

CAUSATIVE AGENT(S): A QUR'ANIC PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT: *There are many writings on the axiomatic (i.e Qaḍīyyah musallamah) scientific causative agent(s), both from the East and the West. Muslims, as well as non-Muslims have also said a lot from their own perspectives. But none have been able to categorically specify whether or not the notion is totally rejected from the Qur'anic point of view, or it is totally approved. This paper thus discusses the notion, which sees the Qur'an as a model for anything and everything. The paper posits that Philosophy, Sciences, Technology, and Religion un-animously agree that all things have got a cause, and hence all 'causeds' have a source. Philosophy is yet to substantively satisfy our quest, science is still struggling to allay our fears, technology is yet to convince our minds of its danger(s), and religion has not been fully allowed to freely prove its worth, where then lays the 'causer', the 'medium' and the 'caused'? The paper accesses some philosophic notions of the causative agent(s) in the light of the Qur'anic interpretation of such. The major focus of the paper is on some Qur'anic verses and instances relevant to 'cause' and 'effect'. The paper submits that 'the notion of the causative agent(s) without exploring its religio-Divine sources is incomplete.*

Keywords: *Agent, Causative, Perspective, Qaḍīyyah musallamah, Qur'anic.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not (Authorized (King James) Version: John 1: 1-5). Such is the Biblical declaration of the beginning of all the beginnings. Even though the real meaning is clearly understood to have been misappropriated beyond its proportion one thing that is glaringly true there is that there was absolutely 'no thing' prior to the existence of the causer of all the causes. The scientific insistence here is that there must be a cause for all the causeds, and there must be a beginning to all the beginnings, and hence the search for the origin of all the roots.

II. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Before delving into the details of this paper it is pertinent to introduce some terms that call for attention. A careful search in The World Book Encyclopedia Dictionary defines 'causative' as '1. being a cause; productive (of an effect), and 2. expressing causation'; 'cause' is defined as 'whatever produces an effect; a person or thing that makes something happen'; and 'causer' is defined as 'a person or thing that causes; the agent or act by which an effect is produced' (Barnhart, Clarence L., 1966, vol. 1, pp. 308-309; Pearson Longman, 2008, p. 234). Agent is defined as 'a person [or thing] who produces effect; any power or cause that produces an effect by its action' (The World book..., vol. 1, p. 39; Longman Dictionary..., p. 29). 'Effect' on the other hand is defined as 'whatever is produced by a cause; something made to happen by a person or thing; [a]

result' (The World Book..., p. 627; Longman..., p. 502). Thus, 'causative agent' could be rightly defined here as any thing, living or non-living, through which another thing can be originated, evolved or created divinely, biologically and naturally; a medium through which everything must come to being, and without which nothing exists. It denotes a natural way through which things evolve materially. This distances the involvement of any divine source or immaterial substances in the process of creation. In the Qur'anic view, the causative agents could be referred to as the medium, cosmological or non-cosmological, through which Allah SWT executes His Divine orders on His creations (details below). Philosophical notion of 'cause and effect' is that they are inseparables; that without a cause there cannot be an effect, and once there is an effect there must be to it a cause, they are directly and materially related. From the Qur'anic notion, it is not a must that once there is a cause an effect must ensue or be generated. Divinely, Allah SWT may chose not to have a cause followed by an effect, or He may decide to have an effect without any cause. A good Qur'anic instance of this is the ineffectiveness of burning inflicted upon Ibrahim AS (Hammad, Q. 21: 50-73, pp. 549-551). '*Qadiyyah*' is defined as 'action, case, judgement' (Qal'aji, Muhammad Rawas, 1985, p. 365), and '*musallamah*' is defined as 'postulate, presupposition intuitive [that is in need of no proof]' (ibid., p. 429). Thus, '*Qadiyyah musallamah*' is an 'axiom', a statement taken to be true without any proof, evidence or examination; it is a preconceived self-evident truth that may never be changed or tampered with (The World Book, p. 138). It is a rule or principle that is generally considered to be true whatsoever (Longman, p. 89). A popular example of this is the proof that 'if equals are added to equals the results will always be equal', and that 'a whole is always greater than any of its part'. 'Qur'anic perspective' is self-explanatory; it refers to those Qur'anic instances of great relevance to the topic under discussion, as it is detailed at the appropriate section of this paper.

III. GENERAL BACKGROUND

The task of all the inquiries about the cause of all the causes did not start with science. It was not the prerogative of science to know the root of things; science is rather sufficed with axioms than seeking further for sources and origins. The task of philosophy it was, and still is, to seek for the answer to the 'Ws'; 'why', 'what', 'when', 'where' and 'which', and the 'How' questions, and it was in the quest for any possible response that were aroused many possible assumptions, assertions and insinuations. It is an important note of reference here that there has never been one unanimous answer among the philosophers, from the ancients to the contemporaries, and neither has it been from the scientists with regard to the origin of things and the original cause of all the causes. A tedious and unfruitful task it would be to attempt an overall opinion of the philosophers concerning the origin of all the origins in this paper as it would take voluminous age of writings doing so. But a general overview would suffice.

It is true that all known object must have a trace from which it evolves, and all things, living or non-living, has a beginning and a source. There must have been a past, glorious or inglorious, for all that is present as there shall be no present for a thing of no past (Mohammed Lutfy Jum'ah, 1999, pp. h-w). The question of the source and cause of life was there before Thales, but we do not have any known attempt on the response prior to his. Thales was the first to opine that the principle of all things is water, and that the earth is a flat disc which floats upon water; water is the originative principle of all things, (Stace, 2010, pp. 23-25; Mujahid, 1984, pp. 29-32; Marshall, 1891, pp. 1-7) and hence the proposition that the cause of all the causes is water. Anaximander, a young disciple of Thales, agrees with him that the principle of all things is material, but he refuses to give this material a particular name or representation. The matter to him is formless, indefinite, and absolutely featureless (Ibid., pp. 26-27, pp. 32-34, and pp. 7-14 respectively). Anaximenes, another Ionic philosopher, agrees with the assumption that all things evolve naturally from mater, and he opines two propositions; rarefaction and condensation, as the two major processes through which all things evolve from air. To him, the earth is a flat disc floating upon air (Marshall, 1891, pp. 14-15).

The Pythagoreans' belief is that everything is numerable and can be counted, and thus everything evolves from number, although it is materialistic in nature (Stace: 2010). The general idea of the cause of all things among the Eleatics is simply 'is'. It is interesting to see Xenophanes describing the cause of all things as God, but still in the material sense. He claims the God as "all eye, all ear, all thought..." and thus upsets polytheism while he himself is a pantheist and not a monotheist as it seems (Stace: 2010, p. 37).

Among the Atomists, it is generally thought that all things evolve materially from atom due to segregation (separation) and aggregation (Stace, 2010, p. 66). To Anaxagoras, all things evolve from matter through the process of mixing and unmixing and it is erroneous to assume origination and destruction, for matter is both uncreated and indestructible (Stace, 2010, pp. 69-76). Protagoras, a Sophist, is in doubt whether or not there is 'gods'. To him, "man is the measure of all things..." (Stace, 2010, pp. 77-89). It would be seen therefore that all the causative propositions of the pre-Socratic philosophers, with exception of the Sophists who are humanistic, are materialistic and naturalistic.

The Socratic era is the era attributed mostly to the philosophical activities of Socrates and those philosophers who contemporize him. The core of the philosophical activities of Socrates was to rescue man from the

pure humanistic shackle of the Sophists. He was the pioneer of the methods of induction and definition. It is clearly known that Socrates proclaimed not a cause to all things other than 'God', an heavenly uncreated creator who inspires and directs his affairs (Marshall, 1891, pp. 101-134). The later philosophers, such as Plato and Aristotle, bother less on the origin and cause of things as vigorously did by their predecessors, they rather concentrate their minds on the representation of things, and it was to them that we owe the origin of idealism and realism.

It should be mentioned at this point that the major thirst of all sciences, philosophy being at the inceptive start, is to lead an answer to the nature's quests on 'What is the source of life?' 'How did life begin?' 'When was life first realized?' 'What caused life to be and how?' and 'What is the utmost purpose of life?'. Philosophy has never been satisfied fully of any response in this regard. The only source of a sure answer is religion. In this manner the heavenly religion, that which is Divinely guided and directed. One important of such religion is Islam, a religion guided by Allah *SWT*'s injunctions for the benefit of mankind, and to quench our Philosophic thirst for causative answers. All the 'Ws' and 'H's' questions are conveniently given attentions in the Glorious Qur'an. Of all the questions this paper would only attempt two, i.e. 'who created the creations' and the 'how was the creations created'. The Qur'an ascertains that nothing escapes the knowledge of Allah *SWT* however minute it may be (Surah Saba', Q 34: 3).

IV. THE QUR'ANIC NOTION OF CAUSATIVE AGENT

In the Qur'an, there are several verses about creation of things; heavens and the earths and all that dwells therein, in-between and beyond. Most of these verses however are meant to be believed and are not opened to experiments, but can be scientifically observed. Some on the other hand are already open to scientific proof and explanation, and hence are observable and are open to experiments leading to the conclusion that the book which contains those verses must not have been written by any mortal. Take for instance the verse addressing both the nation of the Jinn and human (Surah al-Rahman, Q. 55: 33), when it challenges and encourages: "O fellowship of Jinn and humans! If you are able to penetrate through the outer spheres of the heavens and the earth, then do penetrate them. Yet never shall you penetrate them, but with Our overwhelming authority" (Hammad, 2008, p. 938). In other words, Allah *SWT* challenges and encourages the custodians of intellect and realization to strive towards the exploration of the cosmological creations, but warned them not to do so without first possessing the necessary expertise, i.e. the possession of the ability to observe, investigate, experiment, and extract the unknown but needed result from the known. Examples such as this are many in the Qur'an.

The problem science and philosophy have with religion is that how can a book come with an already, ever-ready, and perpetual answer to the problem of creation and evolvement been scrutinized? Then what would be the role of the intellect in arriving at such a solution and response. The problem here is that science and philosophy has placed so much burden and stress on the intellect and expect so much from it; whereby science and philosophy regard the intellect as 'the governor' religion regards it as the 'governing tool', and whereby the intellect is scientifically and philosophically considered the creator of the creation religion presents it as the verifier, ascertainment, and the means of fruitfully studying and comprehending the creation.

Now, what is the source of all creations from the Qur'anic view? Did things evolve naturally by themselves, or they were just by accident, and what does the Qur'an say about the uncaused Causer? To attempt a response let us examine one or two other instances from the Qur'an. In this aspect the Qur'an says: "[All things are commenced] with the name of Allah, the All-merciful, and the Giver of mercy. All praise [and glory] is for Allah [Alone for He is the] Lord of all the Universes [and all that they include]. [He is] the All-Merciful, the mercy-Giving, [and He is the] Possessor of the Day of recompense" (Hammad, 2008, Surah al-fatihah, Q. 1: 1-4, p. 2). In the previous Qur'anic instances it is self-explanatory that Allah is the One who gave everything its creation and shape; He is the Sole-Owner and the Perfecter of all His creation at His convenience. The verses are openings to the interpretations of Surah al-Sajdah when the Qur'an authentically certifies that: "Allah is the One who hath created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in [a span of] six [Heavenly] days. [And after the creation] then He settled Himself [befittingly] over the Throne. Thou hath not apart from Him any patron nor any intercessor, [Ye human] will thou not, then, be mindful that Allah is the Causer of all things [and behind all causes and effects He is the One and Only]. He is the One who conducts the affair [of all creation] from the heaven to the earth [with perfection and wisdom]. Then to Him everything ascends in a [Heavenly] day whose measure is a thousand years of your perception of counting. Such He is the [Sole] knower of the [realms of all the] unseen and the seen, the Overpower [One], the Mercy-Giving. [He is] the One [Who] hath perfected everything He hath created, and [He is the One] who originated the creation of humankind [originally] from clay. Then He made the progeny of humankind from a [quintessence of] humble fluid drawn forth. Then He fashioned (made excellent) him (humankind's progeny) and breathed of His [life-giving] spirit into him. And [in addition] He placed for you the faculties of hearing and sight along with the intellects that comprehend. But very little are the appreciations that you show [Him]" (Hammad, 2008, Q. 32: 4-9, pp. 709-710; al-Tabari, n.d, vol. 16, pp. 170-177; Ibn Kathir, 1422AH/2002CE, pp. 359-366). In justification it is reported from the holy Prophet

Ṣ'AW, the interpretation of which is: Abu Hurairah R'A reported the Holy Prophet Ṣ'AW as holding his hands saying: Indeed, Allah SWT has created the heavens and the earth and all that is in-between them in six heavenly days, and then settles Himself magnificently on the Throne in the seventh day. He created the earthly crust on Saturday, the mountains on Sunday, the trees on Monday, the forbidden things on Tuesday, the light on Wednesday, the animals on Thursday, and Adam on Friday in the latest hour of the day, after 'Asr (late afternoon) prayer. He created him from the earth crust; with its red and black colours, its good and evil, hence Allah SWT brought forth from Adam AS both good and evil (al-Baihaqy, n.d, no. 17146).

The previous Prophetic relation was brought to light to depict Prophet Muhammad's input as to whether it was Allah SWT who is the Uncaused-Causer, the Uncreated-Creator and the Unmoved-Mover or the nature and its cosmological attributes that was originally created and caused to life by Him. Certainly, Allah is the Cause of all things, living and non-living, perceptible and imperceptibles, and He it is who subjects into the effects the elements of being effective. The prophetic relation further strengthens the Qur'anic challenge in Q. 46 when it says: "Have they not considered that Allah who created the entire heavens and the earth in its totality and was not in any way enfeebled by their creation is well-able to again give life to the dead? Oh yes, indeed! For He is indeed powerful over all things" (Hammad, 2008, Q. 46: 33, p. 883).

No thing can be effected, talk less of being effective except it is caused to be. The major reason for idol worshipping was that the ancient people, after the elapse of time went in search for source of, and power behind the phenomenon and thought things like sun, moon, and stars possess such a magnificent power subjected themselves serving them. But when it became clear to them that those things could neither favour nor hurt they relented. This is prevalent in the Sulaimanic dialogue with Balkis, in surah al-Naml, where the Qur'an says: "I found her and those who follow her among the people bowing their faces down to the sun in worship instead of bowing to Allah. [This is so] as Shaytan has ornamented to them their godless deeds, and thus has he deterred them from the path of Allah, and they therefore are not rightly guided. Why do they bow not their faces down to Allah who is the One who brings forth all that is hidden in the heavens and the earth, and who Alone knows what ye keep as secret and that which ye make known (Hammad, 2008, Q. 41: 37-39, p. 832). Allah is the One except whom there is none, the Possessor of the Magnificent Throne" (Hammad, 2008, Q. 27: 24-26, pp. 640-641). Thence, when it was clear to Balkis and the adherents of her erroneous belief that they were lost, the Qur'an reports her as saying: "...suddenly, realizing the truth, she turned to Allah in prayer and said: My Possessor! I have indeed wronged myself by bowing down to the sun in worship, and I henceforth submit myself with Sulaiman in worship to Allah alone, Possessor of All the Universes." (Hammad, 2008, Q. 27: 44, p. 644).

Moreover, a serious philosophical and insightful concentration on Q. 27 again suffices most scientific-philosophical enquiries concerning the Cause, the means, and the effect, when Qur'an emphatically says: "O ye Prophet! Say all praise is due for Allah Alone, whose deliverance is sure, and whose profound peace is upon His servants, the ones whom He hath Himself chosen to bear His messages. Thus ask those who disbelieve: is Allah, the All-Availing, worthier of worship, or the helpless idols that they falsely associate with Him as gods. Ask them also, O Prophet, who hath created the heavens and the earth, and who hath sent down to you water from the sky with which We cause to grow orchards of delight? It is not possible for you to cause even one of their trees to grow without it. Then is there another god worthy of worship along with Allah? Rather, those who say this are a people who veer from the straight path and ascribe equals to Him. Or challenge them again, ye Prophet, Who has made the earth a hospitable place of settlement for all the being? And who made rivers flow all through it? And set in it anchoring mountains to balance it? And who placed a seamless divide between the sweet and salty water? Then is there another god worthy of worship along with Allah? Indeed, most of them do not truly know the greatness of Allah. Or engage them further, O Prophet, who answers the one in distress when he cries out to Him and He lifts the affliction? And who has appointed ye human beings as successors to inherit authority in the earth. Then is there another god who hath given thee of the dominion worthy of worship along with Allah? How very rarely you reflect on Allah's bounties upon you. Or query them again, O Prophet, who guides thee safely through the veils of darkness in the land and the sea? And who sends the winds bearing glad tidings before the rain-showers of His mercy? Then is there another god worthy of worship along with Allah? Most High is Allah far above all that they associate with Him as gods. Or tell them, O Prophet, who starts and originates creation, then causes it to return to being after it passes away? And who sustains you from the stores of the heaven and the earth? Then is there another god worthy of worship along with Allah? Say to those who disbelieve: bring forth thy evidence, if ye art truthful! Then, convincingly say to them, O Prophet, in a way of conclusion: no mortal in the heavens and the earth comprehends the science, knowledge and philosophy of the unseen realm, except Allah. And they (the scientists and philosophers) who claim the possession of it are utterly unaware even of when they themselves will be caused to raise up for judgement! And finally, and indeed, the accretion of all their knowledge, science and philosophy amount to no certainty in the Hereafter. They are rather in utmost assumption about it; they are rather utterly blindful to it" (Hammad, 2008, Q. 27: 59-66, pp. 647-649.). The Qur'an, when it deals with causes and effects, clarifies it both theoretically, as depicted above, and practically, as will be mentioned soon.

To explain the practical process of the cause and its effect in its own light, Q. 35 says: “see thou not, O ye Prophet, that Allah alone it is Who sends down water from the sky, whereby We bring forth fruits of varying colours? And also in the land mass of some mountains there are streaks, white and red, varying in their colours, as well as others intensely black. And so too among humankind, and all birds and wild beasts, and all cattle, there are varying colours as well. Yet none is awakened to the wonders of creation and is truly conscious of Allah from amongst his servants save those entrusted and empowered with knowledge, science and philosophy of the word and the way of Allah. Surely, Allah is overpowering, all-forgiving.” (Hammad, 2008, Q. 35: 27-28, pp. 750-751). A further intellectual invitation to the practical origination, creation and re-creation of things is depicted in Q. 50, when it says: “Have they not intellectually gazed at the heaven above them, how perfectly We built it and adorned it? Nor has it even a single flaw. And have they not intellectually, scientifically and philosophically direct their reflections upon the Earth, We alone it is who spread it wide at its surface, and cast therein anchoring mountains to balance it as it spins. And We alone it is who caused something of every delightful variety of plant life to grow in it. All these were done to serve as a divine insight for humankind into the wonders of creation, and to serve as a reminder of an inevitable recollection of all things for ever penitent servant. And [in response to the scientific and philosophical quest for the source of life on earth] We have sent down, from the sky, indescribable blessed water full of mercy, with which We grow gardens and grain of the harvest. And [We also grow from the indescribable blessed water of mercy] tall date palms with spathes of clustered dates. [All these were made] as a provision and means of sustenance for all the servants of Allah, regardless of whether they adhere to His wishes or not. And, thereby, do We give life to a lifeless habitation, settlement, city and nation. Even so shall be the resurrection of all things” (Hammad, 2008, Q. 50: 6-11, p. 907). We have, to certain extent, depicted Qur’anic instances of Allah being the only Cause, Originator and Creator of everything. The next concern of this paper now is ‘how’ Allah causes things from nothingness to thingness.

The question of ‘how’ things evolved or were evolved, to which Philosophy has been unable to ascertain, is the easiest question answered in the light of the Qur’an. There are many instances of those answers from the Qur’anic perspective, but this paper would be sufficed with the eight major instances. These instances might be rightly referred to as the ‘creational device’ in the cosmological sense.

Ascertaining further that Allah is continuously in control of all and clarifying the device used in origination of things, Q. 2: 117 says: “For He is the Sole Originator of the heavens and the earth with no precedent. Thus when He decrees a matter to be caused to being, He but says to it: Be! And it is being” (Hammad, 2008, p. 30). To answer the Philosophic question of how an unmarried and unpopulated woman could conceive and give birth, the Biblical version of which has been misconstrued, the Qur’an responds, clarifying the miraculous birth of Jesus Son of Maryam, in Q. 3: 47 saying: “She (Maryam) mesmerizingly said: O my Possessor! How is there going to be for me a son and no man has ever copulated me? He replied her saying: you were right in claiming that you never touched by a man, but Allah creates whatever He wills and in however way He wills it, for when He decrees a matter to be caused to being, He but says to it: Be! And it is being” (Hammad, 2008, p. 92). Another instance of origination of creation is also in Q. 3: 59 and Q. 19: 35 where Allah says, denouncing the sonship of Jesus Christ to Him: “Indeed, the similitude of the creation of Jesus, with respect to Allah, is to that of Adam who was created from dust, and Allah said to him: Be! And there he was” (Hammad, 2008, p. 94) and “It is not for Allah to take any son. Highly exalted is He above begetting a son! For when He decrees a matter to be caused to being, He but says to it: Be! And it is being” (Hammad, 2008, p. 515) respectively.

In the fifth instance, reiterating that He is the Sole Originator and Creator of all things, Q. 6: 73 says: “And He alone is the One who created the heavens and the earth with the very essence of all truth. Thus, on the Day of Reckoning, He shall but say: Be! And so it shall be. His word is the utter truth. And for Him alone shall be the dominion on a Day Hereafter when the Trumpet of Resurrection is whistled. He is the Sole Knower of all the realms of the unseen and the seen. For He is the All-Wise, the All-Aware” (Hammad, 2008, p. 223).

In a direct Divine response to allay the Philosophical quest, Q. 16: 40 answers: “Our only Word-Device to anything when We intend for it to be caused to being is but to say to it: Be! And there it is being” (Hammad, 2008, p. 449). A similar instance of this is in Q. 36: 82 where the Qur’an says: “Indeed, His Divine-Order when He intends for anything to be caused to being is no more than to say to it: Be! And there it is being” (Hammad, 2008, p. 766).

The last instance of the eight is in Q. 40: 67-68 where it is stated the process of creation and origination from one stage to the other until completion, composition, decomposition, and resurrection, declaring that: “He is the One who has created all of you initially and originally from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then from a congealed clot, then He brings you forth as children, then He made you reach full maturity, and then that you may become elderly. Though among you are those who are destined to die before this. It is thus, so that you may all reach a preordained term of death, and so that you may all come to intellectually realize that Allah alone could do this. He alone is the One who causes to life and causes to death. And thus, when He decrees a matter to be caused to being, He but says to it: Be! And there it is being” (Hammad, 2008, p. 821). All the eight instances mentioned above are commonly referred to as the ‘eight ‘BE AND IT IS’ in the glorious Qur’an.

Haven given the solid Qur'anic perspectives theoretically three practical relations; poverty, inactivity, and intellectual stagnancy, depicting Qur'anic causative agents and cause and effect can be examined. But this would be done in yet another paper titled: "Sciensophic and Quranic Causative Agent(S): A Comparative View", in the light of Q. 41: 46 and Q. 46: 19 respectively.

V. CONCLUSION

The facts stated above are mostly theoretic, but are not hard to practice. There can never be contradiction in anything that is true; if it was true in the past it must be presently true and remain so in the future. That Philosophy has made so much effort in arriving at the truth is a fact that can not be denied, and that Philosophic claims and proofs are Qur'anically supported is also not false. But a method of harmonizing the two is utmostly required, and if this is what Islamization is all about then we can say we have a system working, otherwise it is just an analysis of the propagated facts from the Muslim-Scholars' point of view. Although, there are among the Scientists and Philosophers who believe in origination of things by a power above that of human's, but since they lack heavenly guidance they still confine that power to the earthly phenomenal and not beyond, and that exactly is the correction the Qur'an has come to do. Thus, the discussion of origin and cause of things without thinking along with the religious perspective of the same will not only result into futility but is also a hoax, for Philosophy and religion complement each other and they cannot be dissociated.

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