The Necessary being, through the Lens of Surah Al Ikhlāṣ
-Joshua Raju

Abstract:

This paper demonstrates the similarities of the Necessary Being (NB) found in the Contingency Argument (CA) and the revelation of Surah Al Ikhlāṣ to showcase the Islamic understanding of God to be founded in rational thought that will enable the reader to further investigate the coherence of Islam and the acceptance of a God, Allah SWT.

Contents

1. Introduction:

Numerous religions and philosophical discourses have arisen due to man's need for explaining what caused existence. Traditionally, an acceptance of a God-like figure who governed the universe was a prominent worldview. However, with the rise of atheism and misotheism, belief in God has lost popularity due to a perceived lack of rational support for the proof of God (Tzortzis, H, 2016). The CA provides a rational understanding for the need of the NB, with the Quran also providing a logical perspective of the NB through Surah Al Ikhlāş. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate that the concept of a NB in Islamic traditions is a logically sound premise which is harmonious with points found in the CA. This paper will be presented in 3 stages as shown in figure 1:
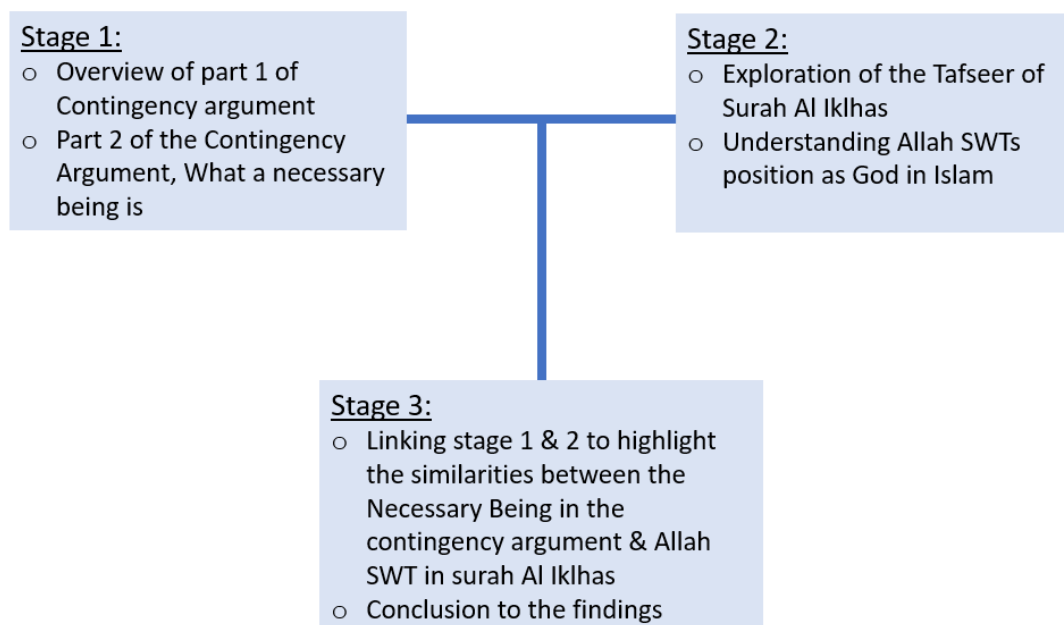
Stage 1:
- Overview of part 1 of Contingency argument
- Part 2 of the Contingency Argument, What a necessary being is

Stage 2:
- Exploration of the Tafseer of Surah Al Iklhas
- Understanding Allah SWTs position as God in Islam

Stage 3:
- Linking stage 1 & 2 to highlight the similarities between the Necessary Being in the contingency argument & Allah SWT in surah Al Iklhas
- Conclusion to the findings

Figure 1: Stages of the paper

2. Overview of the Contingency Argument

The contingency argument (CA) is one of the three cosmological arguments which is a posteriori argument that states with the fac that something contingent exists (Reichenbach, B 2017). There are numerous versions of the CA by great thinkers such as Al Ghazali, Thomas Aquinus and Samuel Clarke however for the purpose of this paper Joshua Rasmussens version of the CA will be used as shown in figure 2 due to its simplicity.

1. Something exists.
2. If everything is contingent, then there is no external explanation of the contingent things (of why there are the contingent things there are).
3. There is an external explanation of the contingent things.
4. Therefore, not everything is contingent. (From 2 and 3)
5. Therefore, something is non-contingent. (From 1 and 4) 6. Therefore, something has necessary existence.

Figure 2: Argument from Contingency - (Rasmussen, J. (2010).

3. The Necessary being found in the contingency argument.

Section 1 shows the first part of the CA, the second stage of the CA explores the qualifying attributes of the NB, it can be understood that the NB has the two properties below in figure 2 that negate it from being a contingent being:

1. An uncaused case.
2. Cannot be anything else.

Figure 3: The Necessary being, - Malik, S. (2022)

This paper will explore other qualifying factors of the NB as detailed below:

3.1 Must be Supreme.

The NB must be supreme, being the maximal to any positive property that contributes to its inherent value, such as knowledge, power and goodness. The NB which is foundational to all contingent things does not have a further explanation to its positive attributes, contrasting this to every non-supreme thing is limited by having an external explanation (Rasmussen, (2010). Figure 4 shows the premise of the supreme requirement for the NB:

1. Whatever is not supreme is limited, it is the maximal in its positive properties
2. Whatever is limited could conceivably have some external explanation, and thus is able to be surpassed in its positive properties
3. The necessary being cannot conceivably have an external explanation.
4. Therefore, the necessary being is supreme through being maximal in positive properties

Figure 4: Supreme nature of the Necessary Being (Rasmussen, J. (2010).

3.2 Independent existence

Ibn Sina explains that a NB's existence is not dependent on a previous entity, and it sits outside of the realm of things which are dependent upon it. If the NB was part of the 'set' it was foundational to, it would be in the same influence as the contingent things of the set and thus would not be a NB (Hijab, M. (2021). Refer to Figure 5 for Ibn Sinas case.

The Necessary Being:
- o **Exists outside of the set**
- o **Independent of the set**

THE UNIVERSE
- o Apples
- o Trucks
- o Fish
- o Dinosaurs
- o **Things within the set**
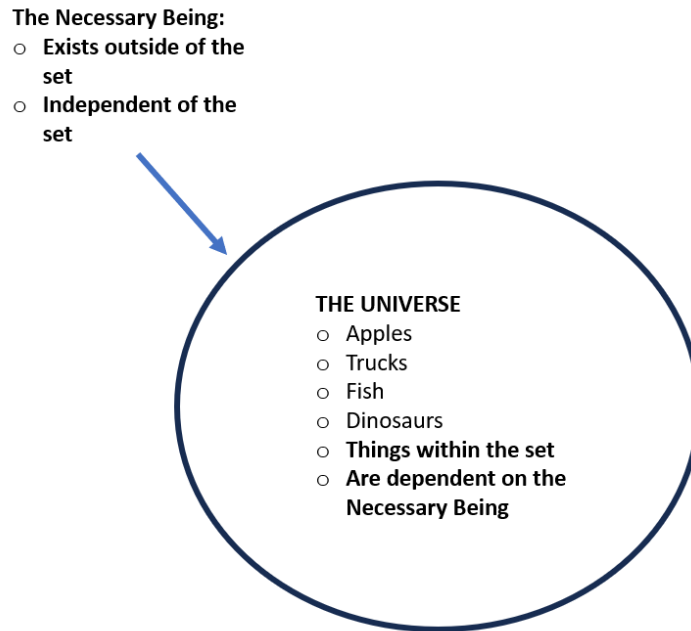- o **Are dependent on the Necessary Being**

Figure 5: Ibn Sinas proof for independent existence (Hijab, M (2021).

3.3 Eternal:

The NB never comes into existence nor ceases to exist. This is as whatever does come into existence or ceases to exist is contingent. A NB is non contingent this cannot have the temporary state, making the NB eternal. (Rasmussen, J (2010).

3.4 Non-limited and unsurpassable in power:

As per Point 3.1 and 3.2, if something is supreme and independent it contains no limitations. One could view the NB as the anchor to all things, and as such having no precursors that its limited by. Figure 6 describes this point further (Rasmussen, (2010).

1. Whatever is limited can have an external explanation.
2. The necessary being cannot have an external explanation.
3. The necessary being is not limited.
4. If the necessary being has some power (at least to be the cause of contingent things)
5. If the necessary being's power was surpassable, then the necessary being would be limited.
6. As the necessary being is not limited, the necessary being's power is unsurpassable.

Figure 6: the necessary being: non-limited & unsurpassable in power, (Rasmussen, (2010).

4. The Necessary Being through the lens of Surah Al Ikhlāṣ

Surah Al Ikhlāṣ which translates to sincerity is the 112th chapter of the Quran and is comprised of four verses. This section will use Tafseer (exegesis) of this chapter to examine each verse, in respect to Allah SWT as a NB.

Figure 7 shows a translation of Surah Al Ikhlāṣ.

1) Say: He is Allāh, the One and only!

2) Allāh, the Everlasting Sustainer of all.

3) He fathered none, nor was He born.

4) And no one is comparable to Him.

Figure 7: Surah Al Ikhlāṣ

4.1 Verse 1: "Say: He is Allah the one and only "

Qul huwal laahu ahad

Say: He is Allah, the One and Only

Figure 8: Verse 1: Surah Al-Ikhlas

Verse one attributes absolute oneness being unique to Allah. The name Allah in Arabic subsumes all the attributes of perfection, magnificence, and beauty of Allah in a complete form (The Light of The Quran, 2010). In other words, the name Allah is a word used to portray the magnitude of the NB in being maximal in all positive properties. The word Ahad (أَحَدٌ) has the meaning unique, singular and unparalleled in every aspect, denoting that there is nothing like Allah, and that He alone is supreme (The Light of The Quran, 2010).

4.2 Verse 2: "Allah, the everlasting sustainer of all":

اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ

Allah hus - samad

Allah, the Eternal, Absolute

Figure 9: Verse 2, Surah Al Ikhlas

In Arabic, Al- Samad means 'the one who is sought to whom one recourse and the one who has nothing above him', Allah is the one who is sought for the fulfilment of all needs. When "Al-Samad" is used after the word Allah, it shows the negations of all defects from Allah, just as it negates the fact there is anyone above Him who could overcome Him, that is to negate His necessary position by making Him contingent (The Light of The Quran, 2010).

4.3 Verse 3: "He fathered none nor was He born".

لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ

Lam yalid wa lam yoolad

He begetteth not, nor is He begotten

Figure 10: Verse 3, Surah Al Ikhlas

This verse negates all lineage from Allah, marking Him as without start or end. Ibn Abbas (RA) mentioned "He Fathered none, he has not sired a son, nor was he born, he does not come from something else" (The Light of The Quran, 2010). Anything that is born is generated and cannot be divine thus not deserving to be worshipped. This verse places an emphasis on the non-contingent nature of Allah showing Him to be an being that is eternal and thus necessary (The Light of The Quran, 2010).

4.4 Verse 4: "And No one is comparable to Him".

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

Wa lam yakul-lahoo kufuwan ahad

And there is none like unto Him.

Figure 11: Verse 4, Surah Al Ikhlas

There is nothing like Allah in His names, attributes, and actions. In Arabic the words kufu, kafi, kifa'a all mean comparability, likeness, or equality (Light of the Quran). In Arabic normative speech one would expect the sentence to read, Lam Yakum Ahadun kufwwan kahu but here the word kufuwwan has been brought forward to stress the fact that nothing is comparable to Allah. The personal pronoun has been placed before Kufuwwan to emphasize the essence of Allah and to highlight His dissimilarity to anything make Allah limitless and unsurpassable (The Light of The Quran, 2010).

5. Comparison between the contingency argument and Surah Al Ikhlāş

In this section I will draw upon the findings of section 3 and 4 to establish a link between the NB found in the CA and the description of Allah SWT in Surah Al Ikhlāş. As discussed in section 3 through establishing principles of logic the NB is required to be;

1. Supreme
2. Independent
3. Eternal
4. Unsurpassable in power and non-limited.

Through unpacking the tafseer of Surah Al Ikhlāṣ Allah SWT is shown to be.

1. One of a kind
2. The sustainers of all things
3. Not being fathered or being born
4. Incomparable to creation.

Table 1 shows the comparisons between the NB found in the argument from contingency and Surah Al Ikhlāṣ description of the NB.

Necessary Being in the Contingence Argument	Allah SWT in Surah Al Ikhlāṣ
Premise 1: Supreme	Verse 1: Only one – Nothing is comparable to him,
Premise 2: Independent existence	Verse 2: Everlasting sustainer of all – Non contingent and outside the data set of contingent things
Premise 3: Eternal	Verse 3: Fathered none nor was her born - Eternal
Premise 4: Unsurpassable Power & Non-limited	Verse 4: Non comparable

Table 1:The Necessary being compared from the argument from Contingency and Surah Al Ikhlāṣ

From table 1 there is a direct correlation between the words of the Quran in establishing Allah SWT as the NB and the NB found in the CA. I believe this is due to mankind's ability to employ intellect and rationality in realising that something cannot come from nothing and that if something is to exist there must be a single, supreme, independent, eternal and unlimited NB that is foundational for reality's existence. The similarity shown by the Quran to philosophical discourse proves beyond a doubt that Islams theology is founded on logical reasoning to provide an explanation for why reality exists.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion this paper portrays understanding of the NB through both the lens of the Quran and the CA. The examination of both sources showcase that Islamic theology provides a rational understanding of the NB. It is the intention of this paper that the reader will garner an appreciation of Allah found in surah Ikhlas as foundational to reality and will continue their own research into the proof for God and Islam.

7. References (APA 7)

1. Tzortzis, H., Publishing, F., & Clemente, S. (2016). The Divine Reality God, Islam & The Mirage of Atheism. Retrieved November 15, 2023, from https://ia801006.us.archive.org/28/items/thedivinereality_201907/The%20Divine%20Reality.pdf

2. Reichenbach, B. (2017). Cosmological Argument (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). Stanford.edu. https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/cosmological-argument/

3. Rasmussen, J. (2010). Cosmological Arguments from Contingency. Philosophy Compass, 5(9), 806–819. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-9991.2010.00321.x

4. Hijab, M. (2021). The Burhan. https://sapienceinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/The-Burhan-Ebook-Dec-2021-v1.pdf

5. The Contingency Argument - Dr. Shoaib Ahmed Malik. (2022). Www.youtube.com. Retrieved November 15, 2023, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OQHH4eTzQfg

6. (2010). The Light of the Quran (1st ed., Vol. 1) [Review of The Light of the Quran]. Daar Us Sunnah.