



Introduction to Islam

Introductory Points and Questions About God and Religion

Course: REL 233
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Faith and Rationality

- Faith : Most important aspect of human's life
- Shouldn't it make sense ?
- Shouldn't the heart and mind witness its truth ?
- Why many people react emotionally and believe blindly?
- Shouldn't faith be adopted consciously after careful evaluation and rationalization?
- Is it possible to rationally address faith and quest for God?



A Rational Approach to Address Quest for God

- How do people usually learn about a reality? Or discover it, or prove it ?
 1. Through sensory perceptions (perceiving by five senses)
 2. Logical inference (reasoning, conclusion)
 3. Reliance on expert testimony of credible witnesses

Question: Can we use these methods to explore the reality of God's existence ?

Use of Sensory Perceptions

- Use of our five senses: A typical method in daily life
 - A disciplined and controlled use of this method has lead to scientific knowledge
- However, two common characteristics of all objects that can be sensed
 1. Material or tangible
 2. Finite (having specific origin, life span, size, mass, form, etc.)
- A limitation of scientific means: They can deal only with physical and finite objects
- Another limitation is human mind
 - Not only object should be finite, but also one should already be familiar with
- Proper understanding of limitations of human sensory perceptions is important to proceed further

Use of Sensory Perceptions

- Human's limitations often lead to two extreme outlooks and mixed views
 1. Rejecting anything not perceivable
 2. Worshiping any powerful or transcendent things
- A more appropriate Conclusion
 - Anything finite not worthy of worship, but worth exploring
 - Cannot deny God just because not perceivable in physical terms
 - We all believe in many things without physical experience
- God being infinite, human perception and scientific tools offer limited value to confirm God
 - While we can sense the SIGNS of God and we can FEEL the existence of God, we should distinguish between God and signs of God, and between feeling and using five senses
 - Because connecting those signs to God is a logical inference, and the connection cannot be done by the five senses
 - Also, feeling is an act of heart, and heart is not one of the five senses
- Therefore, we can not depend on our sensory perceptions and scientific tools to confirm God's existence
- How about the other two methods that are used to confirm realities ?

Use of Logical Inference

- Can this universe and human life be created without a creator (by chance or accident or random)?
- An established fact is that every finite thing is subject to law of cause and effect
 - Therefore, this universe and human beings must have a cause/creator
- Further, the creation must be based on a plan, knowledge and wisdom
- While every finite entity has creator, the Ultimate Creator (Cause of causes) could not have been created by anyone
- So, the ultimate creator has to be infinite.
- If infinite, then:
 - Has to be one and unique
 - Cannot be partitioned into different roles
 - Cannot have a certain image or shape
 - Finite beings cannot claim incarnation of infinity
- A rational and logical conclusion:
 - This Infinite Creator is God, the One and Unique

Use of Logical Inference

God being infinite means: Infinite in person, existence, knowledge, power, wisdom, and in all other attributes

- Infinity of God: Main reason of being beyond our perception
 - We have no familiarity and experience with infinity
 - Example of a blind person from birth trying to understand color
- The Creator must be different from the creation because if He is the same, then He will need a creator
- Therefore He must be eternal
- And, if He is eternal, He is self-sufficient
- So, use of logical inference confirms the existence of God