

In the Name of God

Intellect and the Wholly Otherness of God

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A Dialogue between Muslim and Christian Philosophers

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The wholly otherness of God implies deep difficulty in using the experience as an epistemological approach for understanding and demonstrating God's existence and his being agent cause for everything in the world. If we believe that everything has its own existence by God, we cannot find any example of existence giving cause in the world.

The problems that design arguments have been encountered in its history arise, to some extent, from the matter of wholly otherness of God. When someone is asked about an example of the causality of God for something in the world, he makes an example of the causality of a man for his acts like building a home. It is like Demourge, in Platonic philosophy, who creates the world by an existing matter on the model of Ideas. But the relation of God to the world is a kind of existence giving to everything on his own ideas.

All the changes can have some examples as their cause but it is not so for existence giving agent. We can only refer to an example that can illustrate the meaning of existence giver, which is the existence that you give something when you imagine it. The existence of an apple in your imagination depends on your existence-giving act or causation. How can we find an example in a tentative world like this kind of causation? And how can we use the general rule of a tentative world for another world – namely the world of God's existence and his acts in a tentative world?

It seems that on this basis and fact, the existentialists and some fideists try to go beyond the rule of a tentative world and emphasize on "wholly otherness of God". But there is a dilemma here. If we emphasize on wholly otherness of God we cannot find any general rule in our world of experience to be used for demonstrating for the existence of God –which is wholly other. If there is nothing in our world of experience to refer to Him, then how can we understand or speak of Him? On this problem, the problem of the meaninglessness of God's existence and acts has been raised.

Is there any reality that can be used for both world of experiment and the world of God's existence and acts which is wholly other? In Islamic philosophy, the intellectual rules are those realities.

In my paper, I am going to refer to a totally different world of existence giving and the world of experience. It means that we cannot use tentative epistemology for the other world to understand and demonstrate an existence giver. By referring to the fundamental gap between two kinds of worlds, I will demonstrate that the only thing that can be compatible with both worlds is intellect. The intellectual judgments can bring an overall bridge between those worlds. I will show that there are some intellectual ideas- like existence, necessity, causality, unity- that is compatible with all possible worlds; therefore religious epistemology must use them –in its intellectual entity- for demonstrating the existence-giving of God.

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