

Islamic Theism and the Multiverse

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Abstract: In this paper, we argue that under certain assumptions, Islamic theism moves in the direction of a multiverse. We present several arguments in two major categories. The first is based on the divine attribute of everlastingness: if God's everlasting attributes are expressed in the creation and the universe has a finite past, then God created a multiverse. The second category involves perfect being theology: if some of God's attributes express themselves in the creation, and God has every compossible perfection, then we should expect God to create a multiverse.

Keywords: multiverse; Islamic theism; kalam; philosophical theology

1. Introduction

One can scarcely study contemporary cosmology without hearing of the multiverse. By the multiverse we mean space–time regions that are causally disconnected from each other; universes which are separated spatially, temporally, or spatio-temporally. Some theists and atheists take the multiverse to be a threat to rational theism; they hold that multiverse theories are hostile to theism because, they claim, multiverse theories explain the fine-tuning of the universe without appealing to a designer; the multiverse, in this view, is an alternative to God in explaining fine-tuning. Therefore, if the multiverse were actual, it would render the existence of God superfluous¹.

Some philosophers, on the other hand, argue that the multiverse is not only not hostile to theism, the multiverse is useful to theism. For example, some theists deploy the multiverse in support of theodicies². Others claim that God would create all the possible universes in which good surpasses evil, so the multiverse would be the best possible world; as such, the multiverse answers the best possible world objection³.

As a multiverse-friendly theistic philosopher, I align myself with the view that classical Islamic theism, under certain assumptions, harmonizes well with the concept of a multiverse. By classical Islamic theism, I refer to the belief in a supreme being, known as God among other names, who is credited with creating the universe and is characterized as omnipotent and omniscient. I posit that God communicates His will to humanity through prophets, who then disseminate these revelations to their communities. The Quran, esteemed as the word of God revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, stands as the principal and definitive revelation that governs all dimensions of faith, practice, and morality, distinguishing Islamic theism from other classical theistic traditions. Additionally, I subscribe to the tenets of Perfect Being Theology (PBT), which defines a divine being as one possessing maximal greatness and an array of all compossible great-making properties. While I do not commit to any specific Islamic intellectual tradition such as the Mutikallemin (Ashari or Maturidi), Falasafa, or Sufism, my forthcoming arguments in favor of Multiverse Theism will be structured to appeal variably to these perspectives. I aim for these arguments to resonate across different Islamic schools of thought, providing each adherent with compelling reasons that align with their doctrinal positions. Although I may critique certain schools in specific sections, my overall approach seeks to include and respect alternative viewpoints.

Since all but one of our arguments is applicable to classical Islamic theism, we will use the term “Multiverse Theism” to refer to the thesis that affirms both classical Islamic theism and the multiverse hypothesis.



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When we use the word “multiverse”, we are not referring to any particular model. We remain agnostic about the features of the multiverse hypothesis except for those implied by our arguments.

We aim to demonstrate that given classical Islamic theism, Multiverse Theism is both plausible and non-ad hoc. The Muslim theologian, we will argue, has independent and even plausible reasons to believe in a multiverse. As such, if the multiverse were to become well-established scientific theory, it should (weakly) confirm classical Islamic theism. The multiverse theory, then, is neither a defeater of rational belief in God nor an ad-hoc, late-comer construction brought in to “save” theism “once again” from the advance of science. Indeed, in the Quran we read of the theological grounds, perhaps unknowable until the science of Einstein and quantum mechanics, for belief in the multiverse. In Quran 65.12 we read:

God it is who has created seven heavens, and similar number of earths. The commandments come down among them slowly, that you may know that God is able to do all things, and that God surrounds all things in knowledge.

While this text does not provide unequivocal support for the multiverse, it is highly suggestive of a large number of multiple “heavens and earths” (taking “seven” as metaphorical for the number of perfection) and its presence in Islam’s founding text is sufficient to undermine the claim that the multiverse is theologically ad hoc⁴.

Moreover, in Quran 1, and in the daily prayers of Muslims from the beginning, we read, and countless Muslims recite: “Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds.” While “worlds” is typically restricted to the celestial bodies in our universe, it could suggest, of course, the existence of other, spatio-temporally unrelated worlds (universes)—the stuff of the multiverse. Indeed, the Quran repeatedly refers to Allah as the Lord of the Worlds.

Additional theological support for Multiverse Theism is based on not untypical Islamic understandings and extensions of some essential divine attributes. Islam’s theological case for the multiverse can be divided into two major categories. The first is based on the divine attribute of everlastingness. Some medieval Muslim philosophers, for example, argued that some of God’s attributes express themselves in the created world, and since these attributes are everlasting, the universe must be everlasting⁵. Everlasting attribute arguments combine this medieval insight with the recently established fact that our universe has a finite past to support a multiverse. The second category involves perfect being theology. If some of God’s attributes express themselves in the creation, and God has every compossible perfection, then we should expect a maximal divine creation. In short, God’s attributes combine to make a theological case for a multiverse.

I hope our study will serve as a valuable contribution to the already burgeoning interest in Islamic cosmologies. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, a pioneer in this field, explored various cosmologies that emerged within Islamic civilization, including those of Ikhwan al-Safa, al-Biruni, and Ibn Sina (Nasr 1993). Julien Decharneux has examined the links between the cosmology of the Quran and various cosmological traditions of Late Antiquity (Decharneux 2023). Damien Janos has focused on the cosmology of al-Farabi, specifically his cosmological method and the interplay between astronomy, physics, and metaphysics (Janos 2012). Alnoor Dhanani has reconstructed the theories of matter and space of the Mutakallimun from the tenth and eleventh centuries, offering valuable insights into Basrian Mutazili Cosmology (Dhanani 1993). Ian Richard Netton has investigated God and cosmology in Islamic philosophy through innovative approaches using modern literary modes of criticism derived from structuralism, post-structuralism, and semiotics (Netton 1994). Additionally, William C. Chittick has presented Sufi reflections on cosmology, highlighting the unique contributions of Sufism to Islamic thought (Chittick 2007; Chittick 1989).

2. Arguments from the Creator Attribute of God

2.1. The Argument from the Everlasting Creator Attribute of God

The first argument is based on the creator attribute of God. In classical Islamic theism, God is the creator and sustainer of everything. In Islamic theism, being creator (al-Khāliq) is an essential attribute of God (Quran 6:102, 13:16, 36:81, 39:62, 40:62, 59:24); God, the creator, created everything, without example, from nothing.

Using the creator attribute, we can formulate the following argument in support of the multiverse:

1. God is everlastingly the creator.
2. In order to possess the creator attribute, one must have created something.
3. God created our universe (with its finite past).
4. But God was the creator before He created our universe (from 1 and 3).
5. Therefore, God created another universe before our universe (from 2 and 4).
6. Therefore, theism suggests a multiverse⁶.

Since these arguments make a host of metaphysical assumptions, some of which we will shortly address, we do not offer this as a deductively valid argument from classical Islamic theism to Multiverse Theism. As such, the argument cannot be said to imply the multiverse. But, given 1–5 are not implausible considerations, classical Islamic theism suggests they comport well with the multiverse.

The first premise holds that being creator is an essential attribute of God, implying that God is always the creator (if a being were not the creator, it would not be God). This claim can be understood in two ways. First, this claim might be taken to mean that God is eternal, that is, that God exists in timeless eternity with all the events in his life experienced all at once, timelessly; as eternal, God has all of God's attributes timelessly, including the creator attribute. Second, this claim might be taken to mean that God is everlasting—that God has always existed and always will exist, yet God experiences temporal succession; God's thoughts and experiences have temporal location⁷. The first premise of the argument, as we understand it, assumes that God is everlasting (as will all of the arguments in the first category)⁸.

The second premise asserts that to manifest the attribute of a creator, one must have engaged in the act of creation. The designation "creator" inherently implies the activity of creating—bringing into existence something that previously did not exist. This foundational definition necessitates that an entity must have participated in an act of creation to be accurately termed a creator. Consequently, the possession of the creator attribute is inherently contingent upon the successful completion of a creative act. It is critical to distinguish between potential and actualization. Merely possessing the potential to create does not confer the creator attribute; only actual creation does. For instance, an individual may possess all the necessary tools and skills to paint (potential), but until they have actually produced a painting, they cannot be recognized as embodying the attribute of a painter.

The third premise posits that the universe, having been created by God, possesses a finite past. This assertion is generally accepted among theists. In the context of Islamic theism, particularly within the orthodox theological traditions of the Ash'ari and Maturidi schools, it is held that the universe was brought into existence *ex nihilo*, by divine command. Consequently, it is inferred that the universe is characterized by a finite past⁹.

The rest of the argument follows from these three premises. Since God is everlastingly the creator, he must be the creator before he created our universe. And if a being must have created something in order to possess the creator attribute, God must have created something before he created our universe.

There are several objections to the above argument. First, one might claim that God created non-spatial and non-temporal objects, i.e., abstract objects, before He created our universe. In other words, God was the creator before he created our universe not because He created a prior universe or set of prior universes, but because he (eternally) creates

abstract objects. This objection assumes Theistic Activism¹⁰, a controversial position due to bootstrapping objections¹¹. Moreover, it seems to me that creation requires a temporal sequence—a “before” and “after”. Abstract objects, however, if they are non-temporal objects as implied in the objection would seem to be a problem. Without a temporal framework, the notion of “before” and “after” does not apply. This implies that the creation of abstract objects is incoherent. Therefore, the objection fails.

Even if abstract objects eternally depend upon God for their existence, we could recreate (pun intended) the argument in terms of the creation of physical objects. After all, when the Islamic scriptures hold that God created the heavens and the earth and all they contain, they were (likely) not thinking of abstract objects. God creates, we read, every creature in the heavens and the earth, our innermost being, what has been made, humans (God’s handiwork), male and female, his people, his new people (sanctified people in the New Creation), and life. So, the Islamic theist could either (a) restrict the doctrine of creation to God’s temporal creation of the heavens and the earth (and so deny that God creates, in this sense, abstract objects) or (b) claim two ways of being creator. God is Creator1, which means that God eternally creates abstract objects and necessary truths, and God is Creator2 which means, following the Scriptural witness, God temporally creates (perhaps out of nothing) the heavens and the earth. If the distinction holds, the reconstructed argument would be more precisely The Argument from the Creator2 Attribute.

Moreover, the notion that God eternally created abstract objects before transitioning to the creation of concrete universes appears peculiar when considering other divine attributes such as all goodness, which we will discuss in forthcoming sections. The concrete universe encompasses the realization of potentialities such as material beauty, life, and the moral development of sentient beings—qualities that are not pertinent to abstract objects. Consequently, God’s creation of the physical universe satisfies various dimensions of divine goodness and creative expression. Therefore, His Creator2 attribute, which pertains to the creation of physical entities, seems to hold greater significance than the speculative Creator1 attribute, associated with the creation of abstract entities.

Second, one may reject the second premise, holding that in order to instantiate the creator attribute, God need not have created anything. God is the creator, in this view, simply by virtue of being able to create; being able to create is sufficient for instantiating the creator attribute. However, this claim fails to distinguish the attribute of creator from the attribute of Omnipotence, God’s power to create. We can imagine a being who is omnipotent but who never creates anything, but we would not call such a being the creator. It seems that creators, by definition, must have created.

Or one might deny the third premise. One might argue that the universe is eternal, and that God is the creator because God sustains it or recreates it every second of its eternal existence. While this is not incompatible with classical Islamic theism simpliciter, it is incompatible with, for example, the Muslim belief that the only everlasting being is God¹². The claim that God is creating a single universe everlastingly would be compatible with Islamic theism if there were a temporal multiverse, an eternal succession of temporally finite universes, of which ours is the current end-state. In this view, no universe is everlasting, only God is an everlasting being. This recreation model, then, suggests a temporal multiverse. Given this assumption, the conclusion of the argument stands.

One may express concern that the proposition that God is the sole everlasting entity could conflict with our primary argument. Consider the following objection¹³: the premise that God is the only everlasting being suggests a temporal point t before which God exists and no other entities (including other universes) do. This notion appears incompatible with the concept of everlasting creation and potentially undermines the validity of the argument from God’s attribute as an everlasting creator. However, asserting that God is the only everlasting being does not necessarily mean that we can identify a specific time t at which God was the sole existent entity. This directly results from God’s nature as an everlasting creator; hence, at any given time t , God would have already created some universe, which we might refer to as universe(t). Does this imply that God is not the only everlasting being?

I believe not. For any specified t and corresponding universe(t), there exists a preceding moment $t - 1$ at which this universe did not exist, yet God did. There are no universes that are beginningless and existent for any arbitrary time. Every universe has a starting point, whereas God does not. In other words, God exists prior to each given universe and is its creator. While it is true that there are infinitely many universes corresponding to any time t , this is not problematic as long as each universe has a beginning and a prior moment when it did not exist.

One might think that this argument implies an everlasting multiverse, so there are two everlasting beings, God and the multiverse. However, the multiverse is not a being in its own right, it is simply a label for a collection of universes; it is not something above or beyond its constituent, individual, finite universes. As such, it is not a being with properties. So, there is no being that is co-everlasting with God. I would like to present several arguments supporting the contention that the multiverse does not constitute an entity in itself. Mereology, the philosophical study of parts and wholes, posits that for multiple entities to form a coherent whole, there must be relational or interactional properties that bind these entities together. In the paradigm of the multiverse, the universes are predominantly causally disconnected from each other. Consequently, there are neither interactions nor relational ties among them. Therefore, they do not constitute a new unified entity. Additionally, according to the principle of Occam's Razor, theories should not multiply entities beyond necessity without providing additional explanatory power. The hypothesis that the multiverse, beyond the individual universes, constitutes a real entity introduces an unnecessary layer of metaphysical complexity. Conversely, recognizing the multiverse simply as a categorical label for various, disconnected universes adheres to the principle of parsimony, thereby avoiding the introduction of superfluous structure or connections where none are observed or required¹⁴.

Islamic conceptions of God as essentially the creator, when taken together with the God as everlasting and a rejection of Theistic Activism involving everlasting creation, are highly suggestive of a multiverse. Or, if God is Creator1 with respect to abstract objects, the argument could be reconstructed with God is Creator2 with respect to the heavens and the earth, *mutatis mutandis*, which would have the advantage of fitting better with the more common-sense claims of Islam's revealed texts.

2.2. *The Argument from the Best Creator*

The creator attribute of God, when combined with perfect being theology, can also be used to develop an Islamic argument for Multiverse Theism:

1. God has every great-making attribute at its maximum.
2. God is the creator.
3. A being who creates all of the universes worth creating would be a better creator than one who creates a single universe.
4. Therefore, God creates all of the universes worth creating, i.e., a multiverse.

The first premise is a restatement of perfect being theology and the second premise is an assertion of classical Islamic theism. As the most perfect being, God has every compossible great-making property to its highest degree. Therefore, if God is essentially the creator, God is not only creator, God is the best possible creator.¹⁵

The third premise expresses the intuition that a being who creates more than one thing that is worth creating¹⁶ is a better creator¹⁷ than a being one who creates a single thing, *ceteris paribus*; the creation of the best possible creator must be unsurpassable. But our universe is surpassable because we can imagine a creation with two universes (say, ours and another), and with three universes, and with four universes. . . ., all the way up to the multiverse (which includes our universe and other morally valuable universes). The multiverse—with more moral agents, more energy and space and time, and just more stuff—is better than any single universe. Since the multiverse is better than our universe simpliciter, the creator of the multiverse would be better than the creator of a single universe. QED.

I added the following warning: “A potential objection could assert that only a single universe is worth creating, thereby challenging the third premise. This objection will be addressed in the subsequent section”.

In conclusion, perfect being theology, in combination with the creator attribute of God, suggests a multiverse.

3. Arguments from the Moral Attributes of God

3.1. The Argument from the Moral Perfection of God

According to classical Islamic theism, God is all good¹⁸. Given God’s essential goodness, one would expect God to maximize, as much as logically possible, the moral and aesthetic goodness of reality. Based on this intuition, many theists such as Ibn Sina ([Ibn Sina 1968–1971](#), pp. 158–60), Al Ghazali ([al-Ghazali 2001](#), pp. 47–50), Ibn Taymiyya ([Hoover 2004](#)), Ibn Arabi ([Chittick 1989](#), pp. 289–301) and Leibnitz ([Caro 2020](#)) claimed that God has created the best possible world. Avicenna, likely the originator of the best possible world tradition in Islamic thought, held that God is “a cause in Itself of good and perfection in as much as that is possible” ([Ibn Sina 1960](#), p. 415). His critic, Al Ghazali, also seems to adopt the position: “There is not in possibility more wonderful than this world, because of the perfected existence of all realities within it” ([Ormsby 1984](#), p. 106). Although not widely accepted by the Ashari school of theology, which dominates Muslim thinking, this position seems to be adopted by Sufi’s partly due to the influence of the mystical writings of Sufi Ibn Arabi ([Ormsby 1984](#), pp. 103–7). Some recent philosophers, motivated by this intuition, argue that the best possible world is a multiverse ([Kraay 2010](#), pp. 355–68). Similarly, Paul Draper has argued that given a theistic God who has limitless creative resources and is perfectly good, we should expect that God would create a multiverse ([Draper 2004](#), pp. 311–21). In this section, we develop and defend an Islamic version of this argument in support of Multiverse Theism.

Defenders of a theistic multiverse who develop their case based on the perfect goodness of God, typically argue that God would create all of the universes which involve more goodness than evil (according to some non-arbitrary cutoff). We are neutral on what this cutoff should be. We simply define, without precise specification, the universes that God would choose to create in order to increase the value of the reality as “universes worth creating”. The argument from God’s moral perfection for the multiverse is formulated as:

1. God is all good.
2. God is omnipotent.
3. All good beings would want to increase the value of reality.
4. A universe worth creating would increase the value of reality.
5. An omnipotent being can create any universe worth creating.
6. Therefore, God would create any universe worth creating.
7. Therefore, there is more than one possible universe.
8. Therefore, God would create more than one universe.
9. Therefore, God would create a multiverse.

Given the assumption of classical Islamic theism, the first two premises are uncontroversial. The third premise seems to follow by definition from God’s essential goodness. The fourth premise assumes, uncontroversially, that values are additive; in other words, if we have two different universes, their total value is equal to or greater than the value of each universe separately. The fifth premise follows from the definition of omnipotence (assuming that universes are consistent internally, and assuming universes that are compatible with true counterfactuals of freedom)¹⁹. The sixth premise follows from the previous premises. The seventh premise seems reasonable: surely, there is no reason to assume that only a single universe is worth creating. Suppose universe U1 is worth creating, now consider a second universe, U2, identical to U1 but with one more neutrino particle. Since an extra particle does not reduce the value of a universe, U2 would be at least as worthy of creation as U1. From the sixth and seventh premise, it follows that the multiverse exists.

Let us again consider some objections. First, a critic might deny the existence of objective values or deny the claim that objective values can be attached to reality. This objection, however, is not very attractive to Muslims who believe that God is objectively good, which implies that objective values exist or that God ascribes objective value to reality. Of course, a critic might reject objective values because they reject the existence of God; but our argument begins with the assumption of classical Islamic theism and classical Islamic theism affirms or implies the objective values of God and God's created things.

It is also important to acknowledge that some extreme forms of Divine Voluntarism, possibly present within certain interpretations of the Ashari school of Islamic theology—a variant of classical Islamic theism—might challenge the third premise. Consequently, adherents of this specific theological perspective may find the argument less compelling. I intend to offer some concise critiques of this form of extreme divine voluntarism in the following section.

The denial of objective values would likewise undermine atheism's arguably best case against theism—the problem of evil. If objective values cannot be attached to universes, then God, without violating God's essential goodness, could have created universes that include any kind or amount of evil.

A Muslim, however, might deny the claim that God's decision to create is constrained by maximizing value. After all, God is, so it seems, also maximally free and could create in accord with non-axiological criteria (or none at all). There are two problems with this objection. First, it is hard to imagine another, non-axiological criterion according to which an all-good God would create; would an essentially good being ignore, say, moral value and just create worlds with an even number of things or the preponderance of the color purple? God might be free to do so, but an essentially good being, so it seems, would not. God's freedom, on this view, is best understood as constrained by God's essential attributes. Secondly, whatever serves as God's non-axiological criterion would still give rise to a multiverse; the argument, so it seems, could easily be modified, *mutatis mutandis*, in terms of this new criterion. There is an infinite number of possible universes with even numbers of things or in which the color purple dominates. Whatever God's criteria—axiological or non-axiological—we would expect a multiverse.

Another possible objection is to claim that all of the criteria used by God, which He seeks to maximize, are uniquely satisfied by our universe. Hence, God created a single universe, the best given all of God's criteria, rather than a multiverse. Again, this seems difficult to sustain because we can imagine a universe that is an exact copy of our universe but with just one more neutrino; wouldn't that universe be equal to or better than ours? And so worthy of creation? Given the range of such possibilities, it is hard to imagine that just one universe could uniquely satisfy God's criteria. One might argue that our universe is so precisely fine-tuned that even a minimal alteration, such as the addition or subtraction of one neutrino, would cause it to collapse. This critique presumes a stringent level of fine-tuning, where every aspect of the universe is critically balanced. While some physicists and philosophers contend that our universe appears fine-tuned for life, it is exceedingly improbable that such minor adjustments would indeed lead to collapse. Furthermore, it is important to note that neutrinos primarily interact through gravity and have very small masses. Moreover, calculations regarding the fine-tuning of the universe suggest that it can support life within a range of physical constants, rather than a single precise value. This indicates that many potential universes could feasibly sustain complex structures and life forms (Barnes 2012).

One might argue that while the universe would not collapse with such a minor change, its overall value (in terms of being worth creating) might change²⁰. In the vastness of the universe, a single neutrino represents an incredibly tiny fraction of the total matter and energy. The emergent properties of the universe, which play important roles in aesthetics and moral values—such as the formation of complex structures, the evolution of life, and the existence of consciousness—arise from the interactions of countless particles and forces over vast scales of space and time. These properties are not sensitive to the presence or absence of

an individual neutrino. The processes that lead to these emergent phenomena involve large numbers of particles and substantial interactions, rendering the impact of a single neutrino effectively insignificant. This conclusion aligns with the principles of statistical mechanics, which describe how macroscopic properties emerge from the collective behavior of many particles. Moreover, the fine-tuning as presented in the objection, implies that no matter where God chooses to place the neutrino, the universe would suddenly become not worth creating, even though there is no increase in evil and the universe remains macroscopically indistinguishable from its previous state. It is difficult to perceive how such a universe could be considered less valuable, let alone not worth creating.

In summary, the theistic conception of an all-good and omnipotent God, when allied with the assumption that objective values can be attached to universes and are additive, suggests the multiverse hypothesis.

3.2. *The Argument from No Perfect Universe*

Fahreddin al-Razi argued that the world we live in is not the perfect world, because the perfect world—like the largest number—is impossible (al-Razi 1987, p. 107). When something admits of no intrinsic maximum, the largest or best or most perfect are impossible. God could always add more righteous people to any given world (simultaneously making the world bigger per person) and so make it better. Gaunilo’s perfect island, then, is in principle impossible because whatever island one thinks is perfect, it would be better with one more tree, a little larger size, and/or one more person. Hence, they argue, the concept of “the perfect world” is incoherent. Such a view has been defended by contemporary thinkers such as Plantinga (Plantinga 1974, p. 61), Swinburne (Swinburne 1979, pp. 114–15), Forrest (Forrest 1981, pp. 49–54), Schlesinger (Schlesinger 1977), Reichenbach (Reichenbach 1982, pp. 121–29) and (Rubio 2020).

One cannot deny the obvious: if God were to choose a world, no matter which world he creates, there would always be a better one.

William Rowe claims that this creates a problem for perfect being theism (Rowe 1994) because it implies that God is morally surpassable—no matter which world God creates, God could have done better. And if God is morally surpassable, God is not the greatest possible being.

Interestingly, Rowe’s argument can be modified to form an argument for theism, that is, for Multiverse Theism:

1. For any given universe, there is a better possible universe.
2. If God were to create a single universe, his work would be morally surpassable.
3. God is the greatest possible being.
4. If God were the greatest possible being, then God’s work would not be morally surpassable.
5. God’s work is not morally surpassable.
6. Therefore, God did not create a single universe.
7. God created at least one universe.
8. Therefore, God created a multiverse.

The first premise applies “the no best world” intuition to universes; it claims that there is an infinite spectrum of increasingly better universes. The second premise follows from the first: given that there is an infinite spectrum of increasingly better universes—no matter which universe is created, there is always a better one that God did not create. The third premise is PBT, and the fourth premise seems to be a reasonable consequence of PBT. The fifth premise is a consequence of the third and fourth premises, and the sixth premise is a consequence of the second and fifth premises. The sixth premise, combined with the premise that God created our universe, suggests that God created a multiverse (again, although we spell the argument out as deductively valid, we concede the difficulty of demonstrating the truth of all of its premises or being aware of all relevant but unconsidered premises).

Daniel and Frances Howard-Snyder (Howard-Snyder and Howard-Snyder 1994, pp. 260–68) deny the fourth premise and argue that a perfect being’s work can be morally

surpassable. They imagine two perfect beings who use a random machine to choose which universe to create. Now assume that the second being's creation is better than the first being's creation. Did the latter surpass the former? Given that both used the same process—a random creation machine—they argue that there are no grounds to hold that the second being surpassed the first being. Hence, a morally surpassable creation does not imply that a perfect being can be surpassed.

Their argument seems to assume that God was limited to creating a single universe. Indeed, they hint at this in their discussion of the second omnipotent being who is faced with creating a world “and did not create them all.” If omnipotent beings could have created them all (all of the morally desirable universes), then restricting themselves to a single universe suggests some sort of defect on the part of divine goodness. If restricted to single universes, then perhaps omnipotence did the best omnipotence could. But if the multiverse is possible, perhaps not. Any single universe would be morally surpassable by the multiverse, which, so it seems, the greatest possible being should create.

Another possible objection is to modify Rowe's claim and argue that there is no best possible multiverse because, for any multiverse, there is always a better one. While this objection would work for some physical multiverse models, it will not for a theological multiverse considered in this argument. Because this multiverse would include all the universes worth creating, there would be no better multiverse.

Let us consider one more objection²¹, assuming our universe is w_1 and there exists a better universe, w_2 , such that $w_1 < w_2$. According to the premises of the argument from no perfect universe, God must also create w_2 . We now face a decision: which of the following options is preferable? (1) Creating both w_1 and w_2 , or (2) creating two instances of w_2 ? If our argument holds true, God has chosen option (1) by creating both our universe and w_2 , the latter being superior to ours. However, it appears that option (2) would be better than option (1). Thus, it could be argued that God should have chosen option (2).

This objection, while recognizing the concept of Multiverse Theism, does not undermine the main thesis of our paper. Instead, it presents an intriguing dilemma: given the existence of many (potentially infinitely) superior universes, why should God create our universe, w_1 ? This question could be partially addressed by other arguments given in this paper. Additionally, under the assumption that no best universe exists, for any given universe w , there is always a better universe $w+$, thus this objection could also apply to w . Essentially, no universe is exempt from this challenge.

However, I contend that this objection ultimately fails. First, it conflicts with Leibniz's Law, also known as the identity of indiscernibles. This ontological principle posits that no two distinct entities can possess all properties identically. Therefore, if this law holds, it would be impossible to have two identical w_2 universes. Second, even if we dismiss Leibniz's Law, one might argue that while $w_2 > w_1$, and even if God created an infinite number of w_2 , the combination of infinitely many w_2 plus w_1 is still superior. Hence, there is a rationale for God to create our universe w_1 as well. Thus, even under these considerations, the objection does not succeed.

3.3. Argument from Highest Justice

Our next argument is based on the just attribute of God. In classical Islamic theism, God is thought to be essentially and perfectly just. God is fair to every being and perfectly dispenses justice in the afterlife. Surely God could have created beings besides humans, beings with free will, beings who could be morally good and enjoy their existence. One might argue that it was unjust to create us and not to create them. This seems so because there seems to be no moral reason to prefer us and not to prefer them. Since God would bring ultimate justice to reality, God probably created other moral agents in different universes. This argument can be summarized as:

1. God is perfectly just.
2. Therefore, God creates all of the moral agents worth creating.

3. Other human-like beings besides us would have been worth creating (with free will, intellect, moral goodness, etc.).
4. It would be unjust to create us and not to create them (there is no moral reason to prefer us over them).
5. God created us.
6. Therefore, God created a multiverse.

Point (2), we concede, may be impossible (because “moral agents worth creating” may not admit any intrinsic maximum), the premises are relatively uncontroversial. Nonetheless, we can clearly imagine many different human-like beings who are worth creating, hence there could have been many other beings/persons worth creating beside those in our universe (3).

While the third premise is *prima facie* attractive, it makes a controversial assumption. It assumes, again not uncontroversially, that God has moral responsibilities or moral obligations toward non-existing beings. This assumption can be attacked in two ways.

Firstly, a critic may posit that God is not obligated towards any being. This perspective is notably upheld by Asharism, which advocates for extreme Divine Moral Voluntarism²². However, this stance encounters several fundamental issues commonly associated with Divine Voluntarism. Initially, the assertion that God bears no moral responsibility towards us risks diminishing and negating God’s moral attributes, rendering them superficial. Secondly, if Divine Voluntarism were accurate, it would imply that God could arbitrarily alter His decisions, potentially condemning a virtuous individual, who adheres to His commands, to Hell. This scenario could extend even to His prophets. Such a notion starkly contradicts the principle of divine justice. Lastly, extreme Divine Moral Voluntarism could lead to theological skepticism. If God is not morally accountable, He could deceive humanity, thereby undermining any basis for trust in scriptural assertions and eliminating any rational grounds for belief in scripture. Even if one thought that God had no obligations, one might think that it would nonetheless be good for God (as just) to do various things. God does them, not because God is responsible to some higher moral authority or out of obligation, God does them because God is good and God’s goodness finds expression in creation in various ways. So even denying that God has obligations and responsibilities, or that divine justice must be understood in terms of obligations and permissions, God’s justice might express in manifestations of goodness. Understanding divine justice in terms of expressions of goodness might be sufficient for advancing this argument.

Second, the critic might claim that one has no moral responsibility toward non-existing beings. But it seems that there are cases where we seem to be morally responsible toward non-existing beings. For example, we seem to be responsible toward non-existing people of the past and non-existing people of the future.

Let’s prime our intuitions with some simple (but possibly philosophically objectionable) examples. People of the past: we should, for example, respect the grave of deceased people, honor wills, and take into account the wishes of deceased ancestors for our lives, etc. People of the future: we are obligated to leave a healthy planet for future generations, and I would be responsible for my action if I were to plant a bomb which would destroy London in 100 years.

On the assumption of presentism, these would be moral responsibilities toward non-existing beings. Given these intuitions and given presentism, we have responsibilities for non-existing beings.

Of course, this response is not sufficient to counter the objection. Our sense of obligation toward deceased people may be parasitic on their (past) existence or may reduce completely to feelings towards loved ones. And maybe presentism is false.

And while we may be responsible to future existents, it doesn’t follow that we are even could be responsible toward all merely possible people. For example, even supposing we have responsibilities toward future existents, we don’t seem to have responsibilities toward merely “possible people” who will never exist. As Rivka Weinberg argues, “[i]f a

hypothetically possible person will never exist then there is no real subject for interests at all" (Weinberg 2013, p. 473).

Consider a couple which decides not to have a child. Do they act immorally toward a particular non-existent child (or to every possible child)? It seems not. If we had such obligations, each couple would be obliged to birth an infinite number of non-existent children! Assuming "ought implies can", if we can't fulfill obligations to all merely possible people, then we have no obligation to do so. Thus, even if we have obligations towards future generations, we cannot have obligations to all merely possible people.

God, of course, can do vastly more than humans can do. And while it is false that "can implies ought", God's infinite abilities may affect God's obligations (supposing God has obligations). So, while we may not have obligations to countless possible people, perhaps God does because God can fulfill such obligations. Omnipotence, after all, does have its advantages.

In order to assess this objection we need to determine when we really do have a moral responsibility toward non-existing beings. It seems to us that two conditions must be met in order to be morally responsible toward non-existing beings. First, the existence of these beings must be possible at some space-time point and the moral community²³ we belong to must be able to causally interact with that being. We are not responsible to Indiana Jones because we have no power to bring him into existence, hence he is not part of our world and there is no way he can interact with our moral community. God, on the other hand, has the causal power to create any coherent non-existent "being", and he can interact with any being. Therefore, for God, any compossible being satisfies the first condition. However, the first condition is not sufficient for moral responsibility. It successfully eliminates our moral irresponsibility toward, say, Indiana Jones, however, the child that couple is considering satisfies this condition as well, yet they seem to have no responsibility toward that child.

So, in order to have a moral responsibility toward a non-existing being, we must, second, be able to bear the consequences of that responsibility. In other words, the demand of this responsibility cannot be very high. The couple, after conceiving a child, bears immense material and emotional responsibility. They are obligated to give up considerable portions of their time, money, etc. If they are unwilling to assume these responsibilities because they lack the necessary resources, their decision not to bring children into the world would be morally permissible.

Since God is omnipotent, God can meet the demands of many non-contradictory obligations. None of his creative actions would cause him any difficulty. Thus, God seems to satisfy the second condition as well. If our analysis is correct, the second objection fails. Hence, the third premise seems to be correct.

Consider a final reason to think that God has moral responsibility toward non-existing "beings." In all theistic religions, God promises ultimate justice in the afterlife by punishing evildoers and rewarding the righteous. But assuming presentism and that dead people no longer exist²⁴, this belief seems to require one to believe that God has moral responsibility toward non-existing beings. Most finite beings will die before judgment day. If God didn't have a moral responsibility toward non-existing beings, God need not keep his promise of ultimate judgment. But this conflicts with our moral intuitions.

Even if God were to have no moral responsibility towards non-existing beings, God's Justice suggests that He would create all the beings worth creating. This is so because as the number of beings increase, God's justice increases, too. As a result, one can claim that God as the Supreme Just being will create all the beings worth creating so that He can bring more justice to reality.

To conclude, the theistic conception of Just God, combined with the assumption that He has a moral responsibility toward non-existing beings, leads to Multiverse Theism.

3.4. The Argument from the Highest Love

According to classical Islamic theism, God is perfectly loving or the most loving being. In Islamic theology, perfect love is one of the 99 essential attributes of God, known as

Al-Wadud (Quran 11:90, 85:14). The perfect loving attribute of God taken together with Perfect Being Theology implies that we cannot imagine a more loving being than God. But this, again, implies that God creates all the beings worthy of love. Here is the summary of the argument: God is the most loving/perfect loving (Al-Wadud), i.e., God loves all beings worth loving²⁵. In more formal terms:

1. We cannot imagine a more loving being than God.
2. In order to truly love, an object of love must exist at some time t or timelessly.
3. A being B_1 who loves more beings than a being B_2 (with the same degree of love) is more loving than B_2 .
4. If God were not to create all the beings worthy of love, we could imagine a more loving being than God.
5. God creates all the beings worthy of love.
6. Not all beings worth loving exist in our universe.
7. God created a multiverse.

The first premise is the theological claim that God is the perfect loving being. The second premise follows from the first premise and PBT. The third premise states that a being can love another being only if that being exists. We should note that one can love a non-existing being that existed in the past, like my love of my grandfather, or love a non-existing being that will exist in the future, such as a mother's love of her unborn child. The third premise claims that one cannot truly love a being that never existed and never will exist. The fourth premise assumes that love is additive; in other words, a person who loves more people (assuming the same degree of love) is the more loving being. This seems reasonable because we think that a person who loves, say, her entire family is more loving than a person who loves just one of her children. The fifth premise follows from the third and fourth premise—if God did not create all the beings worthy of love, we could think of a being who is more loving (by, *ceteris paribus*, creating one more person). The sixth premise follows from the third and fifth premise. Since we cannot imagine a more loving being than God and since loving requires the existence of the beloved, we can conclude that God creates all beings worth loving. In conclusion, since not all the beings worthy of worship exist in our universe, it follows that God created a multiverse.

This argument, of course, is speculative and open to many objections. One possible objection is to deny the third premise and insist that one can love non-existing beings. Some people, for example, claim to love merely fictional characters. It seems to us that while you can have affection toward non-existing beings, that feeling should not be called love. This is so because it seems that proper love involves sharing; in other words, giving to the other what of one's own is good for him. And this requires the existence of the beloved.

4. Arguments from the Lord Attribute of God

In this final section, since the general structure of these arguments is clear, we will develop arguments that are species of an everlasting and a Perfect-Being-Theology argument. We will just present and defend them quickly and without response.

One of the essential names of God in Islamic tradition is *Ar-Rabb*, often translated into English as "The Lord". Of course, this is not special to Islam; in all of the theistic religions, God instantiates the attribute, Lord. Aquinas notes that one can argue for the eternity of the world from the "Lord from eternity" attribute of God (Davidson 1987, p. 64). Aquinas's argument can be repurposed as an argument for Multiverse Theism. This argument can be summarized as:

1. God is everlastingly the Lord.
2. A being can be a Lord only if there is a subject over whom he has authority.
3. God created our universe, i.e., our universe has a finite past.
4. God was the Lord before He created our universe.
5. Thus, God must have created some other universe before our universe.
6. Therefore, theism implies a multiverse.

Similar to the argument based on the everlasting attribute of God, this argument assumes the everlasting model of God and that our universe has a finite past. The second premise seems reasonable, as the title Lord seems by definition to imply a subject over whom one has authority. Finally, abstract objects do not seem to be suitable candidates for subjects with respect to whom God can be designated as Lord. “Lord” implies subjects who can respond in obedience to an authority.

One can also develop a PBT argument from the Lord attribute of God as well. God, as a greatest conceivable being, is also the greatest conceivable Lord. Moreover, the Lord, who rules over a greater number of subjects, is the greater Lord. Hence, if God is the greatest Lord, we would expect him to create all the possible beings whose existence is consistent with God’s other attributes. And this implies the existence of a multiverse. The argument can be formulated as:

1. God is the greatest conceivable being.
2. God is the greatest possible Lord.
3. If being, B1, is in authority over more subjects than being, B2, then B1 is a greater Lord than B2.
4. If God did not create all beings worth creating, we could imagine a greater being than God.
5. Therefore, God created all beings worth creating.
6. Not all beings worth creating exist in our universe.
7. God created a multiverse.

Again, the first two premises are statements of PBT. The fourth follows from the third, and the fifth follows from the previous premises. The sixth seems to be trivially true. The only controversial premise is three. But three is just a slightly stronger claim than the second premise in the previous argument. Intuition suggests that a being with more subjects is the higher Lord.

5. Conclusions

We have offered several arguments that try to show that classical Islamic theism suggests, or maybe even implies, Multiverse Theism. While we initially offered textual support from the Quran, we explored more deeply a case made from various divine attributes. The arguments follow two different patterns. One group tries to show that the eternity of some of God’s attributes suggests Multiverse Theism: the everlasting creator and everlasting lord attributes of God, combined with the finite age of our universe, suggest Multiverse Theism. The second strategy involves arguments that combine the insights of Perfect Being Theology with God’s attributes: God’s attributes of creator attribute, moral perfection, justice, love, and lordship, when combined with perfect being theology, suggest a multiverse. From such patterns of reasoning, other arguments suggest themselves. For example, if omnipresence is correlated with the size of the actual physical space of our universe, then perfect being theology combined with omnipresence leads to a multiverse.²⁶

We concede that each of the arguments makes philosophically and theologically controversial assumptions. For example, we reject divine eternity, speak of non-existent beings, assume (sometimes) that God has obligations and reject theistic activism (and that’s just for starters). Perhaps most startlingly, we assume that God can create an infinite number of universes and an infinite number of people (compossible with God’s nature). However, we are not offering theistic proofs of the multiverse. Rather, we are bringing to bear reasonable (or not demonstrably unreasonable) theological and philosophical intuitions to bear on the discussion. You might, then, think of these arguments as suggestions. Given the premises and some not unreasonable, but probably not totally satisfactory, rejections of various objections, classical Islamic theism suggests the multiverse. This is likely all that can be reasonably expected of such arguments.

Taken together, these arguments certainly call into question the typically unquestioned theological assumption of a single universe. And they offer rich and mostly unexplored

ground (worlds) for theological reflection on the divine attributes; the divine attributes may require countless universes to find their proper expression.

Finally, these arguments should put to rest the claim that the multiverse is a defeater for theism. We claim that both the divine eternality and PBT arguments combine to show that Multiverse Theism is not an ad hoc position (for the theist). Indeed, we have offered a host of considerations that suggest the multiverse is strongly suggested by traditional divine attributes.

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Notes

- 1 For physicists defending this claim see: (Susskind 2005; Green 2011; Tegmark 2014). For philosophers defending the claim that fine-tuning can be explained via multiverse see: (Leslie 1989; Smart 1989; Parfit 1998, pp. 24–27; Bradley 2009, pp. 61–72).
- 2 For a defense of a multiverse theodicy see: (Turner 2003, pp. 1–17).
- 3 For a response based on the multiverse against the problem of no best world see: (Kraay 2010, pp. 355–68).
- 4 It is imperative to acknowledge that there exist several potential interpretations of the referenced verse (Quran 65:12) that do not necessarily pertain to the concept of a multiverse. The Directorate of Religious Affairs in Turkey, in their exegesis of the Quran, outlines various possibilities regarding the term "seven earths." These interpretations include the cosmological perspective prevalent during the Prophet's era, a reference to the seven continents, an allusion to seven distinct planets, or the notion of seven layers of the earth. Additionally, it is recognized that the numeral "seven" may symbolize perfection or multiplicity rather than representing a literal quantity (Karaman et al. 2020, pp. 396–97).
- 5 For detailed presentation of these arguments see (Davidson 1987, pp. 49–85).
- 6 This argument implies a temporal multiverse, in which one universe exists before another universe, which exists before another universe, ad infinitum.
- 7 The everlasting model of God need not assume that God is in physical time. God may have his own temporal life, outside of physical time. So, when we say that our universe has a finite past in the third premise, we mean it has a finite past with respect to God's (metaphysical) time. Since, we believe, finite physical time implies finite metaphysical time, we develop the argument in terms of physical time.
- 8 Although God as everlasting was not popular in medieval philosophy, it is among contemporary philosophers of religion. Contemporary philosophers find it difficult to understand how a timeless, eternal God could know A-theoretic propositions about the present and act in space-time. For a review of arguments for and against the everlasting model of God see: (Ganssle 2001). The everlasting view had adherents among Muslim theologians in medieval philosophy, most notably some Mutazilite theologians and Ibn Taymiyya. For detailed study of Ibn Taymiyya's conception of God and creation see: (Hoover 2004).
- 9 It is also noteworthy that certain Islamic theists, such as Ibn Rushd and Ibn Sina, have advocated for models of the universe that posit its eternity. Their stance is influenced, in part, by Aristotelian science. However, as I have argued in previous works, contemporary scientific understanding appears to endorse the concept of a universe with a finite past.
- 10 For a defense of Theistic Activism see: (Morris and Menzel 1986, pp. 353–62).
- 11 For the bootstrapping objection to Theistic Activism see: (Gould 2011, pp. 255–74).
- 12 If we express the argument in terms of physical time, the eternal universe objection conflicts with orthodox cosmological models in modern cosmology.
- 13 I extend my gratitude to the anonymous referee for highlighting this potential objection.
- 14 The remark that universes are prior to the multiverse needs additional defense, since some models of multiverse seems to imply that there are meta-laws above the universes. For example, universes in the Quantum Mechanical multiverse are connected by and evolve according to the universal wavefunction. This can be used as an argument against the claim that universes are prior to the multiverse.
- 15 This accords with the Islamic understanding of God, as the best creator. "So blessed be Allah, the best of creators" (Quran 23:14).
- 16 Intuitively, it seems that not every creation is not worth creating, such as evilverses and universes in which there is just evil or evil suppresses goodness.
- 17 We should note the adjective better refers to the creative power of, rather than the axiological degree of the creation.
- 18 In Islamic theism, this is reflected in God's name, Al-Barr (Quran 52:28).

- 19 We concede that omnipotence is restricted to the logically possible. Moreover, we concede, given libertarian freedom, that it is up to free creatures (not God) what they freely do in certain circumstances. So, following Plantinga, we concede that there are universes worth creating that God, though omnipotent, cannot create.
- 20 I thank the anonymous referee for providing this objection.
- 21 I extend my gratitude to the anonymous referee for raising this objection.
- 22 We should note that Asharite theology holds that what is good or bad is entirely dependent on God's will. There is no inherent good or evil outside of what God decrees. This is what I mean by extreme Divine Voluntarism. Note that this is different than modified divine command theories such as the one championed by Robert Merrihew Adams (Adams 1987, pp. 97–122). Adams argues that moral truths exist and are grounded in the nature of God. Adams posits that God's commands are rooted in His perfectly good and loving nature. This makes morality dependent on God's nature rather than His will alone. Hence Adams' modified divine command theory posits that there are objective moral values, this is not true for extreme divine voluntarism. Since modified divine command theory acknowledges the existence of objective moral values in God's nature it is consistent with the claim that God has moral responsibility towards its creation. This responsibility is rooted in God's inherently good and loving nature. Because God's nature is the standard of goodness, His actions towards creation are guided by this moral character.
- 23 The moral community can be defined as a set of beings with moral characteristics which interact with at least one other being in the set.
- 24 This argument will not for some theist traditions who deny that death people will cease to exist till they are resurrected. There are different opinions about this issue in Islamic tradition.
- 25 Some Christians think that no sinful human being is worth loving. For them this argument should be (and can be) restated in terms of God's undeserved love rather than human worth. Most Muslims will think that God only loves people who deserve to be loved.
- 26 Omnisubjectivity is a supposed attribute of God's defended by Linda Zagzebski. She claims that God has an ability to know what it is like for each of God's creature to be themselves; He shares our first-person perspectives with us. Again, if omnisubjectivity is a great making property, since it is obviously dependent on the creatures themselves, one can again argue that combined with perfect being theology it leads to a multiverse.

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