Essay

GOD, Scientists & the Void

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ABSTRACT

This is a collection of my short essays dealing with the issues of existence of GOD, circular reasoning, the void & myth about creation from nothing.

Key Words: GOD, scientist, void.

On the Existence of God

Scientists want to prove that God does not exist. Since they want to prove it, therefore they cannot claim that it is already a proven fact. So the statement "God does not exist" can be given the status of a theory only and nothing more than that. Therefore its fate will be determined like any other theory of the scientific world. Like any other scientific theory it will have to prove its validity afresh at each and every new instance. So, not by assuming that the void is a real void, and thus not by assuming that there is no God, but by any other means, scientists will have to show that there is no hand of God behind the origin/birth/creation of this universe, and therefore their no-God theory is again validated here. So the scientific community all over the world should realize that the origin of our universe from a vacuum fluctuation is a myth only, not a scientific fact.

Circular Reasoning

In his article "The other side of time" scientist Victor J. Stenger (2000) has written: "Quantum electrodynamics is a fifty-year-old theory of the interactions of electrons and photons that has made successful predictions to accuracies as great as twelve significant figures. Fundamental to that theory is the spontaneous appearance of electron-positron (anti-electron) pairs for brief periods of time, literally out of 'nothing'." From here he has concluded that our universe may also come literally out of nothing due to quantum fluctuation in the void, and therefore we need not have to imagine that God has done this job.

But is it true that electron-positron (anti-electron) pairs are appearing spontaneously literally out of "nothing"? Are scientists absolutely certain that the so-called void is a true void indeed? Because here there is a counter-claim also: God is there, and that God is everywhere. So actually nothing is coming out of "nothing", only something is coming out of something. Here we want to examine whether scientists' claim that the so-called void is a true void can be sustained by reason or not.

There can be basically two types of universes: (1) universe created by God, supposing that there is a God; (2) universe not created by God, supposing that there is no God.

Again universe created by God can also be of three types: (1a) Universe in which God need not have to intervene at all after its creation. This is the best type of universe that can be created by God. (1b)

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Universe in which God has actually intervened from time to time, but his intervention is a bare minimum. (1c) Universe that cannot function at all without God's very frequent intervention. This is the worst type of universe that can be created by God.

Therefore we see that there can be four distinct types of universes, and our universe may be any one of the above four types: (1a), (1b), (1c), (2). In case of (1a), scientists will be able to give natural explanation for each and every physical event that has happened in the universe after its origin, because after its creation there is no intervention by God at any moment of its functioning. Only giving natural explanation for its coming into existence will be problematic. In case of (1b) also, most of the events will be easily explained away, without imagining that there is any hand of God behind these events. But for those events where God had actually intervened, scientists will never be able to give any natural explanation. Also explaining origin of the universe will be equally problematic. But in case of (1c), most of the events will remain unexplained, as in this case God had to intervene very frequently. This type of universe will be just like the one as envisaged by Newton: "Gravity explains the motions of the planets, but it cannot explain who set the planets in motion. God governs all things and knows all that is or can be done."

So we can with confidence say that our universe is not of this type, otherwise scientists could not have found natural explanation for most of the physical events. In case of type (2) universe, here also there will be natural explanation for each and every physical event, and there will be natural explanation for the origin of the universe also. So from the mere fact that scientists have so far been able to give natural explanation for each and every physical event, it cannot be concluded that our universe is a type (2) universe, because this can be a type (1a) universe as well. The only difference between type (1a) and type (2) universe is this: whereas in case of (1a) no natural explanation will ever be possible for the origin of the universe, it will not be so in case of (2).

Therefore until and unless scientists can give a natural explanation for the origin of the universe, they cannot claim that it is a type (2) universe. And so, until and unless scientists can give this explanation, they can neither claim that the so-called void is a true void. So scientists cannot proceed to give a natural explanation for the origin of the universe with an a priori assumption that the void is a real void, because their failure or success in giving this explanation will only determine as to whether this is a real void or not.

The Myth: Origin of the Universe from Nothing due to Vacuum Fluctuation (OUNVF)

This is about scientists' claim that our universe has originated from nothing due to a vacuum fluctuation. Here I want to show again that this claim cannot be sustained by reason. We all know that the theorems in Euclidean geometry generally start with some basic assumptions that are accepted as true without any proof. These basic assumptions are called axioms. Similarly scientific theories also start with some basic assumptions. These are called postulates. So far these postulates of scientific theories were all God-independent. I am going to explain what I mean by the term "God-independent".

Let us suppose that P is a postulate. Now it may be the case that there is a God. Or it may be the case that there is no God. Now let us suppose it is the case that there is a God, and we find that P is not affected. Again let us further suppose that it is the case there is no God, and again we find that in this case also P is not affected. Then we can say P is God-independent. But in the case under consideration the basic assumption with which scientists start is not at all God-independent. Rather

we can say that it is very much God-dependent. Their basic assumption here is this: the void is a real void, and it is nothing but a void. Now if it is the case that there is a God, then this assumption is very much affected, because the void is no longer a real void. If, and only if, it is the case that there is no God, then only it is a real void.

Therefore when scientists are saying that the void is a real void, then they are also saying it indirectly that it is the case there is no God, or, that it is a fact there is no God. But my question here is this: are these scientists now in a position to say so? Have their knowledge of the empirical world and its laws and its workings up till now made them competent enough to declare at this stage that there is no God?

Because here two points will have to be considered: 1) They have not yet been able to give a natural explanation for the origin of the universe; and 2) Similarly they have not yet been able to give a natural explanation for the fact that our universe has become habitable for life, whereas it could have been barren and lifeless as well.

Now it may so happen that scientists completely fail to give any natural explanation for both 1) and 2). In that case will it not be too early for them to suppose that the void is a real void? Because if they are unsuccessful, then they do not know whether there is a God or not, and therefore neither do they know whether the void is a real void or not. But if they are successful, then they definitely know that there is no God. Then only they can say that the void is a real void. So we can say that 1) and 2) are two hurdles that the scientists must have to cross before they can arrive at a place from where they can boldly declare that God does not exist. This is the place that may be called scientists' heaven. Because once they can reach there, then they will have no hesitation to deny the existence of God. Because now they have explained the alpha and omega of this universe, starting from its origin up to the coming of man on earth and further beyond, and nowhere they have found any hand of God influencing the course of events in any way.

But, to arrive at that place can they take any undue advantage? Or, can they try to reach there by any unfair means? Can they already assume that there is no God, and based on that assumption, can they try to cross any one, or both, of these two hurdles? But in case of 1) they have just done that. That is why I want to say that OUNVF is a pure case of circular reasoning.

A Critique of the Void

If at the beginning there was something at all, and if that something was the whole thing, then it can be shown that by logical necessity that something will have to be spaceless, timeless, changeless, deathless. This is by virtue of that something being the whole thing. Something is the whole thing means there cannot be anything at all outside of that something; neither space, nor time, nor matter, nor anything else. It is the alpha and omega of existence. But, if it is the whole thing, then it must have to be spaceless, timeless, changeless, deathless. Otherwise it will be merely a part of a bigger whole thing.

Now let us denote this something by a big X. Now, can this X be in any space? No, it cannot be. If it is, then where is that space itself located? It must have to be in another world outside of X. But by definition there cannot be anything outside of X. Therefore X cannot be in any space. Again, can this X have any space? No, it cannot have. If we say that it can have, then we will again be in a logical contradiction. Because if X can have any space, then that space must have to be outside of it.

Therefore when we consider X as a whole, then we will have to say that neither can it be in any space, nor can it have any space. In every respect it will be spaceless. For something to have space it must already have to be in some space. Even a prisoner has some space, although it is confined within the four walls of his prison cell. But the whole thing, if it is really the whole thing, cannot have any space. If it can have, then it no longer remains the whole thing. It will be self-contradictory for a whole thing to have any space. Similarly it can be shown that this X can neither be in time, nor have any time. For a whole thing there cannot be any 'before', any 'after'. For it there can be only an eternal 'present'. It will be in a timeless state. If the whole thing is in time, then it is already placed in a world where there is a past, a present, and a future, and therefore it is no longer the whole thing.

Now, if X as a whole is spaceless, timeless, then that X as a whole will be changeless also. There might always be some changes going on inside X, but when the question comes as to whether X itself is changing as a whole, then we are in a dilemma. How will we measure that change? In which time-scale shall we have to put that X in order for us to be able to measure that change? That time-scale must necessarily have to be outside of X. But there cannot be any such time-scale. So it is better not to say anything about its change as a whole. For the same reason X as a whole can never cease to be. It cannot die, because death is also a change.

Therefore we see that if X is the first thing and the whole thing, then X will have the properties of spacelessness, timelessness, changelessness, deathlessness by virtue of its being the whole thing. It is a logical necessity. Now, this X may be anything; it may be light, it may be sound, or it may be any other thing. Whatever it may be, it will have the above four properties of X. Now, if we find that there is nothing in this universe that possesses the above four properties of X, then we can safely conclude that at the beginning there was nothing at all, and that therefore scientists are absolutely correct in asserting that the entire universe has simply originated out of nothing.

But if we find that there is at least one thing in the universe that possesses these properties, then we will be forced to conclude that that thing was the first thing, and that therefore scientists are wrong when they say that at the beginning there was nothing. This is only because a thing can have the above four properties by virtue of its being the first thing and by virtue of this first thing being the whole thing, and not for any other reason. Scientists have shown that in this universe light, and light only, is having the above four properties. They have shown that for light time, as well as distance, become unreal.

I have already shown elsewhere that a timeless world is a deathless, changeless world. For light even infinite distance becomes zero, and therefore volume of an infinite space also becomes zero. So the only conclusion that can be drawn from this is that at the beginning there was light, and that therefore scientists are wrong in asserting that at the beginning there was nothing.

Addendum to a Critique of the Void

Another very strong reason can be given in support of our belief that at the beginning there was light. The whole thing will have another very crucial and important property: immobility. Whole thing as a whole thing cannot move at all, because it has nowhere to go. Movement means going from one place to another place, movement means changing of position with respect to something else. But if the whole thing is really the whole thing, then there cannot be anything else other than the whole thing. Therefore if the whole thing moves at all, then with respect to which other thing is it changing its position? And therefore it cannot have any movement, it is immobile. Now, if light is the whole

thing, then light will also have this property of immobility. Now let us suppose that the whole thing occupies an infinite space, and that light is the whole thing. As light is the whole thing, and as space is also infinite here, then within this infinite space light can have the property of immobility if, and only if, for light even the infinite distance is reduced to zero. Scientists have shown that this is just the case. From special theory of relativity we come to know that for light even infinite distance becomes zero, and that therefore it cannot have any movement, because it has nowhere to go. It simply becomes immobile. This gives us another reason to believe that at the beginning there was light, and that therefore scientists are wrong in asserting that at the beginning there was nothing.

I know very well that an objection will be raised here, and it will be a very severe objection. I also know what will be the content of that objection: can a whole thing beget another whole thing? I have said that at the beginning there was light, and that light was the whole thing. Again I am saying that the created light is also the whole thing, that is why it has all the properties of the whole thing. So the whole matter comes to this: a whole thing has given birth to another whole thing, which is logically impossible. If the first thing is the whole thing, then there cannot be a second whole thing, but within the whole thing there can be many other created things, none of which will be a whole thing. So the created light can in no way be a whole thing, it is logically impossible. But is it logically impossible for the created light to have all the properties of the whole thing? So what I intend to say here is this: created light is not the original light, but created light has been given all the properties of the original light, so that through the created light we can have a glimpse of the original light. If the created light was not having all the properties of the original light, then who would have believed in these days that in this universe it is quite possible to be spaceless, timeless, changeless, deathless? If nobody believes in Scriptures, and if no one has any faith in personal revelation or mystical experience, and if no one even tries to know Him through meditation, then how can the presence of God be made known to man, if not through a created thing only? So, not through Vedas, nor through Bible, nor through Koran, nor through any other religious books, but through light and light only, God has revealed himself to man. That is why we find in created light all the most essential properties of God: spacelessness, timelessness, changelessness, deathlessness.

Reference

Victor J. Stenger (2000), The other side of time.
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