

# تحليل ونشأة الكون واتساعه في القرآن الكريم مع التركيز على نظرية نور الأنوار للسهروردي

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## الملخص

وفقاً لنظرية الانفجار العظيم (النظرية الأكثر قبولاً في نشأة الكون)، فإن كل المادة والطاقة كانت في وقت ما في كرة صغيرة حارة بشكل لانهاثي، والتي انفجرت وبعد الانفجار، وُجد الكون المادي وهو في حالة اتساع مستمر. يشير القرآن الكريم في آيات مختلفة إلى كون أجزاء العالم متصلة ثم انفصالها عن بعضها البعض واتساعها. يتحدث السهروردي في فلسفته بطريقة أخرى، أي عن إشراق الأنوار، حول خلق العالم. المسألة الرئيسية في هذه المقالة، التي كُتبت بالطريقة الوصفية التحليلية، هي: هل آيات القرآن المجيد في دين الإسلام والفيزياء الحديثة متوافقة أم غير متوافقة؟ هل خلق العالم في دين الإسلام والفيزياء الحديثة وفلسفة السهروردي، مقصور على هذا العالم المادي أم أن هناك عوالم أخرى قد أخذت في الاعتبار في جميع الحالات الثلاث؟ من خلال الدراسات التي أجريت، يثبت تأكيد كون دين الإسلام متوافقاً مع الفيزياء الحديثة فقط في نشأة الكون المادي واتساعه؛ في حين أن فلسفة السهروردي لا تتفق مع رؤية الفيزياء الحديثة أو مع مفهوم الرتق والفتق القرآني في نشأة العالم.

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## المقدمة

تعد مسألة كيفية نشأة الكون وتوسعه أحد الأسئلة الأساسية في تاريخ الفكر البشري، والتي نوقشت في مجالات مختلفة من الفلسفة والدين والعلم. في العصر الحاضر، تُطرح نظرية الانفجار العظيم (Big Bang) باعتبارها النظرية العلمية الأكثر قبولاً في علم الكونيات، والتي تؤكد على انفجار نقطة كثيفة وحارة بشكل لانهاثي، والتوسع المستمر للكون بعد ذلك. من ناحية أخرى، تناولت النصوص الدينية مثل القرآن الكريم في آيات أخرى وصف بدء الخلق وتطور الكون. كذلك، تقدم فلسفة الإشراق للسهروردي بنظرية "نور الأنوار" رواية مختلفة وميتافيزيقية عن نشأة العالم. المسألة الرئيسية لهذا البحث هي دراسة التوافق أو التعارض المحتمل بين هذه المنظورات الثلاثة (القرآن، الفيزياء الحديثة، وفلسفة الإشراق) في وصف بدء الكون المادي واتساعه. تكمن أهمية هذا البحث في أنه يمكن أن يساعد في فهم العلاقة بين العلم والدين والفلسفة في أحد أكثر الموضوعات الوجودية أساسية. الهدف العام للمقالة هو التحليل المقارن لمفهوم نشأة الكون واتساعه في القرآن والفيزياء الحديثة وفلسفة السهروردي. وتشمل الأهداف الخاصة: ١. توضيح رؤية القرآن بالاعتماد على مفاهيم "الرُّنق" و "الْفَتْق" و "الانبساط"؛ ٢. دراسة نظرية الانفجار العظيم وأدلتها؛ ٣. تحليل النظام النوري وفيض الوجود في فلسفة الإشراق؛ و ٤. مقارنة نقاط الالتقاء والافتراق بين هذه المنظورات الثلاثة. السؤال الرئيسي للبحث هو: هل آيات القرآن حول نشأة الكون واتساعه متوافقة مع الفيزياء الحديثة (الانفجار العظيم)؟ وما موقع نظرية السهروردي في هذا المجال؟ نطاق الدراسة من حيث الموضوع، يقتصر على مسألة نشأة الكون المادي واتساعه، ومن حيث المصادر، يشمل القرآن، والتفسيرات المختارة، وأسس فيزياء الكونيات، والأعمال الرئيسية للسهروردي.

## منهجية البحث

هذا البحث من النوع الأساسي-النظري وقد أُجري بالطريقة الوصفية-التحليلية والمقارنة. هدفه هو تحليل المفاهيم وتقديم فهم منظم للعلاقة بين المجالات المعرفية الثلاثة. صُمم منهج البحث على أساس الدراسة المكتبية وتحليل محتوى النصوص. المجتمع الإحصائي للبحث يشمل النصوص الأساسية للقرآن والتفسيرات المرتبطة (مثل الميزان، والنموذج، وجوامع الجامع).

والمصادر المعتمدة في الفيزياء وعلم الكونيات حول نظرية الانفجار العظيم، والأعمال الرئيسية للشيخ شهاب الدين السهروردي (خصوصاً "حكمة الإشراق"). تم أخذ العينات بطريقة هادفة وتم اختيار الآيات القرآنية الرئيسية (مثل الآية ٣٠ من سورة الأنبياء والآية ٤٧ من سورة الذاريات)، والمفاهيم المحورية لفيزياء الانفجار العظيم، والمبادئ الأساسية لفلسفة الإشراق ودراساتها. الأداة الرئيسية لجمع البيانات هي التلخيص من المصادر الأولية وتحليل محتواها النوعي. لضمان الصدق (الصلاحية)، تم الرجوع إلى الوثائق والتفسيرات المعتمدة والمعروفة. كما تم تأمين الثبات (الموثوقية) من خلال الاستشهاد الدقيق بالمصادر وتقديم تحليلات منطقية موثقة. طريقة تحليل البيانات هي نوعية وتمت من خلال تحليل المحتوى والمقارنة التطبيقية. في هذه الطريقة، تم استخراج المفاهيم الأساسية لكل منظور ووصفها ثم مقارنتها ببعضها البعض لتحديد نقاط التقاطع والتمييز. مراحل تنفيذ البحث كانت كما يلي: ١. جمع ودراسة المصادر في المجالات الثلاثة: القرآن، الفيزياء، وفلسفة الإشراق. ٢. استخراج المفاهيم المحورية لكل مجال. ٣. تحليل وتفسير هذه المفاهيم في إطارها الخاص. ٤. المقارنة المنهجية للمفاهيم مع بعضها البعض. ٥. الاستنتاج والتلخيص النهائي.

## النتائج

يمكن تنظيم نتائج هذا البحث في عدة محاور رئيسية:

١. منظور القرآن: الرتق، الفتق، والانبساط يُظهر البحث أن القرآن في الآية ٣٠ من سورة الأنبياء يشير إلى الحالة الأولية "لِرْتَقٍ" (الاتصال والتداخل) السماوات والأرض ثم يتحدث عن "فَتْقَهَا" (انفصالهما وانشقاقهما). دُكرت تفسيرات مختلفة لهذا التعبير، بما في ذلك الاتصال الفيزيائي للسماء والأرض، وعدم نزول المطر ونمو النبات، واتحاد جميع جسيمات العالم. يطرح العلامة الطباطبائي، بالاستناد إلى مفهوم "القوة والفعل"، رؤية مفادها أن جميع الموجودات كانت موجودة بالقوة في ذلك الوجود الرتق، وبعد الفتق، تحققت بالفعل. هذا التفسير يتوافق مع مفهوم "المفردة الأولية" في نظرية الانفجار العظيم.

في الآية ٤٧ من سورة الذاريات، يؤكد القرآن بعبارة «وَإِنَّا لَمُوسِعُونَ» على اتساع السماوات المستمر. يرى المفسرون المعاصرون، بالاستناد إلى الاكتشافات الفلكية الجديدة، أن هذه الآية تشير إلى الاتساع المستمر للكون. يشير البناء النحوي "اسم الفاعل" في «لَمُوسِعُونَ» إلى استمرارية هذا الفعل.

٢. منظور الفيزياء الحديثة: نظرية الانفجار العظيم واتساع الكون تم تأكيد نظرية الانفجار العظيم بأدلة قوية مثل إشعاع الخلفية الكوني الميكروي (CMB) ، والانزياح الأحمر للمجرات، ووفرة العناصر الخفيفة. تنص هذه النظرية على أن الكون بدأ من حالة كثيفة وحارة بشكل لانهائي وهو في حالة اتساع حتى اليوم.

نقاط التوافق مع القرآن: كلاهما يشير إلى بداية محددة (الرتق/المفردة)، والانفصال والتوسع (الفتق/الانفجار والاتساع)، والتطور المستمر (مُوسِعُونَ/الاتساع المتسارع) للكون. هذا التوافق موجود بشكل رئيسي على مستوى وصف كيفية نشأة الكون المادي.

٣. منظور السهروردي: نظام فيض نور الأنوار في فلسفة الإشراق، يبدأ العالم من نور الأنوار (الوجود المحض والبسيط). وفقاً لمبدأ "من الواحد لا يصدر إلا الواحد"، فإن أول صادر عن نور الأنوار هو النور الأقرب. ثم تتشكل التسلسلات الطولية والعرضية للأنوار المجردة عبر الإشراق (الفيض والانتشار). العالم المادي أو البرزخ، هو أدنى مرتبة في هذا التسلسل الذي ينبع من الأنوار المجردة. نقاط الافتراق مع القرآن والفيزياء: ١. آلية الخلق: يرى السهروردي أن النشأة هي عملية فيض دائم وخارج عن الزمن، بينما يتحدث القرآن والفيزياء عن حدث زمني (الفتق/الانفجار). ٢. نوع التفسير: تفسير السهروردي كفي، ميتافيزيقي، وغائي، في حين أن التفسير الفيزيائي كمي، مادي، وقائم على القوانين الميكانيكية. ٣. مجال الوجود: تقول فلسفة الإشراق والقرآن بعوالم متعددة مجردة وروحانية (العقل، المثال، الملكوت)، لكن الفيزياء الحديثة تتعامل فقط مع هذا العالم المادي.

٤. الإجابة على سؤال البحث: بناءً على التحليل أعلاه، هناك توافق ملحوظ بين وصف القرآن ونظرية الانفجار العظيم فيما يتعلق بكيفية نشأة الكون المادي واتساعه. هذا التوافق على مستوى وصف الظواهر الفيزيائية (الرتق = المفردة، الفتق = الانفجار والانفصال، موسعون = اتساع). لكن فلسفة السهروردي تتعارض مع كلا المنظورين في المنهج والآلية الأساسية؛ لأنه يرى الخلق كعملية فيض نوري دائم، وليس كحدث انفجاري زمني في المادة.

## الخاتمة

بحثت هذه الدراسة مقارنة مفهوم نشأة الكون واتساعه من منظور القرآن والفيزياء الحديثة وفلسفة إشراق السهروردي. أهم نتائجها كانت أنه على الرغم من أن الأوصاف القرآنية لبدء الكون وتوسعه تبدو متوافقة وحتى تنبؤية مع نتائج نظرية الانفجار العظيم، إلا أن نظرية السهروردي تختلف في

جوهرها (آلية الفيض النوري) عن كلا الرؤيتين الأخيرين بشكل جوهري. إن توافق القرآن والعلم هنا يشير في المقام الأول إلى مستوى الوصف الطبيعي للظواهر.

التفسير والتبيين: يمكن اعتبار هذا التوافق دليلاً على عدم تعارض القرآن مع العقل والعلم في وصف عالم الخلق. لقد أشار القرآن بلغة معجزة إلى حقائق وصل إليها البشر بعد قرون عديدة باستخدام أدوات العلم. ومع ذلك، تختلف الأهداف والطرق: يشير القرآن إلى الغاية والخالق («وَمَا فَتَقْنَا هُمْ») ، بينما يتعامل العلم مع الكيفية والقوانين المادية، وتركز فلسفة الإشراق على التفسير الميتافيزيقي وتدرجات الوجود. يسعى السهروردي إلى تفسير "السببية" و"المصدر" للوجود في إطار النظام النوري، بينما تبحث الفيزياء في "كيفية" تطورات المادة-الطاقة.

من الناحية النظرية، يقدم هذا البحث نموذجاً لحوار بناء بين العلم والدين والفلسفة ويظهر أن هذه المجالات يمكن أن تكمل بعضها البعض على مستويات مختلفة. من الناحية العملية، يمكن أن يساهم في تعزيز النظرة المتكاملة في الدراسات متعددة التخصصات، وتوضيح مناقشات العلم والدين للعامة، وتقديم إجابة استدلالية على شبهات تعارض العلم والقرآن في هذا المجال. ركزت المقالة على تفسير محدد للآيات القرآنية ونظرية فلسفية واحدة (الإشراق). أيضاً، نظريات علم الكونيات في تطور مستمر. لم يسمح حجم المناقشات الفيزيائية والفلسفية بدراسة متعمقة لجميع التفاصيل.

# Analysis and Examination of the Origin and Expansion of the Universe in the Qur'an With Emphasis on Light of Lights (Nūr al-Anwār) Suhrawardī's Theory

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## ABSTRACT

According to the Big Bang theory (the most widely accepted theory regarding the origin of the universe), all matter and energy were once contained within an infinitely small, intensely hot sphere that exploded, giving rise to the material universe, which has continuously expanded ever since. The Holy Qur'an, in various verses, alludes to the initial connectedness of the universe's components, their subsequent separation, and their ongoing expansion. Suhrawardī, in his philosophy, posits the creation of the universe differently, namely through the emanation of lights. The primary question addressed in this article, which is written using a descriptive-analytical method, is: Are the verses of the Holy Qur'an and modern physics in harmony or in conflict? Is the creation of the universe in Islam, modern physics, and Suhrawardī's philosophy limited to the material world? Or are other realms acknowledged in all three frameworks? Based on the investigations conducted, it is demonstrated that Islam is confirmatory and consistent with modern physics only concerning the origin and expansion of the material universe, whereas Suhrawardī's philosophy does not align with modern physics or the Qur'anic concept of 'ratq and fatq'" (joining and separating) concerning the origin of the universe.

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## Introduction

The question of the origin of the universe has been a fundamental issue in the Qur'an and in the thought of Muslim intellectuals such as Suhrawardī. It also has a long history, traceable from ancient cosmology to quantum foam – a journey through the theories of the material world. The issue of the origin and nature of the material world has perplexed humanity since the dawn of consciousness. From the speculative thoughts of ancient philosophers to the precise equations of modern physicists, the search for understanding of the fundamental building blocks of reality has been a constant intellectual endeavor. This article traces the evolution of thought on this subject from the early concepts of the Greeks to the advanced theories of the 21st century, and subsequently examines the theory of the Master of Illumination (Shaykh al-Ishrāq), grounded in Qur'anic propositions.

## Ancient Greek Philosophy: The First Steps

The Milesian School, often considered the birthplace of Western philosophy, initiated the exploration of the origin of the material world. Thales proposed water as the fundamental substance, while Anaximander proposed an indefinite and boundless principle called the *apeiron*. Anaximenes suggested air as the primary element. These early philosophers, by presenting a rational approach to cosmology, distanced themselves from mythological explanations. Slightly later, Pythagoras and his followers introduced mathematical dimensions to these speculations, positing that numbers constitute the essence of reality. This Pythagorean influence continued, shaping later philosophical and scientific thought. Heraclitus introduced the concept of flux, arguing that everything is in a state of change, while Parmenides countered with the idea of a fixed, unchanging Being. Democritus, a student of Leucippus, presented a pioneering atomic theory, suggesting that the world is composed of indivisible particles called atoms. This atomic hypothesis, though refined over time, remains a conceptual cornerstone in modern atomic theory.

### **The Middle Ages and Renaissance: A Pause in Speculation**

The medieval worldview was primarily shaped by Christian theology, which provided a comprehensive framework for understanding the world and its origin. The prevailing view was that the world was created by God, *ex nihilo* (from nothing), as explained in the biblical book of Genesis. The creation narrative in Genesis served as the foundational text for Western medieval cosmology. It outlined a sequential creation beginning with light, then the heavens, water, earth, and finally plants, animals, and humans. This narrative was widely accepted and incorporated into various theological and philosophical works of the period. Saint Augustine, a prominent early medieval theologian, offered a philosophical interpretation of Genesis in his work *Confessions*, arguing for a figurative interpretation of the creation story while acknowledging the limitations of human understanding. St. Augustine's analysis of the biblical text and philosophical reasoning was influential in shaping medieval thought. Medieval thinkers envisioned a hierarchical universe with God at its apex. This cosmic order was often depicted through the Great Chain of Being, placing humans between angels and animals. The physical world was believed to be divided into two realms: the celestial and the terrestrial. The celestial realm was perfect and unchanging, the home of heavenly bodies and angels. The terrestrial realm, including the earth, was imperfect and subject to change and decay. While theology dominated medieval thought, engagement with philosophical and scientific inquiry was limited about the cosmos. Scholars, particularly those influenced by Aristotle and his commentaries, examined the nature of matter, motion, and the cosmos. However, their inquiries were always conducted within the framework of Christian orthodoxy. In the late medieval period, cracks began to appear in the traditional worldview. The rise of universities and the rediscovery of classical Greek texts led to a renewed interest in natural philosophy. Scholars like Roger Bacon and Albertus Magnus began to emphasize empirical observation and experiment, paving the way for the Scientific Revolution.

### The Enlightenment and Classical Physics

The Enlightenment represented a radical departure from the theocentric worldview that had dominated medieval thought. Characterized by reason, empiricism, and a spirit of inquiry, this era witnessed a profound shift in how people understood the world and its origin. The predominant paradigm that emerged during the Enlightenment was a mechanistic worldview. Influenced by the growing fields of physics and mathematics, this perspective viewed the universe as a vast, intricate machine governed by precise laws. God, while often still acknowledged as the ultimate creator, was increasingly relegated to the role of a cosmic watchmaker who set the world in motion and then allowed it to operate according to natural laws. Isaac Newton's *Principia Mathematica* (1687) was the cornerstone of this mechanistic worldview. Newton's laws of motion and universal gravitation provided a mathematical framework for understanding the physical universe. He argued for a universe governed by deterministic laws, where every effect has a cause. René Descartes' philosophy of dualism, separating mind from matter, laid the groundwork for the modern scientific approach. Pierre-Simon Laplace famously articulated the deterministic nature of the universe in his statement: "An intellect which at a certain moment would know all forces that set nature in motion, and all positions of all items of which nature is composed, if this intellect were also vast enough to submit these data to analysis, it would embrace in a single formula the movements of the greatest bodies of the universe and those of the tiniest atom; for such an intellect nothing would be uncertain and the future just like the past would be present before its eyes." While the mechanistic worldview was dominant, it was not without critics. Philosophers like Immanuel Kant argued for the limitations of human knowledge and the existence of things-in-themselves (*noumena*) beyond the grasp of empirical science. Furthermore, the concept of time, which was relatively unproblematic in the Newtonian framework, came under scrutiny with the development of the theory of relativity in the early 20th century. Despite these challenges, the Enlightenment emphasis on reason, observation, and mathematical modeling laid the foundation for the remarkable scientific progress of the following centuries. The mechanistic worldview, while ultimately superseded by more complex models, provided a crucial stepping stone in humanity's effort to comprehend the cosmos.

### **The Quantum Revolution**

The early 20th century brought a fundamental shift in our understanding of the material world with the advent of quantum mechanics. Max Planck, Albert Einstein, Niels Bohr, and Werner Heisenberg introduced concepts that challenged classical intuition. Quantum theory revealed the probabilistic nature of reality, showing that particles could exhibit both wave-like and particle-like properties. Quantum mechanics, the theory describing the physical properties of nature at the scale of atoms and subatomic particles, offers significant or critical insights into the origin of the universe. While still an active field of research, several promising theories have emerged. One of the most intriguing ideas is the role of quantum fluctuations in the birth of the cosmos.

Quantum mechanics tells us that even in empty space, there are constant energy fluctuations that create pairs of particles and antiparticles which pop into and out of existence. This concept describes the universe at its smallest scale as a foamy, chaotic sea of energy fluctuations. This theory indicates that the universe, immediately after the Big Bang, underwent a period of rapid expansion known as inflation. Quantum fluctuations during this period could have been stretched to cosmic scales, seeding the formation of galaxies, stars, and planets. To fully understand the birth of the cosmos, we need a theory that combines quantum mechanics with gravity. This is known as quantum gravity and remains one of the greatest challenges in physics. This epoch refers to the first moments in the universe's history, when temperature and density were extraordinarily high. The effects of quantum gravity would have been dominant during this epoch. This field attempts to apply quantum mechanics to the entire universe, exploring possibilities such as a "quantum bounce" instead of a singular Big Bang. String theory also offers a potential framework for unifying quantum mechanics and gravity, though it remains highly speculative.

In conclusion, quantum mechanics provides a fascinating lens through which to view the origin of the universe. While we still have much to learn, exploring these ideas brings us closer to understanding the fundamental nature of reality.

### **Modern Physics and Cosmology**

The latter half of the 20th century saw further advances in our understanding of the universe. The Big Bang theory, supported by observational evidence, provides a compelling account of the universe's origin and evolution. The discovery of the Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB) radiation strongly bolstered this theory. Particle physics has investigated the fundamental constituents of matter, identifying quarks and leptons as the building blocks. The highly successful Standard Model describes the interactions between these particles. However, challenges such as the nature of dark matter and dark energy remain. The dominant cosmological model for the origin and evolution of the universe is the Big Bang theory. This theory posits that the universe began as an extremely hot, dense point and has been expanding rapidly over billions of years to reach its current state. A fundamental question is how the Big Bang theory can be empirically supported. Evidence supporting this includes:

- Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB): The afterglow of the early universe, matching theoretical predictions.

- Redshift of Galaxies: Galaxies are moving away from each other, indicating expansion.

- Abundance of Light Elements: The levels of hydrogen, helium, and lithium align with Big Bang nucleosynthesis predictions.

- Large-Scale Structure: The distribution of galaxies matches simulations based on the Big Bang.

Notably, the Big Bang theory faces several unresolved challenges, such as the Singularity Problem, the Horizon Problem, dark matter and dark energy, the Flatness Problem, Baryon Asymmetry, and other issues. These challenges serve as the driving force and motivation for ongoing research and the development of new theories, such as string theory and loop quantum gravity, to reconcile the Big Bang with the principles of quantum mechanics and general relativity.

The Qur'an, and the Connection, Separation, and Expansion of the Universe

According to the perspective of Islamic philosophers and mystics, in addition to the material (corporeal) world-which this article focuses on-other realms exist. In Islamic philosophy, these are known as the World of Intellects ('*Ālam al-'Uqūl*) and the World of Images ('*Ālam al-Mithāl*), and in mysticism ('*Irfān*), they are referred to as the Realms of Divinity (*Lāhūt*), Omnipotence (*Jabarūt*), and Sovereignty (*Malakūt*) (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Treatises on Unity*, 1388 SH, p. 158). This article, however, focuses on discussing the material world and the manner of its genesis.

The verses in the Holy Qur'an describing the connection and subsequent separation of the universe's entities, followed by their expansion, are acknowledged today as an established scientific principle in academic circles-a principle that was mentioned in the Qur'an over a thousand years before the discovery of the Big Bang theory.

Surah Al-Anbiyā', Verse 30:

أَوَلَمْ يَرِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا<sup>ط</sup> وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ أَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

"Have those who disbelieved not considered that the heavens and the earth were a joined entity, and We separated them and made from water every living thing? Then will they not believe?"

This verse is frequently referenced in discussions connecting the Qur'anic narrative of creation with modern cosmological theories, including the initial singularity and the expansion of the universe.

### How the Material World Was Created According to the Islamic Perspective

God, who is the ultimate cause of the existence and creator of the heavens and the earth, is also the cause of the expansion of the universe's entities. According to Verse 30 of Surah Al-Anbiyā', God created the natural or material world through *Ratq* and *Fathq* (joining and separating). But what precisely do these terms signify?

*Ratq* means the continuity and conjoining of two things, whether in terms of their intrinsic creation and nature or due to divine power and craftsmanship. As the verse states: "The heavens and the earth were a joined entity, and We separated them..." (Al-Anbiyā', 21:30). This means: at the inception of creation, the heavens and the earth were conjoined, God then separated and expanded them. (Rāghib al-İṣfahānī, *Mufradāt*, Vol. 1, p. 197)

Qur'anic exegetes have elaborated that *Ratq* means closing and ordering, and *Fathq* means opening, splitting, as the opposite of *Ratq*. This indicates that the heavens and the earth were initially closed, compressed into one another, and ultimately like a single mass or entity. Then, through *Fathq*-opening and creating distances between particles—they came to be as they are. (Qurashī, *Qāmūs-e Qur'ān*, Vol. 4, p. 192)

Allāmah Ṭabrisī, in his commentary *Jawāmi' al-Jāmi'*, identifies three possible interpretations of the verse “the heavens and the earth were closed, and We split them open” which are:

1. The heavens and the earth were initially so connected that no open space existed between them.

2. The heavens were conjoined, and likewise, the earth lacked gaps or fissures; God then separated all elements and created distances between them.

3. The phrase may also refer to the opening of the heavens and the earth through rainfall and vegetation after they were initially barren and conjoined—a view narrated from the Imams (peace be upon them) (Ṭabrisī, *Jawāmi' al-Jāmi'*, Vol. 3, p. 225).

This verse, in his view, refers to the separation of the heavens and the earth from one another after they had been connected and joined, although he also makes a reference to the non-falling of rain from the sky and the non-growing of plants from the earth.

In the commentaries related to this noble verse, there is no discussion of the heaven and the earth being independent of each other before the Big Bang. What is present in the commentaries is based on the creation of the universe through the splitting and expansion of all existence.

Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, in *Al-Mīzān*, surveys differing exegetical views on this verse:

The First View: From this Verse 30 of Surah Al-Anbiyā', "the earth and the heaven were stuck together, and We separated them," it appears that *Fathq* means separation, which is the opposite of connection. This means the heavens and the earth were connected, and God separated them from one another. (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mīzān*, Vol. 14, p. 313)

The Second View: In explaining this view, Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī gives the example of the separation of plants, animals, and humans from each other and said: We constantly observe the separation of earthly and heavenly compounds from each other; for instance, separation of various plants from the earth, animals from other animals, and humans from other humans. Just as elements are continually separating from the earth and manifesting as compounds and generated beings, and as emergent phenomena likewise appear within the atmosphere, this process points to the reality that all such distinct entities were once ordered and interconnected. In other words, there was originally no distinction between the earth and the heavens; rather, they constituted a single entity. This unified reality was in a state of *ratq* (integration and cohesion), after which God Almighty effected *fatq* (separation), and through a firm and precise ordering, brought forth countless beings from the womb of that primordial unity. (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mīzān*, Vol. 14, p. 316)

In his view, the effects that become actualized at the time of separation also exist during the state of connection, but they were deposited within it potentially. That is, all beings were present *potentially* during the state of *Ratq* and connection, and after *Fathq* and separation, they became actualized and took the form of the heaven, the earth, and the beings between them. (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mīzān*, Vol. 14, p. 313)

Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī concludes that the first view-where the heavens and the earth were initially connected and possessed the potential to transform into all subsequent beings before being separated-aligns closely with modern scientific understanding of the universe's origin and expansion.

### **The Qur'an and the Expansion of the Universe**

God states in Surah Al-Dhāriyāt regarding the heavens and the earth: "And the heaven We constructed with strength, and indeed, We are [its] expander. And the earth We have spread out, and excellent is the preparer." (Al-Dhāriyāt, 51:47-48). Although various opinions have been expressed regarding the meaning of "Indeed, We are expanders," some recent commentaries interpret it as indicating continuous and perpetual expansion.

Some commentators, consider the meaning of "*Innā lamūsi'ūn*" to be the expansion of the universe and that God is causing its expansion. Considering the recent discoveries of scientists regarding the expansion of the universe, which have also been confirmed through empirical observations, a more subtle meaning can be found for the verse: that God created the heavens and is continuously expanding them. Modern science also says, not only does the earth gradually increase in mass and volume due to the attraction of celestial matter, but the heavens are also expanding; meaning the stars within a galaxy are moving rapidly away from the galaxy's center. Indeed, the speed of this expansion has been measured on many occasions.

It is noteworthy that the expression "*Innā lamūsi'ūn*" ("Indeed, We are expanders"), using a nominal sentence and an active participle in Arabic, indicates the permanence and continuity of the universe, showing that this expansion has always existed and continues to do so. This view is precisely what modern physicists have concluded: that all celestial bodies and galaxies were initially gathered in a single center, then an immense and enormous explosion occurred. Following that, the components of the universe scattered and took the form of celestial bodies that are rapidly forming and evolving. (Makārim Shīrāzī, *Tafsīr Nemūneh*, Vol. 22, p. 410)

Ibn 'Arabī, in his interpretation of Verse 30 of Surah Al-Anbiyā', refers to the prime matter (Aristotelian matter), stating that the entire universe and all within it came into being from a single matter. That matter held the potential and capacity for all things, including the cosmos, the earth, and the heaven (they were conjoined). After the separation of this pure potentiality, the components of the universe (smoke, gas, water, and ultimately the heavens, the earth, planets, stars, galaxies, and so on.) took shape. (Ibn 'Arabī, *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*, Vol. 2, p. 313)

The expression "*lamūsi'ūn*" ("We are expanders") also indicates that this expansion has always existed and continues to exist, and that celestial bodies and galaxies existed potentially within the prime matter before their genesis. Then a great explosion occurred within that matter, and the potential components of that matter rapidly became actual. This transformation of potential matter into actuality continues to expand.

### How Multiplicity Arose from the Perspective of Suhrawardī

Suhrawardī's ontological model is entirely different from other common ontological models in conventional philosophies. In this model, the relations and connections among entities and the hierarchy of existents are explained based on luminous relations and the reciprocal radiations of luminous essences. For this reason, it exhibits explanatory capabilities rarely found in other philosophical systems. (Dhabābī, *The Philosophy of Illumination: A Study*, p. 58)

### The Process of Emanation of Lower Lights from Higher Lights

The Master of Illumination (Shaykh al-Ishrāq) posits four luminous realms: Pure Abstract Lights, Governing Lights, Suspended Images (*Muthul Mu'allaqah*), and the Barzakh. Light, the axis of Illuminationist ontology, exists in degrees; consequently, the entire Illuminationist ontological system also exhibits hierarchical gradations. The most perfect and intense light is the Light of Lights (*Nūr al-Anwār*). The first emanation from the Light of Lights is the Proximate Light (*Nūr al-Aqrab*).

According to the principle "from the One, only one proceeds" (*al-wāḥid lā yaṣdur 'anhu illā al-wāḥid*), only one effect proceeds from the Light of Lights, because the Sublime Truth is in the utmost state of unity and is simple (without composition). If two or several effects – whether luminous or dark (Barzakhi) – were to proceed from Him, it would necessitate the existence of two or more aspects in the Light of Lights, which would imply composition in His Essence. (Suhrawardī, *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq*, Vol. 2, p. 132)

The first emanation from the Light of Lights is the Great Light, also called the Proximate Light. Some Pahlavi sages referred to this Proximate Light as 'Bahman. According to Suhrawardī, the entire realm of existence is structured according to the principles of love and hierarchical domination. He believes that in the nature (genus) of the deficient light is love for the superior light, and in the nature of the superior light is domination over the inferior light. (Suhrawardī, *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq*, Vol. 2, p. 110)

[Footnote 1: It is called the Great Light because the higher and more intense a light is, the greater its majesty and overpowering nature becomes. (Yazdān Panāh, 1396 SH, p. 133) ]

### What is Meant by "Ishrāq" (Illumination/Emanation)?

Suhrawardī does not conceive the "illumination" (*ishrāq*) of the Light of Lights on non-material lights as something distinct (*munfaṣīl*) from Him. Rather, His illumination is the radiant light that emanates from the Light of Lights and is realized in the abstract light, without any actual separation occurring. He considers the observation (*mushāhadah*) of all lights by the abstract light itself to constitute this illumination, calling it 'incidental light' (*nūr sāniḥ*) light incidental to the abstract light. (Suhrawardī, *Hikmat al-Ishrāq*, Vol. 2, p. 116)

Therefore, the Light of Lights not only brings the Proximate Light into existence but also casts incidental illuminations (*ishrāqāt 'ardiyyah*) on the Proximate Light. Specifically, the Light of Lights has both a longitudinal illumination (*ishrāq ṭūlī*), which brings the Proximate Light into existence, and a latitudinal illumination (*ishrāq 'ardī*), which casts incidental lights upon the Proximate Light. Such illuminations, which emanate laterally from the Light of Lights in a latitudinal manner, are called "incidental lights" (*anwār sāniḥah*).

### Points of Divergence

1. One area of divergence is that Islam and the Philosophy of Illumination (*Hikmat al-Ishrāq*), in addition to the corporeal world, affirm the existence of luminous and spiritual realms alongside the material world, which preceded the genesis of the latter or the Barzakh (isthmus). In modern physics, however, the only existing world is this material one.

2. In Islam and the Philosophy of Illumination, the universe is completely imbued with a divine imprint, to the extent that they consider the efficient and final cause of the universe to be the One God. In contrast, modern physics shows no trace of divinity; rather, it attributes the emergence of the world to a gravitational force – a creation of the One God.

3. In the view of Islamic mystics and philosophers, the origin of the world is prime matter. Modern physics, however, posits that the universe was initially an extremely hot singularity which exploded fifteen billion (~13.8 billion) years ago.

### Fundamental Differences

1. Suhrawardī's Philosophy of Illumination holds that the corporeal world (*Barzakh*) was brought into being through the emanation (*ishrāq*) of abstract lights from their superiors—a view contrary to both the Qur'anic perspective and modern physics.

2. This very world, following its *Ratq* and *Fathq* (joining and separating) in the Qur'anic perspective, or through emanation in the Philosophy of Illumination, has a Lord and Sustainer who perpetually manages it. The post-Big Bang universe, lacking a divine creator, also lacks a manager and nurturer.

3. According to modern physics, the universe may, after various transformations, return to its primordial state. It may expand eternally, becoming colder, emptier, and more lifeless; or it may contract once more, eventually reverting to its constituent components. According to Suhrawardī's philosophy, the emanation (*fayḍ*) from the Light of Lights (*Nūr al-Anwār*) is eternal, and since the Light of Lights, as the agent of existents, is immutable and indestructible, the universe will be eternal due to His permanence.

According to verses such as "Indeed we belong to God, and indeed to Him we will return" (Al-Baqarah, 2:156) and "Unquestionably, to God belong all matters" (Al-Shūrā, 42:53), the ultimate end of all beings is solely to reach God. Ṣadrā al-Shīrāzī also states on this topic: "Every deficient corporeal being returns from this world to the world of spirits, then to the world of intellects, and finally to the Creator, to whom matters ultimately return." (Ṣadrā, *Al-Hikmah al-Muta'āliyah*, p. 736). The material world and all beings, which move within their essence and substance in accordance with substantial motion (*al-ḥarakat al-jawhariyyah*), move toward their ultimate intellectual-divine end. (Ibid., p. 877)

### Conclusion

In general, Suhrawardī presented a metaphysical cosmology rooted in Neoplatonism, aspects of which—particularly concerning light—were later traced through the Middle Ages. His concept of the "Light of Lights" as the ultimate reality bears some resemblance to the idea of a

primordial energetic state before cosmic expansion, as suggested by the Big Bang theory. However, Suhrawardī's cosmology is primarily qualitative and metaphysical, whereas modern physics is quantitative and empirical. The Qur'an, as a religious text, offers a symbolic and spiritual narrative of creation. Verses such as "Have those who disbelieved not considered that the heavens and the earth were a joined entity, and We separated them..." (Al-Anbiyā', 21:30) can be interpreted in light of the concept of cosmic expansion. The Big Bang theory, nonetheless, focuses on scientific explanation, while the Qur'an's primary concern lies in theological and ethical dimensions.

In essence, while interesting parallels exist among these views on the origin of the universe, they differ fundamentally in methodology, objectives, and underlying assumptions. Suhrawardī's philosophy provides a metaphysical framework; the Qur'an offers a spiritual and ethical compass; and the Big Bang theory presents a scientific explanation. A comprehensive understanding of the universe requires considering these diverse approaches in relation to one another.

### **Final Synthesis**

Concerning the interpretation of the genesis of the material world in the verses of the Holy Qur'an, it has been concluded that the entities of the universe originated from a single matter possessing the potential for all things, including the earth and the heavens, which were initially conjoined. After the separation or explosion of this pure potentiality, the components of the universe (smoke, gas, water, and ultimately the heavens, the earth, planets, stars, galaxies, etc.) took shape. Considering Verse 47 of Surah Al-Dhāriyāt ("And the heaven We constructed with strength, and indeed, We are [its] expander"), these entities are rapidly developing.

God, who is the simple, unlimited existent, encompasses finite existents from within and without. No matter how far apart these existents may be, they cannot go beyond the encompassment of God, that is, they are not outside of God. Therefore, it must be accepted that existents expand within existence itself. Since God's existence has no limit, no matter how much finite existents expand, there remains room

for further expansion. This expansion does not necessitate a widening of the circle of existence itself, because the unconditioned existence which is God has no boundary whatsoever.

Suhrawardī does not confine creation and emanation to a specific time, believing that the emanation of the Light of Lights is eternal. This is because the agent of the universe neither changes nor perishes; therefore, the universe endures through His eternal constancy. This is the very infinitude of the beings of the universe, both luminous and dark, and it is the reason for their multiplicity and expansion, even if their modes of creation are described differently.

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