

## **Review Book: Why there is No God, Simple Responses to 20 Common Arguments for the Existence of God and Discussion According to an Islamic Perspective**

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### **Abstract**

Atheism is a disbelief in transcendent that there is no God and religion, widely accepted by youngsters due to the extensive access to social media. In response to the book written by Armin Navabi, an atheist (apostate in Islam) entitled "Why There Is No God: Simple Responses to Common Arguments for The Existence of God", this article aims to analyze and refute the statements of the writer on the nonexistence of God. This study used content analysis with divinity as the theme to discuss three primary topics that cause objections to the religious affiliation among atheists. Atheist affirms God's non-existence due to unconformity of scientific evidence rather than accepting that there is more in the world than is disclosed by science. They over-claimed that the holy Qur'an is written by the pious, which refuted by scientific findings that proved the facts written in the Holy Quran. The wisdom behind the occurrence of events is for humans to use the intellectual capacity given to them.

**Keywords:** Atheism, Armin Navabi, Ex-Muslim, Common Arguments for the existence of GOD.

### **Introduction**

In modern contemporary today, atheism is a thought threat to religious communities around the world. Moreover, social media is used to convey their views without borders and restrictions. One of the prominent former Muslim atheist figures is Armin Navabi who has set up an organization for atheists from all over the world and has several branches in several countries. The organization is called "Atheist Republic" with many followers on Facebook. He offers a safe community to atheists from around the world to share their ideas. Navabi was born and raised in the Islamic Republic of Iran in a Muslim family. His history of beginning to reject the fact of divinity in his life began through his doubt on the concept of divinity after studying religious books. This prompted him to leave Islam and become an atheist after seeking religious truth. According to Navabi, he spread the ideology of atheism because he

wanted to interact with others with similar thinking on divinity and religion (<https://www.audible.com/author/Armin-Navabi/B00OBDGR4U>).

### **Background of the Book**

The work of Armin Navabi entitled "*Why there is No GOD; Simple Responses to common Arguments for the Existence of GOD*" (Navabi, 2014) - has been used by him to further spread the ideology of atheism. The book has received encouraging response from various walks of life from all over the world. Through the goodread app, the book gets positive ratings and comments from most of its readers (<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/23346140-why-there-is-no-god>).

This book aims to provide an accurate and easy-to-understand argument in denying the existence of God. It has chapters and each chapter presents a short and concise explanation of the argument, followed by notions that describe the problems and confusions found in religious life. The author says this book gives all the answers as well as the facts why atheists reject belief in God and religion. This article will discuss the arguments used and reviewed based on logical explanation.

### **Ideas of Denial of the Existence of God and Religion**

In the highlights of this book, only three main contents will be selected to be discussed in this article. The arguments used to deny the existence of God include, that science is able to provide an explanation of natural phenomena, the holy book of the Qur'an is man-made and the content of the Qur'an is outdated.

#### **1. Science Can Provide Explanations About Natural Phenomena**

Among the main points discussed by the author, is that science cannot prove the existence of God. According to the author, religion appeared to explain natural phenomena that could not be explained by primitive humans. For example, the phenomena of volcanoes, lightning and floods are associated with the supremacy of God. The developments in the modern world with the advent of science can explain this phenomenon and how it happens. In Navabi's view, God is no longer needed to understand the natural phenomena that take place.

Scientific methods have succeeded in producing more accurate information and explanations about natural phenomena that occur. Explanations involving "supernatural" powers do not give the right answer but the answer is just an excuse to say "I do not know". According to Navabi, there are situations unreachable by human mind, yet using the reason for God's existence to explain the matter is not the right answer, because belief in God's existence will raise more questions than solutions (Navabi, 2014: 10).

A mathematician, Conway (1970) created the model, Game of Life. This model shows how a complex system can occur from several cells according to basic mathematical calculations. As a result, there are differences between the proliferating cells. Some cells have made a very complex symmetrical design and are constantly growing while other cells move to a stagnant stage before growth stops completely. In each case, the resulting design took place entirely according to the mathematical calculations that govern the behavior of the cell, not from the conscious behavior of the person conducting the study. This study illustrates that any system with its own rules can operate on its own and move towards increasingly complex outcomes without outside intervention (Gardner, 1970: 120-123).

Nature occurs by itself naturally according to scientific studies. Hence, asking God for help will not solve human problems, but will create new problems, because if God exists, who created God? If man believes everything has a creator, why does not that rule also apply to God? Science is constantly exploring and studying about the uniqueness of the universe, and not all questions about its uniqueness have answers. Yet for Navabi, inventing stories about the existence of God to provide an explanation of nature and the supernatural is groundless (Navabi, 2014: 11).

## 2. The Holy Quran is Man-Made

In addition, Navabi also rejects the Qur'an which is considered sacred and its contents are considered authentic. The contents are considered glorious and revealed by God. The holy Qur'an is considered a guide for belief and has many historical stories about religion (Navabi, 2014: 13). Navabi claims that not all the content found in the Quran is true and accurate because there are millions of fictional stories throughout the history of human civilization that turns out to be fabricated. Scripture is incapable of proving the truth of its contents. Moreover, the facts found in the scriptures are full of contradictions and it is proven that these scriptures were written and their contents were designed by humans. Although there are few accurate facts about history in them, most of them are just speculations and myths.

Furthermore, each of these scriptures is full of internal errors, inconsistent stories and facts that differ according to the times. Navabi is of the view that these books were compiled by many authors over several centuries. Since scripture is a true reference, the facts contained in it must be consistent (Navabi, 2014: 13).

Navabi claims that there are also some obvious errors in the Qur'an such as the verse which shows the earth is flat with the sun rising and setting in certain parts of the earth (18:86). According to scientific studies, the matter is accurate but unacceptable according to common sense, that the Qur'an was revealed from God through Prophet Muhammad as believed by Muslims (Navabi, 2014: 14). The Qur'an is said to contain scientific discoveries and Muslims believe that the Qur'an is faultless because it can narrate newly discovered scientific studies. According to Navabi, this argument is dubious. If the Qur'an contains scientific findings, why since ancient times did its followers not conduct such studies and show the evidence in front of scientists? Navabi argues, there are no scientific facts found in the Qur'an until scientists submit scientific studies related to nature.

Clearly, the man who wrote the contents of the Qur'an and the stories in the book were told orally through generations and transcribed in the book (Navabi, 2014: 16).

## 3. Contents of the Quran Outdated

Religious texts are generally outdated and cannot be used as a guide in modern times. The content of the scriptures reflects the values that existed in ancient times. Many of the contents found in the Qur'an are problematic.

In the teachings of Islam, the death penalty will be imposed on people who apostatize or turn away from Islam. In some of the most trusted collections of hadith and are the main sources of Islamic law, the Prophet Muhammad demanded the death penalty for apostates. The Prophet (s.a.w) said:

*"The blood of a Muslim who confesses that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that I am His Apostle, cannot be shed except in three cases: In Qisas for murder, a married person who commits illegal sexual intercourse and the one who reverts from Islam (apostate) and leaves the Muslims"(Sahih al-Bukhari, 9, 83: 17).*

The punishment stated above may be appropriate to the time and culture of the author who wrote the content found in the scriptures, but does not mean that the practice is acceptable to society today. (Navabi, 2014: 23).

## Discussion

To discuss the arguments that have been stated above, this section can be divided into several main topics, which are:

### 1. Science Can Provide Explanations on Natural Phenomena

This statement was refuted by an English philosopher named William Paley who held that the universe must have had a creator using the analogy of a watch. When we look at a watch, we know the watch must have a maker. It is impossible that the watch was created by itself (William, 2006). Navabi claims that not all scientific questions have answers that can be elaborated in more detail (Navabi, 2014: 12). This view in itself invalidates his statement, that science is capable of explaining natural phenomena. So is the question of the existence of God.

Logically speaking, did this universe created by itself? Is it acceptable for something to appear on its own? Something created from something that does not exist necessarily requires cause and effect that leads to its creator. If a thing exists, certainly, the universe did not exist before. Tuan Minal presented a proposition about the existence of God through the logical method and divided the proposition into premises, namely the first premise is "this world is new". Next, the second premise says that something new must be anticipated by the Creator who created it. Therefore, the result is that this world needs a Creator which is Allah SWT. Hence, this proves that God does exist. Everything that exists in this world is impossible to be ancient, that is, to exist by itself (Abidin, 1890: 16).

### 2. The Holy Quran is Man-Made

A holy book like the Quran is not a human creation like the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) because the Prophet Muhammad himself was illiterate. How is it possible that a human being who is not good at writing and reading can create historical stories that happened before he was born? And how can human beings possibly create content about scientific studies such as the creation of the sun and earth found in the Quran? Scientific studies have proven, for example, the theory brought by Western scientists about the "big bang" is seen as similar to what Allah SWT explains in surah Al-Anbiya', the verse 30 which means:

*"Do the disbelievers not realize that the heavens and earth were once one mass (ratqa) then We split them apart? (fataq) And We created from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?"*

Said bin Jubair in his explanation for this verse stated that "heaven and earth were previously attached to each other. When the heavens are raised and thus the earth is revealed then

there is a separation and that is what Allah means in this verse. The segment "Big Bang Cosmology" available on the NASA website (<http://map.gsfc.nasa.gov>) states, this natural event began billions of years ago. Nature at that time was only a few millimeters in size. Since then, it has expanded to become what we see today. The majority of scientists agree with the "Big Bang" theory in understanding the beginning of nature which has been mentioned in surah Al-Anbiya', that is, the heavens and the earth were originally indeed joined together (Daniyal, 2009: 30-33). This is unknown in the time of the prophets and messengers, hence the holy book of the Qur'an is also not possible to be written through oral narration by the people who lived after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, since the historical stories of the previous prophets proved to be one hundred percent authentic as the story of Noah's ark. If written through oral narration, there must be little difference in the historical stories that have been recorded in the holy book of the Quran. This proves the Qur'an was revealed by Allah SWT.

### 3. The Outdated Contents of the Quran

God has created the Qur'an with scientific discoveries to ensure that human beings are closer to Him instead of being further away from Him. If the Quran is outdated, why are there numerous scientific studies that modern scientists have just discovered coincide with the verses found in the Quran? Einstein explains that the universe is expanding. The redevelopment of this mystery is driven by an energy called dark energy. About a billion years ago, this mysterious anti-gravity began to push the universe out once again. The Qur'an has described this phenomenon perfectly through its verses:

وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَيْنَاهَا بِأَيْدٍ وَإِنَّا لَمُوسِعُونَ

"We built the universe with great might, and We are certainly expanding it"  
(Quran 51: 48)

This verse explains to man that the universe has expanded. The word '*la-mūsi'ūna*' in Arabic explains that the universe will continue to expand. The Qur'an has also explained the creation of man from the womb to coincide with the scientific explanation according to science.

Allah says:

مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَرْجُونَ لِلَّهِ وَقَارًا وَقَدْ خَلَقَكُمْ أَطْوَارًا

"What is the matter with you that you are not in awe of the Majesty of Allah, when He truly created you in stages of development?"  
(Quran 71:14)

The Qur'an explains that human beings are created through different stages, in various forms and conditions (*atwāra*) starting from semen before becoming a fetus.

The evolution of human biology has been discussed by the Qur'an resembling Darwin's theory of the creation of man in the womb whereas the Qur'an was created before Darwin was born.

### Conclusion

It can be concluded from the above discussion the arguments put forward are contrary to rational thought, as science itself admits not all things can be unraveled. The facts found in the Qur'an are first mentioned in comparison to the discoveries of science, such as the creation of man. Then it was revealed to an illiterate man in a desert far from human

civilization. Many conducted studies show that those who adhere to a religion are more moral than those who are not religious.

Navabi focuses more on criticism of the concept of divinity than religion. He wrote this book covering all the arguments of atheists rejecting the concept of divinity in their lives. These groups claim that life would be more peaceful and undisturbed without religious warfare on the existence of God and demand proof through scientific study that God does exist. Yet they themselves have failed to find answers related to scientific questions for which there are no answers until now. Most of the facts presented by Navabi in this book do not come with concrete evidence, only statements guided by vengeful emotions against God and religion. Therefore, Muslims need to argue based on reason without neglecting the revelation to answer all the questions posed by atheists since they are rejecting revealed arguments.

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