from conceiving of creation as a leap from nothing to something, to conceiving of creation as the realization of meaning in an existential form.

"Truth" is not matter, but rather a principle of order and manifestation. Thus, existence itself becomes a manifestation of truth in multiple forms, not merely a mechanical product of blind forces.

2. “Be, and it is”: Creation by the Word, not by the mere formation of matter. The Qur’an links creation to command and word:

“His command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it, ‘Be,’ and it is.” Ya-Sin 36:82

“Our command is but one word, like a glance of the eye.” Al-Qamar 54:50

“Indeed, the example of Jesus to Allah is like that of Adam. He created him from dust; then He said to him, ‘Be,’ and he was.” Al-Imran 3:59

Thus, existence, from this perspective, is not merely matter moving according to physical laws, but rather a response to a command, the fulfilment of a word, and the embodiment of a will. This elevates creation from a purely physical interaction to an existential discourse.

The universe, in this sense, is not something silent, but rather the result of a continuous response to the divine command. It is a verbal existence as much as it is a physical one.

3. The Folding of the Heavens: Creation is not merely a beginning, but an end and a transformation. The Qur'an speaks not only of the beginning of the universe, but also of its end and transformation:

“The Day We will fold the heaven like the folding of a scroll for writings.” Al-Anbiya: 104

“The Day the earth will be changed to another earth, and the heavens [as well].” Ibrahim: 48

These verses do not describe absolute annihilation, but rather a folding, a transformation, a change in the pattern of existence. Existence does not transition into nothingness, but into another form of existence. This confirms that the logic of the Qur'an is not the logic of annihilation, but the logic of transformation.

4. Creation and Divine Ordaining: Existence According to Measure and Meaning

In the Qur'an, creation is linked to divine ordaining:

“He Who created and proportioned, and He Who ordained and guided” Qur'an 75:8, “Indeed, We have created everything in precise measure” Qur'an 55:49.

Creation is not a chaotic expansion, but rather a measured act, governed by measure, direction, and guidance. This reinforces the

concept of creation as organization, harmony, and a meaningful structure.

5. The Absence of the Concept of Nothingness in Qur'anic Discourse

It is noteworthy, as mentioned earlier, that the Qur'an does not use the concept of "nothingness" as the origin of existence. Instead, it speaks of dust, water, smoke, clay, the soul, the command, and the word.

Then He turned to the heaven when it was smoke, and We made from water every living thing. Creation occurs from one state to another, from one form to another, not from absolute emptiness. This makes creation closer to an existential transformation than a leap from non-existence.

6. Between Creation as a Physical Event and Creation as a Divine Act

Two levels of creation can be distinguished: creation as a physical event, as described by cosmology (the Big Bang, expansion, transformations), and creation as a divine act, as described by the Qur'an (the command, the word, the truth, the decree). These two levels are not contradictory but rather belong to two different realms: the level of scientific description and the level of existential meaning. Physics describes how the universe changes, while the Qur'an explains why the universe has meaning.

Chapter Conclusion

The verses on creation in the Qur'an reveal a different conception of existence: not creation from absolute nothingness, nor a past event that ended, but rather a perpetual act, a continuous transformation, and a manifestation of meaning in a cosmic form.

From this perspective, the universe exists by divine will, is renewed by divine command, is governed by truth, and is ever-changing, not annihilating. Hence, the question of creation becomes not merely a question of beginnings, but a question of the enduring relationship between God and existence.

This understanding paves the way for the next chapter, where we move from the verses on creation to the verses on the universality of consciousness, to ask a deeper question:

If creation is a meaningful act, is existence silent or conscious?

And does the universe itself participate in responding to this divine command?

Chapter Five

The Qur'an's Comprehensive Vision of Consciousness: The Universe as a Realm of Perception and Response

If the previous chapter demonstrated that creation in the Qur'an is not an emergence from nothingness, but rather an embodiment of God's eternal knowledge upon His word command "be", and a meaningful ever-renewing act, this chapter goes a step further to ask: Is this existence, created with truth, silent and neutral? Or is it an existence with its own dimension of perception and response?

The Qur'an presents a cosmic vision that differs radically from the purely mechanical view that sees the world as matter moving according to rigid laws. It portrays the heavens, the earth, and all of creation as being in a constant relationship with God, expressed through actions such as glorification, prostration, obedience, speech, testimony, and awe.

This language is not accidental; rather, it recurs in multiple places within a coherent semantic framework, thus opening the door to a conception of the universality of consciousness as a gradual existential characteristic, not exclusive to humankind.

1. Cosmic Glorification: A Perception, Not a Mechanical Movement

Among the most famous verses on this topic are:

"The seven heavens and the earth and whatever is in them glorify Him. And there is not a thing except that it glorifies Him with praise, but you do not understand their glorification." Al-Isra: 44

“Each [of them] has already known its [way of] prayer and glorification.” Al-Nur: 41

“Do you not see that to Allah glorifies whoever is in the heavens and the earth and the birds with wings outspread? Each [of them] has already known its way of prayer.” Al-Anbiya: 41

And to Allah prostrates whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth of creatures, and the angels. Al-Nahl 16:49

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, and the creatures? Al-Hajj 22:18

And the stars and the trees prostrate Al-Rahman 55:6

Have they not seen what Allah has created of anything? Its shadows incline to the right and to the left, prostrating to God in submission. Al-Nahl 16:48

These verses do not describe mere physical order, nor are we speaking of a moral metaphor, but rather of a cognitive/existential act attributed to all beings: knowledge, prayer, glorification, and prostration.

These are actions that presuppose a kind of awareness and response, not merely mechanical movement. The Qur'an does not say that things merely "point" to God, but that they "glorify," "know," and "pray."

This transforms the universe from a silent object into a participant in a relationship.

Among the verses that most clearly demonstrate the universality of consciousness are:

“And there is nothing that does not glorify Him with praise, but you do not understand their glorification.”

“The seven heavens and the earth and whatever is in them glorify Him.”

“Each [of them] has already known its prayer and glorification.”

“And the stars and the trees prostrate.”

“And to Allah prostrates whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on the earth.” These verses do not attribute mere movement to created beings, but rather knowledge, prayer, glorification, and prostration—actions with a dimension. Cognitive, not mechanical.

2. Prostration and Obedience: A Relationship Beyond Physical Necessity

“And to Allah prostrates whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on the earth, willingly or unwillingly.”

“And the stars and the trees prostrate.”

“And there is no creature on earth nor bird that flies with its wings except that they are communities like you. We have not neglected anything in the Book. Then to their Lord they will be gathered.” Al-An'am 6:38

Prostration here is not merely a forced submission to a natural law, but rather it is described as: Willingly or unwillingly, this description indicates a kind of response, not merely mechanical determinism. The universe is not presented as a machine operating without consciousness, but rather as an entity integrated into a cosmic system of obedience.

3. The Discourse of Heaven and Earth: Speech and Response

One of the most prominent verses of perception and response in the universe is:

“Then He turned to the heaven when it was smoke and said to it and to the earth, ‘Come willingly or unwillingly.’ They said, ‘We have come willingly.’ Qur’an 11:11 This verse attributes to the universe speech, fear, memory, and testimony—concepts associated with consciousness, not inertia. This is manifested in hearing the discourse, understanding the command, and responding consciously: “We have come willingly.” This scene cannot be reduced to a simple rhetorical image without stripping it of its profound existential meaning.

4. Awe, Memory, and Testimony

It is not limited to glorification and prostration, but extends to awe and testimony:

“And indeed, some stones fall down for fear of God.”

“On that Day, it will declare its news.”

“And the earth will say, ‘What is wrong with it?’”

Awe, speaking, news, and testimony are all concepts linked to consciousness, not to inertia. This indicates that existence possesses an existential memory, not merely a physical presence.

5. Degrees of Consciousness: Not Equality, but Gradation

The Qur’an does not say that human consciousness is the same as that of a stone, nor does it equate all beings. Rather, it presents a gradual consciousness: Humans: moral and prescriptive consciousness; animals: perception and response; plants: growth and direction; inanimate objects: order, glorification, and awe. Here, consciousness is not a single linguistic intellect, but rather: presence, response, and a relationship with divine command. This aligns with the idea that consciousness is not a single type, but an existential spectrum.

6. The Universe is Not an Object, but a Partner in Meaning

When the Qur’an says, “We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves,” it connects human consciousness (the self) with the external universe (the horizons). The universe is not merely a stage for humanity, but a participant in revealing meaning.

7. Is This Metaphor or Ontological Description?

Here arises the crucial question: Are these verses a rhetorical metaphor, or a revelation of the nature of existence? The repetition of this pattern of glorification, knowledge, speech, awe, and testimony makes it difficult to reduce it all to a single linguistic embellishment. The Qur'an does not use this language only once but rather constructs a complete worldview with it.

Chapter Conclusion

On Refuting Immanentism

The assertion of consciousness's universality within the Qur'anic framework does not, in any way, imply the indwelling of God within existence, nor does it consider the universe a divine essence or absolute consciousness. The Qur'an makes a strict distinction between the Creator and the created, affirming that God Almighty is "unlike anything else" Qur'an 42:11, and that all existence is sustained by Him, not contained within Him.

Attributing glorification, prostration, knowledge, and responsiveness to the heavens, the earth, and all beings does not indicate a unity of essence, but rather an existential relationship between the divine will and creation. In this relationship, consciousness becomes a mode of obedience to the divine command, according to the nature of each being. This removes this conception from the realm of immanence, which dissolves the distinction between God and the world, and places it within a monotheistic framework that views the universe as a created entity open to meaning, without being meaning itself. In this context, the universality of consciousness is not a unity of existence in the mystical-philosophical sense, nor a divine immanentism/incarnation in nature. Rather, it is the expansion of the realm of perception and response in creation, as an effect of the divine command, not a manifestation of God's essence. The universe does not possess an independent consciousness, but rather a dependent consciousness that is subservient to God. Its very existence is that of a created being, not a divine being.

Thus, this position is defined as a monotheistic ontological vision, not a pantheistic or materialistic one. It preserves divine transcendence on the one hand, and the significance of existence on the other.

When the Holy Qur'an reveals a universe that is not silent, but alive with relation and meaning, an existence that glorifies, prostrates, obeys, bears witness, and responds, this does not mean that the universe thinks like humans. Rather, it means that it possesses a mode of perception that suits its nature. Thus, consciousness transitions from being a purely human privilege to a gradual existential characteristic encompassing the entire world to varying degrees. This understanding paves the way for the next chapter, where we directly confront the methodological question: Is it permissible to reduce all of this to a rhetorical metaphor? Or is this a philosophical reduction of the Qur'anic text?

This is what we will explore in Chapter Six: *Against Rhetorical Reduction: A Critique of Reducing Cosmic Consciousness to Metaphor.*

Chapter Six

Against Rhetorical Reductionism: A Critique of Reducing Cosmic Consciousness to Metaphor

Having presented the verses on creation as meaningful acts, and the verses on the universality of consciousness as a complete cosmic vision, we arrive at the crucial methodological question:

Is it permissible to reduce all this Qur'anic language to mere rhetorical metaphor? Or does this reduction itself carry an unstated philosophical assumption about the nature of existence and consciousness?

It has become common in modern exegesis to claim that the glorification, prostration, fear, speech, and discourse of beings are merely metaphorical representations to bring meaning closer to the human mind, not descriptions of an existing reality in the universe. However, this position, despite its prevalence, requires careful critical examination, not only from the perspective of rhetoric but also from the perspective of ontology.

1. When is metaphor linguistically legitimate?

In Arabic rhetoric, metaphor is only resorted to when there is an impediment preventing the literal interpretation of a word. The default in language is literal meaning, and metaphor is derived from it. Metaphor is used in poetic imagery, but the Qur'an is nothing like poetry, and the Qur'anic verse declares clearly: "And We did not give (Prophet Muhammad), knowledge of poetry, nor is it befitting for him. It is not but a message and a clear Qur'an." Yassin: 69. Therefore, the first question is not whether these verses can be metaphorical, but rather whether there is a rational or linguistic impediment preventing them from having a literal meaning. Does reason preclude non-human beings from possessing some form of perception or response? The answer is: there is no conclusive rational proof to preclude this, but rather a preconceived philosophical notion that confines consciousness to humankind alone. This means that reducing the

verses to metaphor does not stem from language itself, but from a prior ontological conception of the nature of consciousness.

2. Metaphor here is a defensive solution, not a textual necessity. When it is said, "The star prostrates" (meaning it submits to the law of gravity), "The earth speaks" (meaning the effects of human actions are evident upon it), and "Everything glorifies" (meaning it points to the greatness of the Creator), we are not interpreting the text so much as replacing it with an external philosophical interpretation. Metaphor then transforms from a linguistic tool into a cognitive defence mechanism aimed at protecting a materialistic or rational conception of the universe as silent and neutral. Thus, the question is no longer rhetorical, but ontological: Is existence in itself without perception? Or does perception take multiple forms that cannot be reduced to human consciousness?

3. The unity of the Qur'anic structure prevents metaphorical interpretation. If a single verse were to mention the glorification of God by all beings, it could easily be interpreted metaphorically. But we are faced with a recurring and interconnected pattern: "And there is nothing that does not glorify Him with praise" – "Each [of them] has already known its prayer and its glorification" – "They said, 'We have come willingly'" – "On that Day, it will declare its news" – "And indeed, there are stones that fall down for fear of God." This is a complete semantic network that attributes to the universe knowledge and speech, fear and obedience, and testimony. Reducing all of this to a single metaphor dismantles the Qur'anic pattern and transforms the cosmic vision into mere linguistic embellishment devoid of existential content.

4. The Difference Between Metaphor and Conceptual Expansion

Not every departure from the norm is metaphorical. The text may be expanding the concept of consciousness itself. The Qur'an does not say that a mountain understands like a human, but rather that it has a mode of perception suited to its nature. Just as saying that angels have perception does not make them human, saying that the universe has perception does not make it human. Here, the concept of consciousness shifts from a linguistic mental faculty to a relationship, response, and presence before the divine command. This is not metaphor, but a redefinition of consciousness within a broader cosmic horizon.

5. Fear of Anthropomorphism is Not a Justification for Reductionism

It is sometimes said: If we take these verses literally, we fall into anthropomorphism and corporealism. However, this objection confuses affirming perception with affirming the manner of perception. The scripture does not say that a stone feels as a human does, but rather that it has a mode of perception appropriate to its existence. Just as affirming hearing and sight for God does not mean likening Him to created beings, affirming perception for existing things does not mean equating them with humans.

6. The Impact of Rhetorical Reduction on the Concept of the Universe

When these verses are reduced to metaphor, the universe becomes inanimate matter, devoid of existential connection to God, lacking participation in meaning, merely a stage for human actions. In contrast, the Qur'an presents a universe that participates in cosmic worship. Thus, the difference transforms from a linguistic one to a difference in the very vision of the world.

7. Towards an Ontological Reading of the Language of the Qur'an

This book proposes a reading that sees the language of the Qur'an not only as describing phenomena but also as revealing the structure of existence and reshaping humanity's relationship with the world. The Qur'an does not employ rhetoric for mere embellishment but to establish a conception of a living, relational universe, a meaningful existence, and a gradual, evolving consciousness. This opens a door to a new understanding of the verses, not merely as didactic metaphors, but as allusions to a deeper truth in the nature of existence.

Chapter Conclusion

Reducing the universality of cosmic consciousness to a mere rhetorical metaphor does not resolve the issue; rather, it conceals an unstated philosophical conception of the universe as silent and neutral. This chapter does not reject rhetoric or deny metaphor, but rather repositions it in its proper context: a linguistic tool when needed, not a key to obscuring the ontological dimension of the text. When the Qur'an speaks of the glorification, prostration, awe, and testimony of all beings, it presents not merely poetic imagery, but a cosmic vision of a world alive with relationship and meaning.

From this point, it becomes necessary to shift to the historical and philosophical level of the question: How did Islamic tradition engage with this vision? And where did the disagreements surrounding creation, consciousness, and divine speech originate? This is what we will explore in the next chapter: *The Ordeal of the Qur'an's Creation: Between the Eternal and the Temporal*.

Chapter Seven

The Ordeal of the Creation of the Qur'an: Between the Eternal and the Temporal

Chapter Seven

The Ordeal of the Creation of the Qur'an: Between the Eternal and the Temporal

The issue of the “creation of the Qur'an” is not merely a jurisprudential disagreement or a passing political dispute in the history of Islam. Rather, it is the clearest expression of a profound philosophical question that has remained intertwined with religious thought since its inception: How does the eternal manifest itself in the temporal? How can the word of God be absolute, yet appear in human language, at a specific time, and within a particular historical context?

This question transformed into a major ordeal in the third century AH when a single doctrinal opinion was imposed by political force. However, the essence of the problem runs deeper than a power struggle; it is a perpetual tension between the eternal and the temporal, essence and manifestation, the absolute and the relative, God and language.

1. The Origin of the Problem: Is the Word of God Within Time or Outside of It?

The issue stemmed from an intellectual attempt to affirm God's oneness and transcend multiplicity. The Mu'tazilites argued that the Qur'an is a created entity, because asserting its eternity implies the existence of something eternal other than God, which contradicts monotheism. In contrast, the Sunni majority argued that the Qur'an is the uncreated word of God, as it is an attribute of His, and an attribute cannot be separated from the essence, nor can it be described as

created. However, both sides were addressing the same question in two different ways: the Mu'tazilites feared the existence of multiple eternal beings, while the Sunnis feared denying God's attribute of speech. The disagreement was not merely doctrinal, but ontological: Is divine speech an act occurring in time, or an attribute existing in eternity?

2. The Ordeal as a Failure to Manage the Philosophical Question

When this disagreement was transformed into state policy, the philosophical question became a mandatory doctrine, and intellectual diversity became a crime. Herein lies the tragedy of the "Ordeal," not merely as a historical event, but as a failure to distinguish between open inquiry and closed dogma.

This disagreement could have remained an epistemological debate about the nature of the relationship between the eternal and the temporal, but it was transformed into an instrument of oppression. This reveals the danger of turning metaphysical questions into political laws.

3. The Qur'an Between Essence and Manifestation

This book proposes moving beyond the rigid dichotomy of created/uncreated towards a synthetic reading based on two levels:

-The Qur'an in God's knowledge, eternal in its divine eternity, unbound by time, language, or history.

-The Qur'an in history, manifested in the Arabic language, revealed within a social context, addressing humanity in time and space.

Thus, the Qur'an is eternal in essence and temporal in its manifestation. This does not imply a duality of truth, but rather a difference in the level of existence. Just as light is singular in its source but manifold in its reflections, so too is the divine word singular in its essence but manifold in its manifestations.

4. Human Language as a Mediator, Not a Final Limit

The problem did not lie in the Qur'an itself, but in the language that conveyed it. Language is temporal, human, contextual, and limited. However, in the Qur'an, it becomes a mediator between the eternal and the temporal. This makes the Qur'an a unique case: divine speech in human language, absolute in its relative form, eternal in meaning, and temporal in its expression. Hence, the question of the Qur'an's creation becomes part of a broader question: how does the absolute manifest itself in history without losing its absoluteness?

5. The Impact of the Ordeal on Understanding Consciousness and Existence

The question of the Qur'an's creation was not separate from the conception of consciousness and existence. Those who view the Qur'an as a purely contingent event might be inclined to conceive of a purely material universe with laws separate from meaning. Those who see the Qur'an as eternal and indistinguishable might be inclined to isolate the text from history, freezing it in a timeless form. The synthetic view, however, sees the universe as constantly renewed through creation, consciousness as gradual, and the Qur'an as part of this manifested existential order. The Qur'an is not a stone that descended from heaven, but rather an existential event in history.

6. The Ordeal as a Model of the Conflict Between the Eternal and the Temporal

The ordeal of the Qur'an's creation can be read as the clearest example of the conflict between those who wish to preserve the absolute from change and those who wish to understand its manifestation in time. This conflict persists today in matters of textual interpretation, the relationship between religion and science, the constant and the changing, and the unseen and history. The ordeal has not ended; rather, its forms have changed.

7. From Creed to Philosophy: Reopening the Question

This chapter does not call for reviving the old dispute, but rather for reopening it as a legitimate philosophical question: How can divine speech be eternal in its meaning and historical in its manifestation? This aligns with the book's view of creation as a renewed act, consciousness as a gradual existential characteristic, and Qur'anic language as an ontological revelation, not merely rhetoric. The Qur'an is not a text outside the world, but rather part of the movement of meaning within the world.

The Qur'an Between Essence and Manifestation: In the ordeal, the two views are two sides of the same coin, fundamentally identical yet perceptually different. The disagreement over the "creation of the Qur'an" can be seen as a disagreement at the level of perception, not in the reality of existence. The two opposing views—that the Qur'an is created and that it is eternal—are not contradictory in essence, but rather descriptions of two different levels of the same truth. The Qur'an, insofar as it exists in God's knowledge from eternity, is encompassed by divine eternity and is not subject to time and space, for it is the word of God and an attribute of His. However, insofar as

it is a revelation sent down in human language, within a specific historical context, and with words, letters, and temporal events, it is contingent in its manifestation, bound by space and time and the conditions of history. These two levels do not represent two opposing truths, but rather two facets of a single truth: eternal in essence and historical in its manifestation. The disagreement was not so much about the nature of the Qur'an as it was about the perspective from which it is viewed: whether from the perspective of divine eternity or from the perspective of its appearance in the world. Thus, the dispute becomes a classic example of the tension between the absolute and the temporal, not a contradiction between faith and reason.

Time Between Change, Consciousness, and Eternity

In this view, time is not an independent, self-contained entity prior to existence, but rather the product of the perception of change in existing things. What we call "time" is nothing more than consciousness's method of arranging transformations: the transition of a thing from one state to another, from one position to another, from one form to another. The previous position retained by memory is what we call the past, and the subsequent position we anticipate is what we call the future. The present is merely a moment of awareness of continuous change. In this sense, time is not an independent ontological essence, but a cognitive language for understanding movement and occurrence.

From this perspective, creation does not occur in a time prior to it; rather, time itself is generated with the act of creation and renewal. Divine eternity is not understood as an endless temporal extension, but as a level of existence beyond the categories of "before" and "after." What appears to us as a temporal succession is merely a limited manifestation of a will that is not bound by time. Thus, the question is no longer: When did creation begin? But rather: How does existence

manifest itself in consciousness? Time is no longer a framework containing divine action, but rather a manifestation of its appearance in the world.

Thus, time becomes an aspect of the relationship between consciousness and creation, not an absolute, self-contained reality. The universe, in itself, is neither "ancient" nor "temporary" in the simple temporal sense, but rather a constantly renewing act perceived within the horizon of human consciousness as a series of moments. In God's knowledge, however, the beginning and the end, the past and the future, are present in a single, unchanging presence, not subject to succession or waiting. Here, the concept of renewed creation converges with the concept of eternity, in a vision that sees time not as a constraint on existence, but as one of its manifestations in human perception.

But does negating time as an independent entity render beings eternal like God, changing in position and not created? The precise answer is: not necessarily, if we distinguish between eternity and existential dependence.

It might be thought that saying time is not an independent entity, but rather a product of consciousness's perception of the movement and change of things, necessarily leads to considering beings eternal like God, or to denying them the attribute of creation. However, this conclusion is neither logically nor ontologically necessary. The fundamental difference between God and the world does not lie in whether or not they are subject to time, but in the very nature of existence: God is a necessary being, existing independently, while beings are contingent beings, existing through something other than them. Even if time is understood as a perceptual image of change, things do not become eternal in themselves, because they remain, in

every instance, dependent on the divine act that brings them into existence. Their presence in God's knowledge is eternal, but their existence in the world is a gradual manifestation perceived through movement and transformation. Thus, the concept of creation is not negated, but rather liberated from being an event that occurred at a first moment in time, to be understood as a permanent existential relationship between the Creator and the created. Eternity is an attribute of the Divine Essence alone. Existing things are not eternal in their essence but rather renewed in their manifestation and created in their dependence, even if their change appears to us as a temporal succession shaped by memory and consciousness.

First: Eternity is not merely the absence of time. Divine eternity is not simply the absence of subjection to temporal succession, but rather self-sufficiency in existence and the lack of need for a cause or act to bring it into being. As for things (creatures), even if we do not understand their existence within linear time, they remain contingent, dependent on something else, and constantly dependent on divine action. The fundamental difference is not in time itself, but in whether existence is self-subsistent or dependent on something else.

God = Necessary Being

The world = Contingent Being

Even if you remove the concept of time, this difference remains.

Second: The assertion that time is a product of consciousness does not make things eternal. When we say that time is a product of our perception of the movement and change of things, we are not saying that things were not created. Rather, we are saying that "coming into being" is not an event within a cosmic clock, but a renewed existential

relationship. That is, a thing does not become eternal because it moves without time but remains in need of something that sustains it in existence. This is very close to the idea of continuous creation (*creatio continua*) and the verse, "Every day He is engaged in some affair". Qur'an 55:29. A thing is neither ancient nor independent, but its existence is renewed in every moment of perception.

Third: The difference between eternity and manifestation. From the perspective of this book, God is eternal in and of Himself, beyond the categories of before/after. Things, however, appear in consciousness as change, but they are not eternal in and of themselves. Rather, they are eternal in relation, so to speak; that is, they are present in God's knowledge from eternity, but they do not exist independently. This is very important: the presence of a thing in God's knowledge from eternity—the eternity of a thing in its intrinsic existence. As we said about the Qur'an: eternal in essence, temporal in manifestation, so too is existence eternally known, manifested perceptibly.

Fourth: Do things become merely "changes of position" rather than creation? No, because a change of position presupposes an existence that is transferred, and this itself requires explanation. Even if we say there is no time, only changes of states, the question remains: where did these states come from in the first place? And why do they exist instead of not existing? Here, the concept of creation remains, but not as an event at a zero point in time, rather as a continuous existential act. Creation is not "before and after," but rather "perpetual dependence."

Fifth: This view does not lead to a material unity of existence. It may superficially appear to lead to things being eternal like God, but the difference becomes clear in that eternity equals a divine level of perception, while time equals a human level of perception. Existence

is not a single, undifferentiated entity, but rather closer to “existence being dependent on God,” not “existence being God.”

Chapter Conclusion

From the Creation of the Qur’an to the Question of Existence

The question of the “creation of the Qur’an” is not revisited in this book as a historical doctrinal dispute, but rather as a philosophical model for a deeper question: How does the absolute manifest itself in the relative, and how does the eternal appear in the temporal without losing its transcendence? The issue is not so much whether the Qur’an is created or uncreated, but rather the level at which it is viewed: Is it to be understood from the perspective of its eternal source or from the perspective of its emergence in history? This is not an intellectual error, but rather a sign of the difficulty of the question itself.

Divine speech cannot be reduced to a mere temporal event, nor frozen in an eternity isolated from history. Rather, it is eternal in its source, temporal in its manifestation, revealing an enduring relationship between God and existence.

From this point, the inquiry shifts from speech to existence, from text to the world, because the same question recurs in the universe as it did in revelation: Is existence merely a temporal event, or is it a perpetual act inherent in God? Is the world inert matter, or a manifestation of meaning? Thus, the Ordeal of the Creation of the Qur’an becomes a philosophical entry point for understanding the perpetual tension between essence and manifestation, between the constant and the changing, and between God and the world—not as a contradiction, but as an existential relationship open to interpretation.

Chapter Eight

The Unity of Existence and the Distinction Between Creator and Creation

After examining the ordeal of the Creation of the Qur'an as an expression of the tension between the eternal and the temporal, we arrive at a deeper ontological problem: Is existence truly one or multiple? Is the world God, or does it exist through God, or is it entirely separate from Him?

This question reached its zenith in the debate surrounding the concept of "the unity of existence," which has been one of the most sensitive issues in the history of Islamic thought, as it directly touches upon the relationship between Creator and creation, the absolute and the relative, the eternal and the temporal, and consciousness and the universe.

This chapter does not seek to favour one theological doctrine over another, but rather to analyse the structure of the question itself and reveal the possibility of a synthetic reading that transcends the dichotomy of both fusion and separation.

1. The Meaning of the Unity of Existence: Unity of Reality or Unity of Appearance?

When some Sufis said that "existence is one," they did not necessarily mean that God is identical to the world, but rather that true existence is one, and that multiplicity is a manifestation and expression of this

oneness. Unity here is not numerical unity, but a unity of source. Multiplicity is not an illusion, but rather a series of manifestations.

However, this symbolic language, when read literally, is understood as negating the distinction between Creator and creation, which provoked strong objections from theologians and jurists. This led to the question: Do we affirm the unity of existence? Or the unity of the Creator and the multiplicity of creation?

2. Ibn Arabi: Existence as Manifestation, Not Identity

Ibn Arabi believes that true existence is one, and that the world is not God, but rather a manifestation of His names and attributes. For him, creation is not an emergence from nothingness, but a continuous manifestation of divine truth in multiple forms. He emphasizes in many places the distinction between the unseen divine essence and its manifestations in the world. For him, the universe is a mirror of the divine names, not an independent entity, nor another god. However, his symbolic language ("Truth is existence") opened the door to sharp interpretations, some of which led to immanentism or union, while others understood it with a precise philosophical understanding.

3. Ibn Taymiyyah: Protecting the Distinction Between Creator and Creation

Ibn Taymiyyah's response to the concept of the unity of existence was sharp, as he saw it as a direct threat to monotheism. He insisted that God exists in Himself, and that the world exists through His creation, and that there is an essential difference between them that cannot be negated by any symbolic language. He believed that asserting the unity of existence leads to the denial of servitude, the blurring of the distinction between truth and falsehood, and the introduction of

philosophy into creed. However, Ibn Taymiyyah's objection was not to the spiritual dimension, but rather to the transformation of the Sufi experience into a general ontological theory.

4. The Essence of the Dispute: Existence or Relationship?

If we examine the dispute deeply, we find that it is not only about God, but about the meaning of existence itself. Is existence a single entity with varying degrees? Or are there two separate existences: Creator and creation? Is the relationship between them one of manifestation? Or merely one of creation? Or one of constant presence? The disagreement is not linguistic, but conceptual. Do we see the universe as existing by God? Or as completely independent of Him?

5. Between Pantheism and Immanentism: The Necessary Distinction

It is important to distinguish between philosophical pantheism and the doctrine of immanentism or union. Immanentism posits that God dwells within things, while union asserts that God and the universe are one. Many Sufis, however, maintain that existence is sustained by God, and that multiplicity is a manifestation, not an independent identity separate from the source. This is closer to the concept of "all in God" (pantheism) than to Spinozan pantheism, which equates nature with God (monism).

6. The Impact of This Disagreement on the Concept of Consciousness

This disagreement did not remain merely theoretical; it influenced the understanding of consciousness itself. If existence is one, then consciousness extends throughout the universe in varying degrees. If existence is entirely separate, then consciousness is confined to humanity. This separation directly relates to the question of the

universality of consciousness: Is the universe materially silent, or does it participate in presence and meaning?

7. The Third Path: Existence is Subsistent in God, Not God

This book proposes a third path between two opposing positions: neither a unity of existence that dissolves distinction, nor a transcendence that isolates God from the world. Rather, it presents a vision that sees God as transcendent to the world, the world as subsisting in God, existence as manifested through divine command, and consciousness as degrees of response to this command.

The universe is not God, but it is not outside of God; rather, it is in constant relation to Him. This aligns with the verse: “God is the Light of the heavens and the earth,” without implying that the heavens and the earth are God.

Conclusion of the Chapter

This chapter focused on analysing the disagreement surrounding the concept of “unity of existence” as an expression of a profound ontological question concerning the relationship between the Creator and the world, not merely a doctrinal or linguistic difference. It demonstrated that the conflict between the language of mystical manifestation and the language of theological transcendence reflects a tension between understanding existence as unity in its source and multiplicity in its forms, and the fear of erasing the distinction between Creator and creation. We saw that Ibn Arabi's position expresses a vision of existence as a manifestation of the divine names, not a divine identity of the world, while Ibn 'Ayamiyyah's position represents a rigid defence of the ontological distinction between God and the universe. The chapter revealed that the essence of the disagreement lies not in God Himself, but in the meaning of existence and the relationship between the absolute and the relative. The book proposed a third path, which sees existence as dependent on God, not as God, and multiplicity as manifestations of divine emanation without immanentism or union. This conception thus establishes a synthetic monotheistic vision that combines divine transcendence with the significance of the world, linking the issue of the unity of existence to the question of the totality of consciousness and meaning in the universe.

From here, we move from Islamic heritage to modern philosophy and ask: How does modern thought understand consciousness? Has this question resurfaced in a new form within theories of the totality of consciousness? This is what we will explore in Chapter Nine: Consciousness in Modern Philosophy: From Matter to Subjective Experience.

Chapter Nine

Consciousness in Modern Philosophy: From Matter to Subjective Experience

After reviewing the Qur'anic and traditional conceptions of creation and the universality of consciousness, we turn in this chapter to modern philosophical thought, where the age-old question has resurfaced in a new form: What is consciousness? Is it a product of matter? A universal property? Or a subjective experience that cannot be reduced to physics?

Modern philosophy has witnessed a profound shift in its approach to consciousness, moving from being a theological or metaphysical issue to a scientific and philosophical problem simultaneously, linked to the brain, society, language, experience, and existence.

1. Consciousness as a Material Phenomenon: Neuroreductionism

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a prevailing trend held that consciousness was merely a function of the brain, and that it could be fully explained through neurological and chemical processes. According to this view: thought = neural activity, sensation = electrical reactions, and meaning = the product of biological evolution.

This trend, known as reductionist materialism, attempted to remove any metaphysical or existential dimension from the concept of consciousness, reducing it to the laws of nature alone. However, this position faced a profound dilemma: how can a physical movement

produce a subjective experience (qualia)? How can the sensation of pain, love, or colour arise from mathematical equations?

This is where the philosopher David Chalmers termed the "Hard Problem of Consciousness."

2. What Modern Brain and Consciousness Studies Reveal? The human brain is considered the most complex structure in the universe and the biological organ that surpasses the brains of other living beings. It is significantly larger relative to body weight than the brains of other living beings, including primates. The brain weighs approximately 1.5 kilograms and contains an average of about 86 billion nerve cells (neurons). These cells intertwine to form a complex network of more than 100 trillion synaptic connections, which are responsible for memory, thought, language, and emotions—the foundations of advanced abilities such as perception and consciousness.

It is well established that changes in brain function lead to changes in consciousness. For example, drugs that affect the brain alter subjective experiences, and stimulating specific brain regions can produce bodily sensations, visions, or certain emotional responses. Yet the fundamental cause of consciousness remains unclear.

The brain has a decentralized and distributed structure, where information is processed through interconnected networks rather than a central control part. Different regions are responsible for distinct functions—such as sight, hearing, speech, and movement—and yet these regions interact without a single control centre.

Despite this, human consciousness appears unified. It is typically described in three ways: as the contents of consciousness at any given moment, as a continuous flow through time, and as experiences

perceived by the self. Most brain activity occurs outside of consciousness, with only a small fraction ever entering the realm of awareness.

The distinction between conscious and unconscious processes raises important questions. Is there a specific region or type of neuron responsible for consciousness? Are there unique neural connections that produce conscious experience? Although many theories exist, none have provided definitive answers. Research into neurological phenomena, such as sensory interference and pain perception, has provided insights into the neural connections of consciousness. For example, pain is a subjective experience and a measurable neurological event, but correlation does not imply causation. The relationship between neural activity and conscious experience remains a subject of ongoing research.

Studies using obscure visual stimuli, such as the Necker Cube, have helped identify brain regions involved in conscious perception. However, while some regions show changes in activity that correspond to shifts in consciousness, the precise mechanisms underlying conscious experience are still not fully understood.

Neurological disorders, such as hemiparesis and amnesia, exemplify the complex relationship between brain function and consciousness. These conditions demonstrate the potential for consciousness to be fragmented or altered, challenging traditional notions of a unified self.

3. The Gap Between Objective and Subjective

Neuroscience and brain studies have not been able to pinpoint the origin of "consciousness and self," but they have not been entirely unsuccessful. They have produced a deep and detailed understanding

of brain structure and function. However, the "source" of consciousness and the "self" itself remained unknown because it relied on the assumption that subjective experience (how one is) could be explained by objective, third-person observations (neurons, chemical signals, data processing).

The following are some of the reasons why the gap between the "easy problems" and the "hard problem of consciousness" remains unbridged:

A. The "easy problems" involve identifying the mechanisms in the brain that correspond to behaviours (such as the connection between brain regions and vision, behaviour, or memory).

The "hard problem": It questions why these physical processes accompany any subjective experience at all.

The gap: There is no known logical link that explains how objective brain activity (neuron firing) translates into subjective sensation (the feeling of colour, pain, or joy).

B. The subjectivity-objectivity dilemma: Neuroscience relies on third-person scientific methods (scanning, imaging, and electrophysiology).

-Subjectivity: Consciousness is inherently subjective and can only be accessed from within by the person experiencing it.

-Obscure minds: Our minds are opaque to us; we are aware of the results of our thoughts (self or feeling), but we are unaware of the mechanism that produces them.

-The paradox: Scientists cannot observe a first-person perspective; they only observe a "report" of it.

C. The paradox of the brain studying itself: A fundamental limitation is that the brain attempts to study itself.

Self-referencing: Since the observer is the same as the observed, there is a "self-referential loop." Scale limitations: Just as a scale cannot measure its own length, the brain may be limited in its ability to fully comprehend its own subjective experience.

D. Correlation does not imply causation: Much of modern neuroscience focuses on the neural correlations of consciousness (NCCs)—the “minimal neural mechanisms that, taken together, are both necessary and sufficient for any conscious experience.”

Correlation limitations: Showing that a particular part of the brain is activated when you are “happy” does not explain why that activation is happiness, or whether it is the cause of that feeling.

Identity theory problems: The belief that “you are your brain” is insufficient, as neural activity cannot fully explain intentionality—the fact that our conscious mind “cares” about things outside itself.

E. The self as an “illusion” (the exclusionary view): Some researchers (such as Daniel Dennett, Patricia Churchland, and Keith Frankish) argue that neuroscience has not yet discovered the self because the “self” is merely a mental model, or a user-friendly interface created by the brain—an illusion.

The interface is easy to use: “Self” is simply a means of distinguishing oneself from others and of organizing information; it is not a solid, intrinsic physical entity.

False conclusion: Because we cannot directly access neural processes (the firing of nerve impulses by neurons), we mistakenly conclude that there is an underlying “entity” (the self) that must be in control.

F. “Seeing from nowhere”: Science seeks a “seeing from nowhere” (objectivity), which does not accommodate a “point of view” (subjectivity). The impersonal materialist view: Physical sciences often assume that the brain is a personless machine, making it impossible to identify the origin of “ownership” or “point of view” in physical matter.

G. Alternative interpretations and future directions: Given these challenges, some researchers suggest that instead of reducing consciousness to matter, it may be a fundamental feature of the universe (psychological pantheism), or that neuroscience needs to move beyond classical models and study the electromagnetic fields generated by brain tissue. In short, despite significant progress in mapping the neural basis of consciousness, many fundamental questions remain. The decentralized nature of the brain and the subjective character of conscious experience continue to pose challenges to scientific understanding.

4. Consciousness as Subjective Experience: The Limits of Science

We have explored some of the debate surrounding the concept of self in philosophy, science, and religion. While many feel they possess an inner self or soul, scientific perspectives argue that brain processes are sufficient to explain experience, without the need for a separate “self.”

In addition to what we have already discussed, some philosophical views should be mentioned. Philosophers like Derek Parfit distinguished between “ego theory,” which asserts that we are interconnected selves, and “bundle theory,” which suggests that we are merely a collection of experiences linked by memory. David Hume championed bundle theory, arguing that the self is not an independent entity but rather a bundle of sensations.

Major religions often endorse the concept of the self, positing the existence of permanent spirits or selves. Buddhism, however, rejects this, teaching that the self is an illusion and that suffering stems from clinging to this illusion. Modern neuroscience also explores these ideas, particularly through conditions like hemispheric dissociation, where the brain appears to support multiple streams of consciousness.

Experiments with hypnosis and dissociative identity disorder demonstrate that a single brain can accommodate multiple conscious experiences, challenging the notion of a unified, singular self. Numerous theories attempt to explain the self, ranging from William James's distinction between "ego" and "self" to neurological models that view the self as a process or narrative rather than a fixed entity.

With the development of analytic philosophy, the idea emerged that consciousness cannot be reduced to an external description because it is based on internal experience, sensation, and personal meaning. The brain can be measured, but experience cannot. This opened the door to the idea that consciousness is not merely a physical function, but an existential dimension that cannot be grasped by empirical science alone. Here, an old question resurfaced in a new form: Is consciousness a phenomenon in the world? Or a window into the meaning of the world?

In short, the self may not be a permanent, unchanging entity, but rather a constructive entity or a series of experiences. Accepting this may be difficult, as it challenges long-held assumptions about identity and continuity.

5. Panpsychism: The Return of the Universal Question

In contemporary philosophy, the idea that consciousness is not exclusive to humans, but rather a fundamental characteristic of existence itself, has resurfaced. Some philosophers (such as Galen Strawson) argue that if matter produces consciousness, then matter itself must possess a primary cognitive dimension. Thus, theories have emerged that posit every being possesses a degree of awareness, that consciousness is a spectrum rather than a leap, and that the human mind is not an isolated miracle, but the culmination of a universal process. This aligns—structurally—with the Qur’anic view of the universality of consciousness, without being identical in source or purpose.

6. Social Consciousness: Marx and Mannheim

The question has shifted from the individual to society. Marx argued that consciousness is formed within the economic and social structure. Mannheim maintained that ideas are not independent but rather linked to social and historical context. Here, consciousness is not merely subjective or universal, but historical and social. This reveals that consciousness is not a fixed essence, but a relationship between humanity, the world, and time.

7. The Unconscious: Freud and the Split Self

Freud came to overturn the image of the conscious self, revealing that humans are not fully aware of themselves, and that beneath consciousness lie layers of repressed desires, drives, and memories. Consciousness is no longer its own master, but rather part of a broader psychological structure. This brings us back to the idea that consciousness is not a simple unit but rather comprises degrees and levels.

8. Consciousness and Meaning: From Physics to Philosophy

Modern philosophy shows that physics explains how the universe works but does not explain why it has meaning. Consciousness is the point where the universe meets meaning, matter meets experience, and existence meets inquiry. This returns the question to its ontological root: Is the universe meaningless until humanity appears? Or is meaning part of the very structure of existence?

9. A Comparison with the Qur'anic Perspective

If we compare these approaches with the Qur'anic perspective, we observe that modern philosophy asks: How does consciousness arise from matter? The Qur'an asks: How does all of existence participate in glorification, obedience, and meaning?

Philosophy seeks the cause, while the Qur'an reveals the relationship. Both confront the limitations of language and reason in understanding this phenomenon. Some verses indicate that human consciousness itself is a divine gift: "And I breathed into him of My spirit" - "And He taught Adam all the names."

Conclusion of the chapter

Modern philosophical thought reveals that consciousness is no longer merely a psychological matter, but a question about the very nature of existence. Answers have varied: material reductionism, subjective experience, cosmic universality, social consciousness, and psychological unconsciousness.

However, they all acknowledge the inadequacy of simple explanations. This brings us back to the perspective proposed by this book: that consciousness is not an accidental occurrence in a silent universe, but rather a degree of the relationship between existence and meaning.

Why has material reductionism failed to explain consciousness?

Material reductionism has failed to explain consciousness not because of a lack of scientific data, but because of the limitations of the philosophical framework from which it operates. It succeeds in describing the neural connections of conscious experience, but it fails to explain why these physical processes are accompanied by subjective experience in the first place—that is, why there is sensation, meaning, and feeling within. The transition from describing objective neural activity to explaining subjective experience presupposes a conceptual bridge that neither physics nor chemistry can provide, because their instruments operate from a third-person perspective, while consciousness is experienced from a first-person perspective. Thus, the failure of material reduction reveals that consciousness is not merely a physical function, but an ontological phenomenon that transcends the limits of mechanistic explanation, and it re-examines the question of meaning as an integral part of the structure of existence, not an incidental attribute.

Chapter Ten

Consciousness in Islamic Tradition: The Mind, the Heart, and Cosmic Glorification

After reviewing the paths of consciousness in modern philosophy, we return in this chapter to Islamic tradition to discover that the question of consciousness was not absent from it, but rather present in multiple forms: intellectual, theological, philosophical, and spiritual.

Why does Islamic tradition combine the mind, the heart, and the universe in the concept of consciousness?

Islamic thought did not treat consciousness as merely a brain function, but as a relationship between humanity and God, a tool for understanding the world, a bridge between knowledge and ethics, and participation in a cosmic order that extends beyond humanity alone. The mind is the instrument of perception and discernment, the heart the locus of witnessing and meaning, and the universe the realm of signs and response; none of these is complete without the others. In this sense, consciousness is not reduced to logical thinking, nor to inner experience alone, but is understood as a network of ethical, spiritual, and cosmological awareness. This synthesis reflects a monotheistic view that sees knowledge not as a separation from existence, but as participation in it, and that humankind can only become self-aware within a cosmic order established by God and open to meaning.

Three major approaches emerged within this tradition: intellectual awareness (theology and philosophy), spiritual awareness (mysticism), and cosmic awareness (the glorification of all that exists).

1. Reason as the Basis of Religious Obligation: The Mu'tazilites and Moral Consciousness

The Mu'tazilites established reason as the foundation for understanding religion and religious obligation, believing that humans perceive good and evil through reason before the revelation of scripture. Here, consciousness is the capacity for discernment, moral responsibility, and relative independence in understanding. They maintained that God only obligates those who possess reason, because obligation without awareness is injustice, and God is free from injustice. This made consciousness, for them, moral consciousness before it is cognitive, and linked to divine justice, not merely to biological capacity.

2. The Ash'arites: Reason is Limited, and Consciousness is Linked to Revelation

In contrast, the Ash'arites believed that reason is important, but insufficient on its own to discern good and evil, and that true consciousness is shaped by revelation. Here, consciousness is not the source of values, but rather a recipient of them, open to the unseen.

This does not mean negating reason but rather placing it within a broader framework of knowledge, where reason perceives, revelation guides, and the heart bears witness. Thus, consciousness appears in the form of cognitive consciousness, legal consciousness, and spiritual consciousness.

3. Muslim Philosophers: Consciousness, the Soul, and the Active Intellect

Muslim philosophers (such as al-Farabi and Ibn Sina) linked consciousness to the concepts of the rational soul and the active intellect. For them, consciousness is the capacity to perceive universals, a transition from the senses to the intellect, and a connection with the universal intellect. The conscious person is one who ascends from sensory perception to intellectual perception to connection with the universal meaning. Here, consciousness becomes a rank on the ladder of existence, not merely a psychological state.

4. Sufism: The Heart as the Centre of Consciousness

In Sufism, the centre of consciousness shifts from the mind to the heart. The heart is not merely a biological organ, but the seat of spiritual perception, the locus of knowledge of God, and the centre of witnessing.

Numerous Qur'anic verses affirm that the heart is the centre of consciousness, understanding, contemplation, and thought, and not simply a vessel for blood. The Qur'an describes it as possessing "intellect" and "understanding."

Among the most prominent verses that illustrate this is:

The Heart as the Centre of Intellect: {Have they not traveled through the land so that they may have hearts by which to understand or ears by which to hear? For indeed, it is not the eyes that are blinded, but it is the hearts in the breasts that are blinded.} Al-Hajj: 46 The heart is the centre of understanding, comprehension, and awareness: {And We have certainly created for Hell many of the jinn and mankind. They have hearts with which they do not understand.} Al-A'raf: 179.

The heart is the centre of reflection: {Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an, or are there locks upon [their] hearts?} Muhammad: 24.

The heart is the centre of sealing and stamping in ignorance: {Thus does Allah seal the hearts of those who do not know.} Al-Rum: 59. The heart is the center of tranquility and faith: {Those who believe and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah. Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest.} Al-Ra'd 13:28

The heart is also the center of heedlessness: {And do not obey one whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance.} Al-Kahf 18:28)

These verses indicate that the heart is the source of guidance, thought, and the making of faith-based and moral decisions.

Qur'anic verses mention the heart as the centre of consciousness: {They have hearts with which they do not understand.} Al-Kahf 18:28 clearly indicates that understanding here is not merely logical reasoning, but rather direct existential awareness. Sufi consciousness is based on: remembrance, contemplation, experience, and witnessing. This opens up a conception of consciousness that transcends thought and reaches the level of presence.

5. The Glorification of Existence: A State or Perception?

Exegetes and theologians have differed in their understanding of the glorification of existence. Some have said it is a glorification of state and indication, not of perception. Others have said it is a true glorification, the nature of which we cannot comprehend. This difference reflects two conceptions of the universe: a silent universe that points to God through its existence alone, and a conscious

universe that participates in worship in its own way. Here, it becomes clear that the question of cosmic consciousness was addressed within the Islamic tradition, not something foreign to it.

6. Consciousness and Existential Levels

In Islamic tradition, existence is conceived as having levels: for humans, moral and ethical consciousness; for animals, perception and sensation; for plants, growth and direction; and for inanimate objects, order and glorification, as mentioned in previous chapters.

7. Consciousness and Knowledge of God

In Islamic tradition, consciousness was not an end in itself, but a path to knowing God, understanding the world, and achieving servitude to Him. Consciousness is not cognitive neutrality, but an existential stance, a responsibility, and a relationship. Therefore, it has always been linked to piety, reverence, and insight, not merely to information.

Conclusion

Islamic tradition reveals that consciousness has never been understood solely as a mental function, but rather as a mind that perceives, a heart that witnesses, and a universe that glorifies God. It is simultaneously ethical, spiritual, and cosmological consciousness. Its schools of thought varied, ranging from the rationalism of the Mu'tazilites and the transcendentalism of the Ash'arites to the philosophy of the philosophers and the mystical experience of the Sufis. Yet they all share a view of consciousness as a relationship between humanity, existence, and God.

From this point, we move to the next chapter, where a summary of the main ideas are listed.

Chapter Eleven

Summary of Previous Chapters: Towards a Synthetic Vision: Creation, Consciousness, and Eternity

Chapter Eleven

Summary of Previous Chapters: Towards a Synthetic Vision: Creation, Consciousness, and Eternity

Having traced the paths of creation in the Qur'an, the universality of consciousness in its texts, and having examined some theological and philosophical disagreements concerning divine speech and the unity of existence, and then compared this with modern philosophy and its theories of consciousness, we arrive in this chapter at a synthetic attempt that does not aim to resolve all the problems, but rather to reformulate them within a broader horizon.

The question is no longer whether creation originates from nothingness or from matter? Is consciousness specific to humanity or encompassing the universe? Is the Qur'an created or eternal? Instead, the deeper question has become: What is the nature of the relationship between God, existence, and meaning? Is the universe a silent event, or a constantly renewing act charged with meaning and consciousness?

1. Creation as a Continuous Act, Not a Finished Moment

The Qur'anic reading reveals that creation is not a closed, past event, but rather a continuous act, a perpetual renewal, and an ongoing relationship between the divine will and the universe: {Every day He is engaged in some affair}. Existence is not something accomplished and then abandoned, but rather an ongoing process of renewal. This liberates the concept of creation from a mechanistic view and a simplistic, linear understanding of time, bringing it closer to the constant presence of meaning within existence.

2. Consciousness as a Relationship, Not an Isolated Property

Consciousness is not presented in this book merely as a brain function, nor as an essence independent of the world, but rather as a relationship between existence and divine command, a response to meaning, and a presence before the Truth. Humanity represents the highest stage of this consciousness, but it is not its beginning. The entire universe glorifies, prostrates, bears witness, and obeys, each in its own way. This opens up a conception of consciousness as a gradual existential spectrum, not an isolated biological leap.

3. The Eternal and the Temporal: Neither Discontinuity nor Dissolution

The ordeal of the creation of the Qur'an and the debates surrounding the unity of existence have demonstrated that Islamic thought has always grappled with a single question in various forms: How does the eternal manifest itself within the temporal? The synthetic perspective does not claim that the eternal is separate from history, nor that history is the eternal itself. Rather, it asserts that the eternal manifests itself in the temporal without being reduced to it, and the temporal points to the eternal without containing it. Thus, the Qur'an is eternal in its source, temporal in its language, and universal in its meaning. Similarly, creation is eternal in its will, historical in its manifestation, and perpetual in its relationship.

4. The Universe as a Realm of Meaning, Not Inert Matter

When creation and consciousness are understood in this way, the conception of the universe transforms from a silent machine to a realm of meaning. Stars are not merely celestial bodies, but signs. The earth is not simply matter, but a witness. Time is not merely succession, but

a sphere of manifestation. This does not contradict science but complements it: science explains how the universe functions, while the existential perspective explains why it has significance.

5. Humanity: The Meeting Point of Cosmic and Moral Consciousness

In this perspective, humanity occupies the centre of the universe not by force, but by responsibility. Human beings are conscious of their own consciousness, are questioned about their responses, and are held accountable for their relationship to meaning. This is why consciousness in the Qur'an is always linked to ethics, justice, witnessing, and trustworthiness. Consciousness is not merely knowledge, but an existential commitment.

6. What does this perspective add?

This synthetic perspective does not claim to establish a new science, nor to refute physics, nor to produce an alternative doctrine. Rather, it proposes a philosophical and spiritual framework for understanding creation as a meaningful act, consciousness as a cosmic relationship, the Qur'an as an ontological discourse, and humanity as a witness, not a possessor. It is a perspective that avoids material reductionism and dissolution, and preserves distinction within relation, and transcendence within presence.

Herein lies the philosophical aim of this book: not to offer definitive answers, but to reopen the question of existence and consciousness within a unifying horizon that transcends the dualism between science and religion, matter and meaning, and time and eternity.

Chapter Twelve

Free Will Between Philosophy, Science, and the Qur'an

Freedom in a Law-Governed Universe

Free will appears to be one of humanity's most self-evident yet perplexing concepts: we experience choice as an internal reality, and we build morality, law, and accountability upon its premise, only to be surprised that scientific worldviews, from physical causality to brain science, suggest that our actions may be part of a predetermined system.

This chapter does not seek to provide "conclusive proof" for or against freedom, but rather to reframe the question within a more complex framework:

How can humans be agents and responsible within a universe governed by laws?

Does freedom mean breaking causality, or does it mean a higher form of causality: a conscious, meaning-oriented causality?

Why does philosophy cling to the hypothesis of freedom?

Arguments in favour of free will generally stem from subjective experience, the necessity of moral responsibility, and the nature of conscious thought and creativity. These arguments are often put forward in opposition to strict determinism, the view that all events, including our choices, are predetermined by prior causes.

Main Arguments for Free Will

A. Subjective Experience of Choice: The strong, direct, personal experience of making decisions and feeling in control of them is one of the most common arguments. From choosing a meal to determining a career path, individuals experience a sense of autonomy and agency—an internal feeling of making unconstrained choices. This lived experience is often considered intuitive evidence for free will.

B. Moral Responsibility: The concepts of law, reward, punishment, guilt, and praise are based on the assumption of individual moral responsibility. This philosophical argument assumes that holding people accountable for their actions is only just if they could have intentionally chosen to act differently. If actions were predetermined, punishment would serve only a utilitarian purpose (such as deterrence) rather than a punitive purpose based on moral merit.

C. Deliberation and Rationalism: The process of deliberation—weighing options and considering consequences—means that the outcome is not yet decided. The very acts of advising, persuading, and warning are only meaningful if people have the capacity to choose between different possible courses of action.

D. Creativity and Innovation: Human creativity and the ability to imagine and realize new possibilities through unforeseen choices are presented as evidence of free will. This suggests a level of spontaneous decision-making that does not simply result from a continuum of prior physical causes. Nanotechnology creates new molecular structures that the universe has never before formed.

E. Pragmatic Arguments: Some argue that, even if free will is an illusion, belief in it is essential for a functioning society and personal well-being. This concept can foster responsible social behaviour, encourage a sense of purpose, and is necessary for navigating the world in a meaningful way. The alternative (belief in rigid determinism) may lead to nihilism or despair for some.

Major Philosophical Positions: Determinism, Libertarianism, and Conformism

The philosophical landscape can be summarized in three perspectives:

(a) Strict Determinism:

Every event—including decisions—is the inevitable result of prior causes; therefore, free will is an illusion. Strict determinism asserts that determinism is true, and because it is incompatible with free will, free will does not exist.

Albert Einstein was a staunch believer in determinism and considered free will an illusion. He frequently quoted Arthur Schopenhauer and Spinoza to express his beliefs.

Einstein found solace and insight in Schopenhauer's idea that "man can do what he wants, but he cannot want what he wants," noting that this concept guided him throughout his life and helped him accept the actions of others. He felt that this understanding of the absence of free will prevented him from taking himself and others seriously as independent beings and helped him maintain his composure. To illustrate his point, Einstein used the analogy of the moon, suggesting

that if it possessed consciousness, it would believe it moved of its own accord. He implied that a more astute observer would also view humanity's belief in free will as an illusion.

Regarding human behavior and responsibility, and despite his philosophical determinism, Einstein recognized the practical need to act as if free will existed within society. He stated that although he did not believe in free will, he was compelled to act as if people were responsible for living in a civilized society.

(b) Libertarianism (Nondeterminism):

Rejects determinism and sees humans as the ultimate source of their actions (meaning they could have done otherwise). Libertarianism is a non-conformist position that claims determinism is false and that humans possess genuine free will, that is, the capacity to be the ultimate source or creator of their actions.

(c) Conformism:

Sees that freedom does not mean escaping the network of causes but rather acting according to internal motives and reasons without compelling external coercion. That is, freedom as a “conscious appropriation of action” within a causal system.

This chapter approaches conformism, but it does not simply adopt its traditional form; rather, it redefines both causality and freedom.

Reimagining the Fundamental Conflict: The debate between proponents of free will and determinism can be reformulated within this new paradigm:

Arguments Against Free Will (Downward Laws):

Deterministic arguments highlight universal constants, the law of causality, and the fundamental laws that govern all of existence, including human thought and action. Physical laws, they argue, drive the components of the universe toward a “pre-programmed” impasse, in which we have no will or choice.

Ultimately, while the feeling of free will is a universal human experience, its existence as an actual metaphysical capacity remains a profound and ongoing philosophical and scientific inquiry.

Arguments for Free Will (Upward Mechanism):

The subjective experience of choice and moral responsibility is not an illusion, but rather the process by which fundamental natural laws operate. The capacity for action: Our capacity for deliberation and choice represents a "regressive" mechanism for change. We feel that we choose "of our own free will," and this feeling is essential for motivating the actions necessary for construction and progress.

Why does the "fifth force" model outside of causality fail?

This becomes clear when examining the reasons for the failure of the "fifth force" model outside of causality when it invokes a separate, immaterial, free will, and how this model creates more metaphysical

problems than it solves. This supposed force needs to intervene in the physical world without violating the laws of conservation, influence neural matter without any detectable energy transfer, and remain scientifically undetectable while being the decisive factor in human action. This concept does not explain freedom; rather, it renames the enigma and introduces a supernatural flaw into a universe that could have been understood. Moreover, freedom achieved by breaking the chain of causality cannot be recognized as freedom at all; it is indistinguishable from randomness. And randomness—the occurrence of an action without a cause—is not will. It is the same thing.” Losing it.

Causality is not a chain, but a field.

To get out of this predicament, we must update our concept of chain of causation (Causality). It is not a chain, but a field. The classical Newtonian picture of causality—a rigid chain of deterministic impulses—is an oversimplification. The modern understanding, grounded in quantum mechanics, complexity theory, and systems biology, suggests that causality is best viewed as multilayered, probabilistic, and highly contextual. It operates more by setting constraints and enabling spaces of possibility than by imposing precise outcomes. Within the limits of physical law, multiple future possibilities are often physically possible. Any specific future that unfolds is not always determined with extreme precision by the previous state of the universe. Causality, in this broader perspective, does not dictate every detail; it sets the scene and the rules of the game. Indeterminism without chaos.

This refers to the fact that indeterminism exists without chaos. At the fundamental levels described in quantum physics, indeterminacy is an inherent feature of reality. Events can occur without being predetermined. Predetermined, yet occurring within statistically constrained ranges and without violating the general structure of physical law. This inherent openness is not, in itself, freedom. The probabilistic "choice" of the electron is not a model of human will. But this fundamental indeterminacy creates space—an existential openness—at the very foundation of reality. Freedom requires such openness, but openness alone is insufficient. It is the raw material, not the finished product.

Consciousness as Selector, Not Violator

The ultimate factor is consciousness as selector, not violator. Consciousness does not operate by transgressing the laws of physics. It operates within the broad space permitted by physics, where multiple, physically possible outcomes exist—whether in cases of precise uncertainty in neural processes or in cases of the overall ambiguity of a complex structure. In the moment of decision, consciousness plays its pivotal role. It evaluates potential actions based on their anticipated meaning, integrates memory and future intentions, postpones automatic reactions, and chooses from among alternatives. This choice is not arbitrary but is informed by values accumulated over a lifetime, a formed personal identity, and a semantic understanding of the world. It is precisely here that freedom arises, not as an escape from causality, but as a conscious, value-guided navigation within the causal field. It is causality that becomes self-directed.

Freedom as Structured Openness

Therefore, we can define freedom as structured openness. True, meaningful freedom is not the complete absence of constraints, but rather a defined structure requiring three elements:

1. Constraints: fixed laws and structures that allow for predictable outcomes and reliable actions. Without constraints, action becomes incoherent chaos.
2. Alternatives: a genuine plurality of permissible futures from which to choose. Without genuine choices, action is mere coercion.
3. Reflection: the conscious capacity to model these alternatives, weigh them according to values, and then choose one. Without this awareness, action lacks a sense of ownership.

Responsibility without a metaphysical burden

These three conditions are strongly present within complex natural systems such as the human brain. Freedom, therefore, is not absolute openness, but rather a structured openness—the capacity for conscious and self-reflective creation within a world governed by laws.

This framework naturally supports the concept of responsibility without a metaphysical burden. If our actions were entirely and automatically determined by past conditions, the concept of responsibility would be meaningless—we would be mere puppets. If our actions were entirely without cause, responsibility would be impossible—we could not be held accountable for random events.

Responsibility finds its logical place in the middle ground: it exists because we are agents operating within known constraints, we can understand the potential consequences of our actions, and if faced with similar circumstances, we could choose and act differently based on reflection and evaluation. This is a sufficient basis for moral and legal responsibility. It does not require an immaterial spirit, but rather a conscious, causally integrated, and sufficiently complex self.

Freedom, Meaning, and Continuity

We see, then, that freedom, meaning, and continuity are inseparable. Free choice is not merely selecting an option from a list; it is an affirmation of value, an expression of an aspect of identity, and an expansion of the coherent narrative of life. A choice devoid of meaning—like flipping a coin to decide or a random nervous twitch—is not seen as a free act, but as an arbitrary or bizarre event. Freedom, in its deepest sense, is the instrument by which the self establishes its identity over time and effectively constructs its story within the grand narrative of a law-based reality. Theological Reflection Without Intervention

From a theological perspective, this view liberates us from interventionism. The granting of freedom by God does not entail a periodic suspension of natural law, as if God were intervening to break the chains of determinism that bind us. Rather, freedom exists because the cosmic order is inherently structured—intelligible, open, and gradual—in a way that allows for, and even fosters, conscious participation. Creation is not a deterministic machine, nor is it a chaotic arena of miracles. It is a coherent and generous system, open enough to evoke genuine partnership from within.

Freedom as Function, Not Exception

Thus, we conclude that free will is a function, not an exception. It is not a supernatural anomaly added to nature. It is a high-level function that arises naturally when material complexities, conscious integration, and semantic meaning converge. It arises legitimately from the properties of the universe and operates according to the principles of conscious causality. Freedom is not the absence of causality. It is causality that becomes self-aware, self-forming, and self-directing. It is the universe, in the form of a conscious being, learning to orient itself within its own currents.

Completing the Structure

With this understanding, the structure is completed within the framework of the concept of the fixed and the variable in existence. The constant provides the uncompromising structure and constraint—physical law, biological necessity, and logical form. The changing provides the field of expression, adaptation, and new form. Consciousness arises as an integrative interface where form is translated into meaning. Freedom functions as the capacity for conscious choice within the openness provided by the variable, constrained by the fixed. Dynamic equilibrium is the principle that maintains the coherence of the whole through time. Nothing is added unnecessarily—no fifth forces, no supernatural interruptions. Nothing is arbitrarily removed—meaning, responsibility, and authentic choice remain intact, rooted in reality.

Conscious Will in Neuroscience Research

The concept of free will raises an important question: Do we truly possess it? When we perform a voluntary action, such as moving our wrist, it appears to be a conscious decision. However, scientific evidence suggests that multiple brain processes are involved in initiating voluntary actions, and the precise mechanism remains unclear. Neuroanatomical studies show that voluntary movements activate several brain regions, including the prefrontal cortex, the premotor cortex, and the primary motor cortex, each contributing to the planning and execution of the movement.

Nevertheless, the role of consciousness in decision-making remains a subject of debate. Experiments, such as Libet's, indicate that the brain activity associated with movement begins before individuals are consciously aware of their intention to act. This finding challenges the traditional view that conscious will precedes and causes voluntary actions.

Philosophically, the question of free will is complex. Determinism assumes that all events are predetermined by prior causes, leaving little room for genuine choice. Some argue that free will and determinism are incompatible, while others maintain that making complex decisions within a deterministic framework is sufficient for moral responsibility.

The feeling of conscious control may be an illusion, as psychological and neurological studies show that people are capable of acting without full awareness and may attribute their will to others. This phenomenon is evident in conditions such as involuntary muscle movements and certain psychological disorders.

Ultimately, despite the strength of the subjective experience of free will, scientific and philosophical perspectives suggest that it may not reflect an underlying causal force. Nevertheless, this perception influences behaviour and notions of responsibility.

A 1985 experiment by neuroscientist Benjamin Libet demonstrated that unconscious brain activity (the readiness effort) precedes the conscious intention to act by approximately 300–500 milliseconds, indicating that voluntary actions begin unconsciously. The results suggested that consciousness decides on movement after it has been neurally generated, sparking debate about whether "free will" is an illusion.

Libet asked participants in his experiment to flex their wrists at least 40 times, at times of their choosing, and measured three things: the time at which the action was performed, the time at which brain activity began in the motor cortex, and the time at which they consciously decided to perform the action.

EEG scans showed that the timing of brain activity (readiness potential - RP) preceded the conscious intention to move by about 300–500 milliseconds, before participants reported their conscious intention (will to move) and the actual movement. Libet suggested that the brain initiates the action before we are conscious of it, but noted that consciousness still retains the ability to change or stop the action at the last moment.

In 2007, neuroscientist John Dylan Heinz, at the Bernstein Centre for Computational Neuroscience in Berlin, Germany, conducted a new experiment. In each experiment, participants were given a time limit to make a decision and act upon it. The decision was either to press a button with their left hand or a button with their right hand.

Simultaneously, participants viewed a screen displaying a rapid succession of letters. They were asked to identify the letter appearing on the screen at the moment they decided to press one of the buttons.

While Libet used electroencephalography (EEG), Heinz used the more advanced functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). Both techniques record brain activity as it occurs, but fMRI readings offer higher spatial resolution, more precisely identifying specific brain regions as they are activated. Heinz claimed that by analysing fMRI data of a specific brain region, the prefrontal cortex, he could predict which button a subject would choose—left or right—with up to 60% accuracy a full seven seconds before they consciously made their decision.

However, few scientists are convinced that this negates free will. Marcel Brass, from Ghent University in Belgium, points out that 60% isn't much better than chance, but adds, "This shows that our decisions are influenced by events happening in our brains before we make the decision. But it doesn't prove that our decisions are completely predetermined." Jeff Miller, from the University of Otago in New Zealand, agrees, saying, "The discovery that brain activity predicts a decision doesn't undermine free will." He explains that the brain activity used in the prediction might simply be a predisposition toward one option over another, and that the final decision might have been made consciously.

Heinz himself acknowledges this possibility. Perhaps this early signal doesn't represent a final decision, but rather a signal that points you in a certain direction but doesn't definitively resolve your decision. So, what is meant by "decision-making"?

Heinz says, "It's not free will. Decisions result from unconscious brain processes, and then consciousness intervenes later." Heinz argues that our conscious decisions are predetermined by brain activity, even if we haven't yet fully deciphered this activity. He adds, "The belief that you have free will is a personal experience. It's unreasonable and contradicts the determinism of the scientific universe."

However, the philosophical implications of these findings are not conclusive for at least two reasons:

1. A preceding neural signal does not equate to a final decision: it may represent an inclination or predisposition, not a definitive choice.
2. Furthermore, freedom—as conceived in by many scholars—is not a single, isolated spark, but rather a process of integration, evaluation, postponement, and response across multiple time layers within the nervous system itself.

Thus, these experiences do not negate the possibility of free will, but they shift it from the image of a "conscious button being pressed" to a more complex one: the decision as a gradual formation within a conscious system.

The Problem of Human Will within the Framework of God's Will

“And you do not will except that God wills. Indeed, God is ever Knowing and Wise.” Al-Insan: 30. This noble verse presents us with a fundamental theological paradox:

1. Necessitarianism (Predeterminism): Everything is predestined, and free will is an illusion.
2. Fatalism: God knows beforehand but does not compel.
3. Ash'ari: God is the creator of our actions; He creates everything, but humans “acquire” everything.

This book proposes a reading that distinguishes between two levels:

- God's Will: A foundational will that creates the system itself: its laws, possibilities, conditions, and capacity to produce conscious agency.
- Human Will: An active will that operates within this system as the capacity to choose one possibility over another (within Quantum Physics context), according to knowledge, values, and intention.

In this sense, human will is not negated, but rather understood as part of the "generosity of creation": **God willed to create a world within which choice could be real and meaningful.**

God's knowledge encompasses the entire "tree of possibilities"—the initial conditions, the laws, and the quantum probabilities. The universe is a dynamic system with real points of choice. God knows every possible path and the path that every conscious being will take. Thus, divine knowledge does not negate free will; it encompasses all possible choices.

Manifestation versus Evolution: We are not merely passive manifestations of a predetermined plan, but active participants in a rich system that includes:

-Necessity (the laws of nature)

-Probability (quantum mechanics)

-Freedom (conscious beings).

Our choices are real within this system, and God's knowledge encompasses all levels of interaction.

Analogy: The Universe as an Interactive Narrative

In a traditional story, the author writes all the details, and the characters have no will. In interactive storytelling, the author designs the framework, characters, and scenarios, but the characters interact according to their attributes, leading to multiple possible outcomes. The author knows all the possible endings and what will happen but does not write every action. Similarly, God created a system that generates actions through genuine choice.

In short: God's knowledge is all-encompassing, but reality is not a "pre-written movie"; it is a complex system that makes its own history. There is determinism at a fundamental level, but it is a rich determinism that allows for real possibilities and choices. God's statement, **"And you do not will except that God wills. Indeed, God is ever Knowing and Wise,"** can be understood as follows: God willed to create a system in which His creation enjoys true freedom.

Divine Knowledge of the Future and the Illusion of Time

Some of us might ask: If time is merely a mental and mnemonic construct—where the past consists of remembered locations, the present of the current state, and the future of anticipated locations—then time itself does not truly pass. Rather, only objects and motion exist within the coordinates of space. The Big Bang represents the beginning of motion and space, independent of any human observer who creates a sense of time. This raises a philosophical question: how can this perspective be reconciled with the belief in God's eternity and the idea that existence is ancient in divine knowledge but was only manifested with the Big Bang?

From a physical perspective, time might be a sequence of events in memory, while the universe is a static mass, and the mind creates the illusion of flow. Even without observers, there is an objective causal sequence; change is real, even if time itself is not. Theologically, God is outside the realm of time, seeing all moments simultaneously. Divine knowledge of the future is not prophecy but a direct vision of the entire mass of spacetime.

1. One possible solution lies in distinguishing between levels of time:

- Physical time: arises from motion and change and may be illusory from a higher perspective.
- Causal/Organized time: a real, logical sequence of events, independent of observers.
- The Divine Perspective: God is eternal and timeless, existing outside the realm of time, knowing all events as a whole.

Therefore, the illusion lies in our subjective experience of anticipating the future, not in the reality of the events themselves. The future exists in God's knowledge as part of the totality of creation. Whether the universe is deterministic or allows for free will, God is the creator of order and knows all outcomes.

In short, human time may be an illusion, but causal time is real and part of creation. God, being outside the realm of time, knows all events as a single reality. There is no contradiction between God's eternal knowledge and the existence of time in creation. The “Block Universe” is a created framework, while God's knowledge is eternal and encompasses all temporal arrangements at once.

Human perception is inherently linear and temporal, processing information sequentially and understanding concepts through cause and effect, before and after. Divine knowledge, on the other hand, transcends these limitations, encompassing all events simultaneously.

A mathematical analogy illustrates this distinction: while we experience the universe moment by moment, God knows the complete solution to its governing equations at all times. However, this does not imply absolute determinism. Modern scientific models, such as chaos theory and quantum mechanics, demonstrate that systems may be deterministic, but they are unpredictable, and probabilities play a fundamental role. Divine knowledge encompasses all possible outcomes and paths, including those arising from quantum uncertainty and complex systems.

It is important to note that omniscience does not imply automatic control. God created a system governed by initial laws and conditions, probabilities, and relationships, which produce complexity and emerging phenomena, including consciousness and free will. The

central philosophical challenge lies in reconciling absolute divine knowledge with genuine free will. Traditional solutions range from determinism to conformity, but the modern perspective suggests that God knows all possible cosmic decision paths and the choices that will be made, without denying the reality of those choices.

Rather than being passive manifestations of a predetermined plan, we are active participants in a rich system that allows for necessity, probability, and genuine freedom. Our choices are real and meaningful within this framework, and divine knowledge encompasses all levels of interaction.

2. My preferred solution (synthesis), though radical, is a view of observer-relative idealism⁶ combined with a panentheistic vision of God:

Let us consider that fundamental reality consists of objects in space and their movements. "Time" is not a separate entity, but the experience generated when a conscious observer arranges these movements into a sequence of memory (past), attention (present), and anticipation (future). Without an observer, there is movement but no "time."

God is the primordial, infinite Observer. The entire universe - its matter, energy, and all its motions - exists within the reality of God.

⁶ An observer in Quantum Mechanics is conscious being or any system that interacts with a quantum object, such as a photon, a detector, or even air molecules, acting to "measure" its state. The Observer Effect is the act of measuring a quantum system inevitably interacts with it, changing its properties and causing the wave-like superposition to collapse into a particle-like state.

God's consciousness eternally attends to every position and every transition. This divine attention is not sequential; it is a total, simultaneous apprehension of all motion. For God, there is no 'past' or 'future,' only the everlasting, dynamic present of all existence in movement.

Therefore, the Big Bang marks not the beginning of existence, but the beginning of the particular sequence of movements that our derived consciousnesses experience as cosmic history. The "future" is real, not as an unwritten page, but as a set of positions and movements already fully present in the divine field of attention, which we, as finite explorers within God, will sequentially encounter.

In this view, there is no contradiction: God's eternity is the eternal act of observing all movement. Our time is the illusion of sequence we construct from that movement. Divine knowledge is perfect because God is the very medium in which the cosmic dance unfolds."

In this view:

"Movement" is primary. It is a relation between positions in space.

"Time" is secondary. It is not a dimension or a container. It is a cognitive artifact produced by a conscious observer when it remembers a past position (creating "past"), attends to a current position (creating "present"), and predicts a future position (creating "future").

Consciousness is the time-generator. No observer = no "time," only movement. A rock does not experience time; a conscious being does.

God is the Ultimate Observer. Before any finite consciousness existed, God's infinite consciousness was (and eternally is) "attending to" the movements and positions within Himself. God's observation does not

create time, because God's mode of attention is not sequential. God's observation sustains the reality of the movement itself.

This implies that Movement does not require time; it only requires an Observer to be real.

In this model:

The universe is in God (panentheism: all is within the divine reality).

The movements and changes of the universe are real changes for God. God is not a static block; God is the infinite; all dynamic movement of creation occurs within Him. His knowledge is not a frozen snapshot, but an infinite, active attending to all positions and their transitions.

Our human "time" is our finite, limited, and sequential way of parsing this infinite, divine dynamism.

This is a synthesis of ideas from process philosophy, idealist interpretations of quantum mechanics (where observation collapses the wave function), and classical theism.

The Holy Qur'an and Free Will

In the Holy Qur'an, numerous verses emphasize human free will and personal responsibility for actions within the framework of the general divine will. Humans are held accountable based on their choice of guidance or misguidance, highlighting the principle of "There is no compulsion in religion."

Among the most prominent verses that point to free will and personal choice are:

The freedom to believe or disbelieve: "And say, 'The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills - let him believe; and whoever wills - let him disbelieve' Al-Kahf: 29.

Human will, limited by the will of God: "And you do not will except that God wills - Lord of the worlds" Al-Takwir: 29.

Bearing the consequences of choice: "Indeed, We guided him to the way, whether he be grateful or ungrateful" Al-Insan: 3.

Self-transformation: "Indeed, God does not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves." Ar-Ra'd 13:11

Guidance and misguidance are personal choices: "Whoever is guided is only guided for [the benefit of] himself; and whoever goes astray only goes astray to his own detriment." Al-Isra 17:15

Rejection of compulsion: "There is no compulsion in religion. Righteousness has become distinct from error." Al-Baqarah 2:256

The Arabic root word (rad) and its derivatives appear in the Holy Qur'an 132 times, signifying will, desire, command, intention, love, and request. When attributed to the Divine Being, it signifies will and command. When attributed to created beings, it signifies the ability to make sound decisions and overcome internal and external obstacles to achieve desired goals, restraining oneself from excessive desires, whims, and demands, and submitting to and accepting God's commands. In Islamic jurisprudence, will is defined as the ability to execute God's commands and accept them with complete intention and focus.

First: Types of Will in the Qur'an:

A- Divine Will: This is absolute will and is sometimes called the Divine Precept:

{Our word to a thing when We intend it is only that We say to it, "Be," and it is.} (An-Nahl: 40) {...Indeed, your Lord is an effective doer of what He intends.} (Hud 107)

{Indeed, Allah decrees what He intends.} (Al-Ma'idah 1)

{His command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it, "Be," and it is.} (Ya-Sin 82)

{And He created everything and determined its precise measure.} (Al-Furqan 2)

{Have you not considered how your Lord extends the shadow? And if He willed, He could have made it stationary. Then We made the sun its guide.} (Al-Furqan 45) {The command of Allah is a decree determined.} (Al-Ahzab 38)

{So whoever Allah wills to guide - He expands his breast to [receive] Islam; and whoever He wills to misguide - He makes his breast tight and constricted as though he were climbing into the sky. Thus does Allah place defilement upon those who do not believe.} (Al-An'am 125)

Have you considered the water that you drink? Is it you who brought it down from the clouds, or is it We who bring it down? If We willed, We could make it bitter. Then why are you not grateful? (Al-Waqi'ah 68-70)

B- The will of those accountable (rational beings) among God's creation:

{And We guided him to the two paths} Al-Balad: 10.

{Every soul is held in pledge for what it has earned} Al-Muddaththir: 38.

{And your Lord is not unjust to His servants} Fussilat: 46.

{God does not burden a soul beyond its capacity. It will have [the consequence of] what it has earned, and it will bear [the consequence of] what it has incurred} Al-Baqarah: 286.

{So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it} Az-Zalzalah: 7-8

{... And whoever desires the reward of this world - We will give him thereof; and whoever desires the reward of the Hereafter - We will give him thereof. And We will reward the grateful. (Al Imran: 145)

{This is a reminder, so whoever wills may take a path to his Lord. And you do not will except that Allah wills. Indeed, Allah is ever Knowing and Wise.} (Al-Insan 76:29-30)

{Whoever desires the life of this world and its adornments - We will fully recompense them for their deeds therein, and they will not be deprived of anything therein.} (Hud 11:15)

{And Allah wants to accept your repentance, but those who follow their desires want you to deviate greatly. Allah wants to lighten your burden, and mankind was created weak.} (An-Nisa: 27-28)

{Satan only wants to cause enmity and hatred among you through intoxicants and gambling and to avert you from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. So will you not desist?} (Al-Ma'idah: 91)

{And when We intend to destroy a city, We command its affluent ones [to obey Us], but they defiantly disobey therein; so the word comes into effect upon it, and We destroy it with [complete] destruction.} [Al-Isra: 16]

{They want to extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light, even if the disbelievers dislike it.} [As-Saff: 8]

{Rather, man desires to continue in sin. He asks, "When is the Day of Resurrection?"} [Al-Qiyamah: 6]

{Whoever desires the immediate life, We hasten for him therein what We will to whom We intend. Then We have assigned for him Hell, which he will [enter to] burn, disgraced and banished. But whoever desires the Hereafter and strives for it as it should be striven for, while he is a believer - then those are the ones whose striving is appreciated.}
[Al-Isra: 19]

Conclusion of the chapter

Freedom as a responsibility and a meaning

In light of the foregoing, free will is no longer a supernatural exception, nor an illusion that can be nullified, but rather a noble function that arises when material complexity meets conscious integration and value-based meaning.

Freedom is not the absence of causality, but rather causality when it becomes self-aware, guided by values and goals, capable of postponing spontaneity, and of embracing action as a "choice."

In this, philosophy, science, and the Qur'an converge on a single point: that humanity is not reduced to a machine, nor elevated to a force without law, but rather understood as a responsible being: one who chooses within the world and is accountable for their choices, because their choices have meaning.

General Conclusion / A New Beginning

Between Question and Meaning

This book was not so much an attempt to answer the great questions as it was an attempt to restore them to their rightful place at the heart of existence, and at the core of the relationship between humanity, the world, and God.

We began with the question of creation, moved to the question of consciousness, and traced the paths of the eternal and the temporal. Our approaches diverged between the Qur'an, Islamic tradition, and modern philosophy.

But the thread that united them all was one: that existence is not silent, that meaning is not incidental, and that humanity is not merely a neutral observer in a soulless universe, but rather a being who is questioned, called to understanding, and entrusted with a responsibility.

This book did not reveal a closed, mechanical universe, nor a consciousness confined to the brain alone, nor a religion isolated from the world, but rather a world renewed by creation, charged with meaning, evolving in consciousness, and maintaining a constant relationship with its source.

Here, the Qur'an is not read merely as a book of legislation, but as a book of cosmic vision, linking God, existence, consciousness, and humanity on a single horizon. We are not faced with ultimate certainty, nor with a closed system, but rather with an open horizon of understanding and contemplation. Every attempt to understand creation leads to a new question, every attempt to understand consciousness reveals its limitations, and every attempt to understand

eternity reminds us of the inadequacy of language in the face of vastness. Herein lies the value of the question: not in possessing the answer, but in remaining within the realm of wonder.

The most dangerous thing that can befall modern humanity is not ignorance, but rather reducing the world to meaningless matter, reducing oneself to a soulless function, and reducing religion to a slogan without vision.

This book is a call to resist this reductionism by seeing in the universe a sign, in consciousness a responsibility, in science a path to understanding, not a substitute for meaning, and in religion a presence in the world, not a withdrawal from it.

If this book has a final message, it is this:

We are not alone in this existence.

We are not the first to pose these questions.

And we will not be the last to walk this path.

We are part of an ongoing cosmic dialogue between Creator and creation, between mind and heart, between science and meaning, between time and eternity. When we realize this, questioning becomes not a burden, but an act of worship; thinking becomes not a danger, but a path to humility; and existence becomes not futility, but a sacred trust.

Thus, this book does not end with a conclusion, but with a new beginning: the beginning of an awareness that sees more than matter

in the universe, more than chance in humanity, more than scripture in religion, and more than bewilderment in questioning.

A journey that begins with wonder... continues with responsibility... and ends only in contemplative silence.

Glossary of Terms

For the first axis: Creation and Ontology

Creation:

In this book, creation is not understood as a closed, past event, but rather as a renewed act and an ongoing relationship between the divine will and existence. Creation is not a transition from absolute nothingness to existence, but a manifestation of meaning in transforming cosmic forms. It is a continuous act that connects the eternal with the temporal without reducing one to the other.

Nothingness:

In the Qur'anic discourse, nothingness is not used as an ontological origin of existence. Instead, absence is presented in favor of the concepts of transformation, estimation, and the word. In this book, the concept of absolute nothingness is critiqued as a later philosophical assumption with no textual necessity.

Truth/Meaning:

The principle of the order and meaning of existence, not merely a cognitive value. Creation through truth means that the universe is based on meaning, purpose, and order, not on chance or randomness.

Command and Word:

These terms indicate that existence is not inert matter, but rather a response to will and meaning. The divine word is not a linguistic sound, but a principle of manifestation and realization in the world.

Destiny/Measure:

The structure of existence's order according to measure and meaning, not a mechanical, inert determinism. It indicates that creation is balanced, directed, and open to transformation within limits.

Manifestation:

The appearance of the eternal in temporal forms without losing its transcendence. The universe is a manifestation of the divine command, not an identity of God Himself.

Eternity:

A level of existence beyond the categories of before and after, belonging solely to the divine essence, while the world appears in time as a limited manifestation of it.

Time:

Not an independent substance, but a perceptual image of the succession of transformations in existence. It is the framework of human consciousness for understanding change, not a constraint on the divine will. Existence Subsisting in God: A view that sees the world as neither God nor entirely separate from Him, but rather as existing

in a permanent existential dependence upon Him without incarnation or union.

Second Axis: Consciousness and Awareness

Consciousness: Understood as a relationship between existence and meaning, not merely a brain function. It is a hierarchical existential characteristic encompassing humanity and the universe to varying degrees, with humanity reaching its highest level as a morally responsible being.

Panpsychism – Qur’anic sense: A conception that sees awareness not as exclusive to humanity, but as an existential spectrum extending throughout the world according to patterns appropriate to each level of existence.

Qualia:

The irreducible, internal aspect of conscious experience (such as pain, color, and meaning), considered evidence of the limitations of purely materialistic explanation.

Intentionality:

The fact that consciousness is always directed toward something; that is, it is consciousness of meaning, not merely a closed, self-contained neural activity.

The Self:

Not a fixed, separate essence, but a narrative and existential structure formed through consciousness, memory, and moral responsibility.

The Unconscious:

A level of psychological and neurological processes that precedes consciousness and does not negate it, but rather reveals that consciousness is a spectrum, not a simple unity.

Third Axis: Reason and Heart

The Reason:

An instrument of moral and cognitive perception and discernment, not a self-sufficient source of truth. In Islamic tradition, it is part of a broader system that includes revelation and the heart.

The Heart:

The center of existential awareness, witnessing, and meaning in the Qur'an and Sufism, not merely a biological organ. It is the seat of jurisprudence, contemplation, tranquility, and awe.

Witnessing:

A mode of knowledge that transcends proof to presence, where consciousness becomes participation in meaning, not merely external observation.

Fourth Axis: Language and Meaning**Metaphor and Reality:**

The Qur'anic discourse is not reduced to mere rhetorical metaphor. Rather, its language is read as an ontological revelation of the nature of existence, not simply didactic embellishment.

Rhetoric

Ontology: A concept that sees the language of the Qur'an as describing the very structure of existence, not merely as figurative language.

Glorification:

An existential act attributed to all beings as a response to the Truth, not merely a symbolic gesture.

Prostration:

An expression of the universal relationship of obedience between existence and the divine command, not merely a physical movement.

Bearing Witness:

The capacity of existence to preserve and express meaning on the Day of Judgment, indicating a universal memory.

Fifth Axis: The Eternal and the Temporal

The Creation of the Qur'an:

An issue that expresses the tension between the eternal and the historical, where the Qur'an is understood as eternal in its source and temporal in its linguistic manifestation.

Unity of Existence:

A Sufi concept that refers to the unity of the source and the multiplicity of manifestations, not to the incarnation of the Creator in the creation.

Incarnation and Union:

Concepts that deny the distinction between God and the world, which this book rejects in favour of the concept of a relationship without dissolution.

Acquisition:

An Ash'ari concept that sees humans as acquiring their actions within the will of God, without being mechanically compelled.

Sixth Axis: Freedom and Causality

Free Will:

The capacity of consciousness to make choices guided by values within an open causal field, neither departing from natural law nor submitting to it mechanically.

Determinism:

A view that sees all events as determined by prior causes, which this book reinterprets within a multi-layered, non-mechanical model of causality.

Harmonism:

A position that sees freedom as possible within a causal system, if defined as a conscious, uncoerced choice.

Causality as a Field, Not a Chain:

A modern conception that views causality as a network of constraints and possibilities, not a closed line of necessities.

Seventh Axis: The Synthetic Vision

The Synthetic Vision:

A philosophical framework that combines perpetual creation, gradual consciousness, and divine eternity, without material reductionism or mystical solutions.

The Universe as a Field of Meaning:

A conception that sees the world not as inanimate matter, but as a semantic space in which the relationship between God, existence, and humanity is manifested.

Humanity as Witness and Responsibility:

Humanity is not the centre of the universe by potential, but by trust, as the being who is aware of meaning and accountable for its response to it.

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