219688 - Why do we not say that the Big Bang came before everything else?

the question

i know an atheist that asked me if the universe was created by a god then who created him, or if Your god was a there at first then i can say that the big bang was there at first.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

If you say that the Big Bang came before everything else, this means that you have not studied the theory of the Big Bang itself, and you are contradicting its meaning and basic idea, because this theory affirms that, if it is proven that the universe is constantly expanding, that must mean that in the past it was close together, and this being close together means that gravitational force and compactness between its parts was so great that there was no space between them, (near the beginning) the pressure was so intense that all the matter that forms the universe was the size of an atom, then (further back in time, to the point of the beginning) the size was infinitely small and was nothing. This implies that at that point there was no time or space, because matter itself did not exist.

Therefore when this universe began – when its age was less than a billionth part of a second – which was approximately fifteen billion years ago, as the proponents of this theory say – the size of its matter was very close to zero. Then this pressurised matter exploded and scattered its particles in the form of rays, then it began to cool down, and our universe was gradually formed from it. Hence this theory is called the Big Bang. … This is the view of Stephen Hawking, whom some people called the Newton of the modern era, when he said: “The greatest misunderstanding of the Big Bang is to say that it started with a mass of matter somewhere in outer space. Matter is not the only thing that was created during the Big Bang; rather time and space were also created.

Therefore in the same sense that we say place has a beginning, we also say that time has a beginning." [The Universe, Bozlo, p. 46]

He also says: "This means that the very beginning of the universe was chosen with great care, if the theory of the hot Big Bang was correct from the beginning of time. It is very difficult to explain why the universe began in this particular way, unless we say concerning that that there was indeed a Creator who wanted to create beings like ourselves" [A Brief History of Time, Hawking, p. 127]. See: al-Feeziya' wa Wujood al-Khaaliq (p. 87-96).

This question is obviously flawed, because the Big Bang cannot – rationally – have come before everything, unless you believe that this Big Bang was the Necessary Existent, that has all attributes of perfection, but that description refers to Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, if this is what you mean, then we accept from you this claim that the Big Bang came before everything, and we will agree with you that the universe was created by a Creator Who is eternal.

But when the question demands that we regard as equal the Creator Who is the Necessary Existent Who is possessed of all attributes of perfection and the Big Bang which is an incident that came into being after not having existed at all, then the argument is flawed on two counts:

1. Because it describes the Big Bang as something that had no beginning, but at the same time it is regarded as an incident that came into being after not having existed at all, and this is self-contradictory, because that which existed from eternity (and had no beginning) cannot be an incident

2. Because it describes the Big Bang as being eternal (having no beginning), and does not pay attention to the prerequisites of a thing being eternal, the most important of which is that it must necessarily exist and possess the attributes of perfection, and that refers to Allah, may He be glorified and exalted. Anyone who describes the universe as having existed from eternity falls into this contradiction. What he should have done is refer (the matter of creation) to something other than this created universe, and that is Allah, the Creator, may He be glorified and exalted.

As for the Muslim, he does not fall into this contradiction, because he will tell you that the Creator

existed from eternity and He was and there was nothing before Him, because He is the Necessary Existent, and with Him the chain of all created beings ends. When the Muslim describes Him as being before all things, that is because He cannot be compared with created beings, possibilities or incidents; rather He is greater than that. As for the atheist who affirmed that this universe came into being after not having existed, he is trying to explain it by referring to the Big Bang, which in itself is of the same nature as the universe, with regard to it coming under the heading of possibilities or incidents, then he ascribed to it the attribute of existing from eternity, but this is not possible at all.

We believe that it is easy for the human mind to believe in the idea that the universe is created, whereas it is difficult for it to believe in a universe that existed from eternity and had no beginning, when he sees at the same time all the signs that show that it is not eternal as it is clearly and obviously subject to constant alterations and changes.

As for the concept of the Creator existing from eternity, that is something easy for man to believe, because of a simple and straightforward reason, which is that the Creator is not of the same nature as the created being, which means rejecting all the rules of comparison and analogy that humans use and try to apply to the Creator, may He be glorified and exalted. In that case the explanation (that there is a Creator Who existed from eternity) makes perfect sense. Although the Creator is unseen, the believer believes in Him because He the Necessary Existent who is the Knower of the unseen world.

As for the one who believes that the universe is an incident or created thing that existed before everything, he believes in something that is impossible from a rational point of view. Undoubtedly believing in the Creator is much easier than believing in a created thing that existed from eternity.

In other words, we may ask this atheist, is the Big Bang a possibility or a necessity?

If he says that it is a possibility, then that which is possible could not have existed from eternity.

If he says that it is a necessity, then he has affirmed the existence of that which necessarily exists from eternity and has no creator. In that case he has affirmed the idea that there is a divine being.

The matter is as simple as that.

Here we will give some simple examples for that.

If you see some important decision, that could change the course of the company, being made in some large company, and then people differed concerning the source of this decision, there are two possibilities:

1. either a group of employees, all of whom held positions at the same level, and none of them has more authority than another, and every time one is asked to make a decision he defers it to his colleague because he has no authority to make a decision, so the matter kept going in this sequence until the decision was made as a result of this sequence;

2. or an employee of a higher rank, who has absolute authority and has no colleague at an equal position in the company, so that the matter could be passed between him and that person, took this audacious decision, so that it was done after not having being done,

then which possibility is more reasonable and which do you feel more at ease with?

Undoubtedly it is the second possibility, even though you may not know about this highest-ranking employee who is the one who made the decision – how he was appointed and who gave him this authority – but you find this to be something acceptable, because of the difference in rank and position between this employee and the other, ordinary employees. That was sufficient for you as an explanation of how major decisions are made in this company.

However, if you continue in the sequence (mentioned in the first scenario) and say that this employee ordered that employee, ad infinitum in the realm of lower level employees, that will not be convincing at all as an explanation of the matter, unless you explain the way the decision was made by referring it to one who is in a leading position, who does not need to be appointed by anyone else or wait for the decision of anyone else.

Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, is the One Who is the first and only decision-maker with regard to the creation of this universe and bringing it into existence; He is the One Who does not

ask for permission from anyone else. “He cannot be questioned as to what He does, while they will be questioned” [al-Anbiya’ 21:23]. For He is the Creator, Who is different from created beings. Then (after concluding that there is a Creator) you have to attribute to this Creator, may He be glorified and exalted, that which is hidden from you of absolute perfect attributes, such as existence from eternity, because you are speaking about a very significant matter that has nothing to do with anything ordinary; rather it has to do with something beyond human capability and beyond that with which humans are familiar, namely the creation of this universe from nothing. So it is more appropriate that you should refer (the creation of the universe) to a Creator Who is the Necessary Existent, First and Last, rather than referring it to any created being and attributing to it existence from eternity to eternity. In other words, we say that referring the issue of creation to a Creator who is eternal and has no beginning is the inevitable conclusion of the process of thinking about the cause of this universe and how it came about, because alternative explanations, which say that the universe is eternal (and had no beginning) or that it created itself, or that things came into existence by themselves after having been nothing, are clearly false, as is obvious to anyone who examines these ideas. Therefore he has no choice, as he will be compelled by his rational thinking, and also by his common sense, to believe in another cause, far beyond that with which we are familiar and that we know, that cannot have a beginning, or it cannot be that anyone created Him, and that is Allah, may He be glorified and exalted.

If, after this conclusion, you again ask: then who created Allah? This means that you did not understand the different stages of examining and thinking mentioned above, and you have not understood how those who believe in Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, reached that conclusion; you want to take the debate back to square one.

Dr Ja‘far Shaykh Idrees (may Allah preserve him) said – answering the specious argument of Hume which says that if the universe needed a cause, then God also needs a cause:

I never thought that a thinker – whether he was a believer or a nonbeliever – could seriously ask this question: who created God? When he knows what this word (God) signifies.

But it seems that some prominent Western physicists take this question seriously and in fact

regard it as one of the main flaws in the view that there is a Creator. We see Hawking also saying about God: who created Him?

The answer to this question, which these philosophers, scientists and many others think is a dilemma, is very easy:

If the opponent (in an argument) accepts that the universe, which is an incident or created thing, must have a cause that is not an incident, then if he accepts that this cause is not an incident – i.e. it is eternal – which is called God, then his question about the Creator or cause of God has no meaning at all, for it is a question on the part of one who does not understand what he is saying; it is a question that contains a very weird contradiction, because the cause by necessity precedes the effect, and that which is eternal, by necessity is not preceded by anything. So how can it have a cause?

For someone to say “Who created God?” is the equivalent of saying: “What preceded the thing before which there was nothing?” Or “what comes after the thing after which there is nothing?” Does such a question even make sense? If you tell a man that So-and-so came first in a race, is it acceptable for him to say: Fine, but who came before him? Similarly in this case proof is established that God is the First and there is nothing before Him, so how can it be said “what was the cause of Him?” or “who created Him?”?

However, Davies and Pareau, and others who followed them in imitating Hume, give the impression that those who base their evidence for the existence of the Creator on the existence of the universe have decided on the basis of pure whims and desires that the universe requires a cause to bring it into existence. Then they foolishly decided that God does not need this cause, hence they claimed that we cannot stop at the universe (so there must be something beyond it). But when they got to God, they stopped with Him and did not go any further. There is no difference – according to their claim – between stopping here or stopping there.

From both of them, and from others, this is a sign of confusion because they overlooked the huge difference between the nature of the universe, which is an incident or created thing, and the

nature of the Creator, Who is eternal.

End quote from al-Feeziya’ wa Wujood al-Khaaliq (120-124).

We will quote here a fictional debate that was written by one of those who specialise in debating with atheists, which will highlight the reality of this confusion into which the questioner has fallen.

The atheist said: Your stating that Allah is the Creator of all things is a statement that could be undermined by asking: So who is it that created Allah?

The Muslim said: No, it does not undermine it, because we say that if there is any being that has the attribute of creation (being able to create), yet at the same time there is someone who created him, then he is like his creation: he is also a created being. And any maker who could be described as such yet at the same time there is someone who made him, is also made, like the things that he makes.

Does this statement imply that it is not possible to have a supreme Creator outside of this circle, who has no creator or maker, and no one is equal to Him, and He is the origin and initiator of all things?

Not at all; rather this Creator is the Necessary Existant, who must exist on a rational basis, because he is the end of that chain, which reason cannot accept but that it must end with Him. We are talking about the Creator who is not a created being, who is completely outside this system, so He is not subject to the rules of the system, and cannot be compared to any (hypothetical) “creator/created being”, because He is the one who ordained the rules in this universe, and initiated (those rules) on the basis of His power and creation in the first place.

So the created thing cannot create itself; rather it must have been created by something else and this chain must inevitably, according to rational thinking, end with the first initiator, the first creator, who was not created by anything and is not part of that chain and does not form one link in it at all. Rather he is the one who created the entire chain and everything in it; so He is not part of it and is not limited by its limits or subject to its law. Such is Allah, the All-Knowing Creator.

The atheist said: If He is not subject to its laws, and we cannot perceive Him with our senses, then how can we be expected to imagine Him in our minds and believe in Him in our hearts?

The Muslim said: Reason is able to perceive the concept, but not the nature or reality, and the difference between them is an essential difference for any rational person.

I understand on the basis of reason the possibility of the existence of billions upon billions of stars in the galaxies of this vast universe, but can my reason understand how that is or imagine it? Could I imagine the ratio of my size to the size of the earth alone, let alone that which is far bigger of the stars and planets around us? Not at all! I know of the existence of the soul in bodies which, if it is removed the living man dies, and my reason confirms the necessity of its existence and its essence as a concept and idea, but could my reason imagine anything about its nature and essence, or could I measure it or estimate it mathematically? Not at all!

This is the difference between a concept that reason rejects and does not accept in the first place, and a concept that reason does not reject, but it cannot compare its description to anything that is conceivable or visible, with regard to its nature and essence. So people's minds would not be able to imagine that concept, yet they affirm the soundness of the concept, and the possibility – or necessity – of its existence.

So if you think of the Christian belief in the Trinity, for example, you will see this subtle difference, for they believe in something with regard to the divine essence that is impossible, from a rational point of view, to exist as an idea or concept.

It is not rationally possible for three to be one or one to be three. This is what makes you atheists able to prove the utter falseness of their Trinity.

But when you come to examine the belief of monotheist Muslims in their Lord, you will have no reason to criticise their belief in the essence and attributes of their Lord. You have no criticism except that you cannot comprehend this Lord and you cannot compare Him to something that you do comprehend and understand. It is as if you are concluding that it is impossible for Him to exist according to rational thinking, as is the case with the Trinity! They say that it is a "too easy"

answer to the problem, as if the simplicity of the monotheistic belief in the unseen is something for which they should be condemned and is an indication that it is false. They say that there is no existing being that cannot be subject to the laws of the universe. It is as if you travelled beyond this universe and saw that there was nothing beyond it, so nothing could exist except something that is like what you are subject to in this universe.

The difference between us and you is that we accept what is indicated by every breath in our own bodies, and by everything, small or great, in this precise and well-made universe around us, so we do not attribute its existence except to a Creator Who is greater than it and outside of it, Whose essence and attributes cannot be compared to anything in it. As for you, because of your corrupt way of reasoning and understanding, you insisted on denying the Creator completely and rejecting any possibility of His existence, and you insisted on putting something created and insignificant in His place, such as genes, for no other reason except that you would be able to comprehend its essence. It is as if your minds – which if they were able to understand the language of monkeys, you would have heard them criticising your minds and way of thinking – will not accept anything except that of which it can imagine the nature and essence by means of comparing it to something similar or equal.

So tell me, O atheist, don't you believe that this universe has a limit at which it stops? Is that not so?

The atheist said: Yes indeed.

The Muslim said: Great! Even though that of which they have calculated the diameter is the visible universe, and not the entire universe, and they have even suggested that it is still expanding.

But this is not my concern. My question to you is: do you have anything in this world to which you could compare the limit of the universe at which it ends?

In other words: have you seen in this world that which will help you to understand how that limit, within which is the matter of the universe, could be, and after it there is something that you do not know and cannot imagine, and you cannot but accept the fact that it exists there, whatever that

thing may be?

The atheist thought for a while, then said: No doubt beyond this universe there is empty space and infinite nothingness.

The Muslim said: Surely you are lying! Do you know why?

The atheist said: Why?

The Muslim said: Because the one who bases certain knowledge on the phrase “no doubt”, basing his certainty on an assumption for which he has no rational or physical evidence, is a liar.

Whatever the case, what I mean is that there is something beyond this universe and outside of it, and you cannot imagine the nature of it, no matter what it is, even though you affirm, on a rational basis, that there is a possibility that something exists (beyond the universe), and that the nature of that thing, by necessity, is different from what is within the universe. Otherwise it would not be possible to say – from a linguistic point of view – that this is the boundary at which the universe ends. Is that not so?

The atheist did not answer.

The Muslim said: So why do you insist that the mere fact that you are unable to imagine the essence of God – which we believe is sublime and above the heavens and all that exists, and His attributes cannot be denied on the basis of reason and cannot be compared to any of His creation – is evidence that He cannot exist?

End quote from Islamweb.net on the following link:

Because of the importance of your question, we will quote to you another debate with an atheist:

Shaykh Muhammad al-Ghazaali (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his book Qadhaa’if al-Haqq (p. 197-203):

I had a lengthy discussion with an atheist in which I controlled myself and tried to be patient, until

he disclosed all the specious arguments that he had up his sleeve, so that I could defeat with clear arguments and evidence what he uttered of specious arguments.

He said: If Allah created the universe, then who created Allah?

I said to him: It is as if, by asking this question or raising this objection, you are affirming that everything must have a Creator.

He said: Let us avoid getting into a vicious circle; just answer my question.

I said to him: There is no need for waffle. You think that this universe has no creator, which means that He existed by Himself without any need for someone to bring Him into existence, so why do you accept the view that this universe existed by itself for eternity, yet you find it strange that religious people say that the existence of God, Who created this universe, has no beginning?

It is the same concept, so how come you believe yourself when you confirm this concept (of existing from eternity, with regard to the universe), but you reject the view of others when they affirm the same concept (with regard to God having no beginning). If you think that to believe in a God Who has no creator is a myth, then a universe that has no creator is also a myth, according to the logic that you are following!

He said: We are living in this universe and we can feel its existence, so we cannot deny it!

I said to him: Who asked you to deny the existence of the universe?

When we travel in a car or ship or plane that is zooming along with us in a very terrifying way, our question is not whether the car exists; rather our question is: is it travelling by itself or does it have a driver or pilot who has experience?

Therefore let us go back to your first question, which is to be thrown back at you. Both of us accept that there is a being that exists and there is no way to deny it. You claim that it has no beginning as far as matter is concerned, and I think that it has no beginning with regard to its creator.

If you want to poke fun at a being that has no beginning, then poke fun at yourself first, before you poke fun at religious people.

He said: Do you mean that the rational assumption is the same for both groups?

I said: I am going along with you for arguments sake, only to expose to you the flawed and false arguments on which atheism is based. As for the rational assumption, it is not the same for believers and disbelievers.

Imagine that you and I are looking at a standing building. After thorough examination, I can conclude that an engineer must have built it, but you think that some lumber, metal, stone and paint took up the appropriate positions to prepare this building for people to live in, all by themselves. The difference between our views is like this: if I see a satellite orbiting in space, and you tell me that it went into orbit by itself, without any supervision or control, and I tell you that it was launched by rational people who are controlling and supervising it, these rational assumptions are not the same. In my case, my assumption is the ultimate truth that cannot be denied, whereas your assumption is falsehood that is undoubtedly false. All the atheists of the current era are very skilled in insulting us believers and saying all manner of bad things about us, at the time when they describe themselves as being smart, progressive and brilliant. We are living on an earth that is comfortable and fit for living, beneath a star filled sky, and we possess reason and intellect by means of which we can research and judge, and with this reasoning and intellect we contemplate, reach conclusions, discuss and believe. On the basis of this reason and intellect we refuse to imitate blindly, just as we reject nonsensical ideas. If people want to make fun of those whom they regard as backward, trapped in the past and rigid in their thinking, they might as well also make fun of those who kill reason in the name of reason, and stomp on the conclusions of science in the name of science, for they – unfortunately – constitute the majority of atheists!

… and so on.

And Allah knows best.