

DESIGNED TO DISCOVER

Rating:

Description: God gave us a rational mind and a rational universe so that we reflect upon this creation. This makes us appreciate God's majesty and creative power, which naturally leads us to knowing and affirming that He deserves to be worshipped.

Category: [Articles](#) [Evidence](#) [Islam is Truth](#) [Logical Proofs](#)

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Category: [Articles](#) [Evidence](#) [Islam is Truth](#) [The Existence of God](#)

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"But then with me the horrid doubt always arises  whether the convictions of man's mind, which has been developed from the mind of the lower animals, are of any value or at all trustworthy. Would anyone trust in the convictions of a monkey's mind, if there are any convictions in such a mind?"^[1]

This is an excerpt from a letter written in 1881 by Charles Darwin. What troubled him was the notion of trusting the human mind; if we evolved from lower life forms; if we can be reduced down to random, non-rational physical processes, how can our minds be rational?

Indeed, questions such as, "Can we trust our minds?", "Can we reason to the truth?", and, "Why and how have we acquired the ability to understand the universe?" have captured the minds of great thinkers throughout the ages. Our minds are truly fascinating; we have mental faculties which outshine all other creatures, and we seem to have cognitive abilities which surpass the requirements of natural selection.

Natural selection is not concerned with truth value but rather survival value. Both true, as well as false beliefs, can adequately result in survival. Take this as an analogy: John and Mark are asked to run across a busy highway blindfolded. John's cognitive faculties are functioning perfectly; when he is asked to do this, he reasons to the conclusion that this would be extremely dangerous and declines the offer. On the other hand, Mark's cognitive faculties are impaired, which result in him believing that there is no traffic. At the same time, he holds the belief that someone has just glued his feet to the ground, which results in him not running across the road. This simple example illustrates that survival is not contingent on truth.

It isn't only our minds which are amazing, we also live in a rational universe.

Again, if everything was simply a by-product of non-rational, blind, random physical processes, how have we ended up with a rationally intelligible universe? A universe governed by distinctive laws and one which is mathematically coherent. Many have been mesmerized by the rational nature and order of the universe; this is captured in the statement of Einstein, when he said, "What is inconceivable about the universe is that it is at all conceivable."^[2] We live in an ordered rational universe! Order does not come from disorder; we wouldn't expect scrabble pieces thrown into the air at random to land spelling a concise sentence. Rationality does not come from non-rationality; believing such a thing would be absurd. It would be the equivalent of claiming that something could arise from nothing.

As a race, humans have progressed in leaps and bounds in the sciences, yet the two fundamental requirements to do science—a rational mind and a rational universe—have gone unaccounted for. Having one without the other would render science non-existent. Both need to work uniquely together in a complementary way to make science possible. An analogy which comes to mind is of a lock and a key: the rational mind being the key which has the potential to unlock the rational universe.

Here arises another problem for atheism: how is it that we have a mind which can comprehend the order and rationality of the universe? Keys do not just fit locks by chance, they are designed to fit. This makes sense of God's existence. If rationality cannot come from non-rationality, and since we cannot trust our minds if they are just a result of blind, non-rational forces, then what best explains the fact that we do trust our minds and that rationality can only come from rationality? An All-Knowing and All-Wise being (God) that created the universe with the ability for sentient beings to have rational faculties is the best explanation for this.

In the Quran, seldom does God engage humanity in attempting to prove His existence. Instead, He takes us from His existence, which is self-evidently true, to His worship. One way God does this is by directing us towards His creation; encouraging us to look into creation wherein lie His signs. It is through pondering and reflecting over these signs that we can appreciate His majesty and creative power, which naturally leads us to knowing and affirming that He deserves to be worshipped.

God says in the Quran, "**Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding.**" (Quran 3:190) We can draw a beautiful conclusion from this: God gave us a rational mind and a rational universe so we can reflect over this creation and through this, fulfil our purpose which is to worship God: the One who made us and gave us everything. Indeed, the One who made everything and gave us everything deserves to be worshipped.

Footnotes:

[1] Darwin, C. R. to Graham, William. 3 July 1881.

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