

Seventh Study

**Muḥammad Farīd Wajdī's Contributions to Islamic
Thought With Special Reference to His Writings on
Resisting Atheism and Translating His Book "Fī Ar-Radd
'Ala Al-Māddyīn"**

An Analytical, Historical, Comparative Study

By

**Mahmoud Nagah Ahmed Farag Khalaf
The Department of Islamic Studies in Foreign
Languages (English Section), Faculty of Languages &
Translation, Al-Azhar University**

Muḥammad Farīd Wajdī's Efforts in Resisting Atheism¹

Mahmoud Nagah

Assistant Lecturer, Department of Islamic Studies in
Foreign Languages (English Section)

ABSTRACT:

Muḥammad Farīd Wajdī – an Egyptian intellectual and thinker - spent half of his life in resisting atheism and materialism – two correlating ideologies that mainly aim at denying the very existence of any Omnipotent Creator of the universe. In doing so, he relied on a number of proofs including spiritism, compatibility between science and religion, the ability of Islam to cope with the developments of all times and places, rejection of Darwinism, rejection of the Theory of Chance, etc. His efforts are indeed believed to serve as a basis for Muslims to rely on in answering the claims of atheists and materialists.

Keywords: Atheism – Materialism – Spiritism – Existence of Evil–
Theory of Chance – Natural Laws

جهود محمد فريد وجدي في مجابهة الإلحاد

محمود نجاح

مدرس مساعد، قسم الدراسات الإسلامية باللغات الأجنبية (شعبة اللغة الإنجليزية)،
كلية اللغات والترجمة

ملخص:

إيماناً منه بالخطر الداهم الذي تشكله النظريات والأيديولوجيات المادية والإلحادية على الشباب المسلم، انبرى الأستاذ محمد فريد وجدي لتفكيك هذه النظريات في كتاباته، حيث قضى أكثر من نصف عمره في مجابته بغية تحصين الشباب المسلم من الوقوع في براثنها. وقد انتهج وجدي استراتيجية معينة خاصة به في معالجة هذه الأفكار التي تهدف في المقام الأول إلى إنكار وجود إله يربُّ الكون ويدبر شؤونه، حيث ساق عدداً من الأدلة على وجود الله ووجود عالم غيبي مثل النظرية الروحية الحديثة، والتوافق بين معطيات العلم الحديث ونتائجه وبين الدين الإسلامي، وقدرة الإسلام على مواكبة متغيرات العصور وتفكيك الداروينية، ورد نظرية الصدفة، وغيرها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإلحاد – المادية – النظرية الروحية الحديثة – نظرية الصدفة – النواميس الطبيعية

¹ This paper is extracted from my PhD thesis entitled Muḥammad Farīd Wajdī's Contributions to Islamic Thought With Special Reference to His Writings on Resisting Atheism and Translating His Book "Fī Ar-Radd 'Ala Al-Māddyīn": An Analytical, Historical, Comparative Study.

Introduction:

With half of his life spent in countering materialism and atheism,² Muḥammad Farīd Wajdī's efforts in this regard are believed to be worth examining. In support of his arguments against these two ideologies, Wajdī relied on two kinds of proofs: - first, proofs of affirmation (i.e. *Adellatu lthbāt*) and second, proofs of negation (i.e. *Adellatu Nafy*). The list of the first includes, for example, spiritism, compatibility between science and religion of Islam, Islam's distinctive feature of legislation that enables it to cope with the developments of different times and places, etc. The proofs of negation focus on refuting of the Theory of Chance and Darwinism. This paper will attempt to study Wajdī's attitude towards *Adellatu Al-'Ināyah* and spiritism as two examples of the proofs of affirmation and the Theory of Chance as an example of the proofs of negation.

² Materialism and atheism are a package deal, since "denial of the existence of God" is the common factor between both of them. In his *Al-Tafsīr Al-Islāmi Li Al-Fikr Al-Bashari: Al-Ideologiyāt Wa Al-Falsafāt Al-Mu'āshirah Fi Ḍawa' Al-Islām* (i.e. Islamic Explanation of the Human Intellect: Contemporary Ideologies and Philosophies in light of Islam), Al-Jundi sates that materialism has adopted a very extremist approach towards religions since it denies the existence of the creator, resurrection and death. For Al-Jundi, materialism's chief goal is to eradicate religions and any relevant concepts. Based on this, it can be stated that materialism aims at denying the existence of God and the life after death since materialists believe that religions are man-made. In this sense, materialism can be used interchangeably with atheism, since they both call for the same thing, that is, denial of the metaphysics including denial of the existence of God. In support of this opinion, 'Abd Al-Wahhāb Al-Misīri (1938 – 2008), an Egyptian intellectual, may be quoted, "Materialism is a philosophical doctrine that accepts none but matter as the only condition for (natural and human) life, and thus rejects God as one of the conditions of life." The point that materialism's main goal is to deny the existence of God is crystal clear in Shirley A. Roe's *Voltaire Versus Needham: Atheism, Materialism, and the Generation of Life* where she states that denial of the existence of God and any divine role in the creation and preservation of the world represent materialism's most disturbing aspect. For this reason, many philosophers, intellectuals and scientists hold the attitude that "atheism is the legitimate son of materialism." Not only that, but there is some who believe that atheism is another name for materialism. Anwar Al-Jundi, *Al-Tafsīr Al-Islāmi Li Al-Fikr Al-Bashari: Al-Ideologiyāt Wa Al-Falsafāt Al-Mu'āshirah Fi Ḍawa' Al-Islām* (Cairo, Dār Al-'Itisām, N.D.), 17 – 18; 'Abd Al-Wahhāb Al-Misīri, *Al-Falsafah Al-Mādiyāh Wa Tafkīk Al-Insān* (Damascus: Dār Al-Fikr Al-Mu'āshir, 2002), 15 – 16; Shirley A. Roe, "Voltaire Versus Needham: Atheism, Materialism, and the Generation of Life," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 46, no. 1 (Jan – Mar, 1985), 68, 'Amr Al-Sharīf, *Al-Dā' Wa Al-Dawā'*, "Al-Ilhād Huwa Al-Ibn Al-Shar'i Li Al-Fikr Al-Māddi," June 3, 2007 on 4Shabab TV, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGfxp8ZKT5w>; Ramsīs 'Awaḍ, *Al-Ilhād Fī Al-Gharb* (Cairo: Sīna Li Al-Nashr, 1997), 17.

1. *Adellatu Al-'Ināyah* (Running the Affairs of the Creatures in Due Measure)

This sub-section will attempt to examine what is believed to be *Adellatu Al-'Ināyah* held by Wajdī as a proof that the universe is created with due measure by an All-Wise Creator.

Science bears witness that everything in the universe is created with absolute accuracy or *Be Qadar* – the expression used by the Qur'an when highlighting this point. Fully aware of this fact, Wajdī gives many examples on the wonders of creation, believing the entire universe should have been the product of an Omnipotent Creator since it is based on an absolutely consistent system that suffers no defects at all, a fact he posited as being established by the findings of modern science. His *Al-Falsafatu Al-Ḥaqqatu fī Badā'e Al-Akwān* is a case in point; it examines the wonders of creation in the various domains of life, including humankind, plants, animals and plants, maintaining that the absolutely perfect system upon which the entire universe acts offers conclusive evidence that there must be a Creator Who created this complete consistency.

In quest of helping to man reach the ultimate truth on the Existence of an Omnipotent Creator, the Qur'an drives the attention of people to employ their reason to ponder over the universal signs scattered here and there, including heavens, earth, mountains, camels, stars, the sun, the moon, seas and even man himself. Not only that, but the Qur'an even challenges the entire world to find any *Fuṭūr* in the creation of heavens, "(It is He) Who created the seven heavens one above another; you see no incongruity in the creation of the Beneficent Allah; then look again, can you see any disorder?" (The Qur'an, 67:3)

Commenting on this verse, Imam Ibn Kathīr says, "There is no incongruity, defect or flaw in the creation of heavens, which is why He, Most High, repeated the order for careful examination of it."³ In truth, this absolute consistency of creation espouses the Qur'anic fact that everything in the universe has been created with a due measure or *Mizān* (i.e. balance), a fact recorded in a number of the verses of the Qur'an like (The Qur'an, 54:49), (The Qur'an, 13:8), (The Qur'an, 55:1 – 12), etc.

In this vein, Imam Al-Ghazālī, highlighting *Adellatu Al-'Ināyah*, believes that the creation of the world in such a consistent, arranged, accurate and consistent system that includes various kinds of wonders and signs is but conclusive evidence on *Al-Qudrah* (i.e. Omnipotence) of Allah, since every balanced act should have been produced by an Omnipotent Creator.⁴

³ Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-'Azīm*, 8/176 – 177.

⁴ Al-Ghazālī, *Al-Iqtisād Fī Al-'Iteqād*, 149.

It is proved that science can in no way negate the Existence of a Creator, since He, the Almighty, is beyond the area of experimentation and observation; however, it might give hand to the mind to realize His very Existence through the absolute consistency witnessed in the universe supported with the Divine Guidance conveyed through Messenger Muhammad (PBUH).

Scientific Exegesis approach is believed to be one of the most effective means that establish *Adellatu Al-'Ināyah*. It is concerned with examining the verses of the Qur'an and the Prophetic Hadiths in a manner that shows their consistency with the findings of modern science, and thus establishes the evidence on the point that the Message of Prophet Muhammad should have been sent down from an Omnipotent Creator; otherwise, who informed Muhammad, this unlettered Prophet, with such scientific conclusions only unearthed recently? The following lines will cast light on some of the universal signs recorded in the Qur'an explained in light of the recent conclusions of modern science.

The Qur'an reads, "**We built the heavens with Our Power and (continually) made them vast**" (The Qur'an, 51:47). In his *Lisān Al-'Arab* (i.e. Tongue of the Arabs), Ibn Manẓūr (d. 707 A.H) states that the Arabic words *A'wsa'* and *Wassa'* give the same meaning of *Şayyar Al-Shaya' Wāse'an* (i.e. make something continually widen and expand).⁵ As such, the Arabic word *Mūse'un* – the active participle of the verb *A'wsa'* – carries the meaning of continual expansion.⁶ This is deduced from the fact that Qur'an uses the noun form, which indicates in Arabic continuity of the action.

⁵ Muḥammad Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān Al-'Arab*, Vols. 15 (Beirut: Dār Şader, 1414 A.H.), 8/392.

⁶ Aḥmed 'Umar, *Mu'jam Al-Lughah Al-'Arabiyyah Al-Mu'āşerah*, Vols. 4 (Cairo: 'Ālam Al-Kutub, 2008 A.D. – 1429 A.H.), 3/439.

The point that the universe is continually expanding is scientifically unearthed recently. "Like dough rising in the oven" is the statement used by NASA scientists to describe the continual expansion of the universe.⁷ Proving the fact that the findings of science are not necessarily of absolute correctness, scientists declared that the universe is even expanding "faster today than it did in its fancy."⁸ Here is a very important point closely correlated, that is, as long as the universe (or the heaven as recorded in the Qur'an) is continually expanding, what is the kind of force that keeps it from falling on our heads?

The Qur'an tells that Allah is the One Who keeps heaven from falling down on earth (The Qur'an, 22:65). In another verse, it states that heaven is built upon pillars that cannot be seen by eyes (The Qur'an, 13:2) and (The Qur'an, 31:10). Recently, science has discovered that the entire universe is under the control of four main powers, namely, (1) the strong nuclear force whose main function is to hold together the subatomic particles of the nucleus (protons, which carry a positive charge, and neutrons, which carry no charge); (2) the weak nuclear force that is responsible for regulating the dismantling of some particles within the atom and thus controls the termination of elements; (3) the electromagnetism force which is responsible for holding together the atoms within the molecules of the substance and thus different substances are given their natural and chemical characteristics; and (4) finally the force of gravity which holds all the heavenly orbs, the sky and the earth. Scientists believe that it is this unseen force of general gravity that truly holds all the heavenly orbs in their due place and positions. Besides, it is also these unseen pillars upon which heavens were set up.⁹ But, what if the sky comes to fall down on the earth? Life on the universe would come to its very end – a direct answer given by scientists.¹⁰

⁷ Donna Weaver, Ray Villard, et al, "Mystery of the Universe's Expansion Rate Widens With New Hubble Data," <https://www.nasa.gov/feature/goddard/2019/mystery-of-the-universe-s-expansion-rate-widens-with-new-hubble-data>, accessed December 26, 2020.

⁸ Michael Greshko, "The universe seems to be expanding faster than all expectations," *Science*, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/2019/04/hubble-constant-universe-expanding-faster-than-all-expectations/>, accessed December 26, 2020.

⁹ Zaghlūl Al-Najjār, *Tafsīr Al-Ayāt Al-Kawniyah Fī Al-Qur'ān Al-Karīm* Vols. 4 (Cairo: Maktabat Al-Shurūq al-Dawliyyah, 2007 A.D.), 1/381 – 384; Māher Al-Şawfī, *Al-Mawsū'ah Al-Kawniyyah Al-Kubrā: Ayāt Al-'Ulūm Al-Kawniyyah Wefq Aḥdath Al-Dirāsāt Al-Falakīyyah wa Al-Nazariyyāt Al-'Ilmiyyah*, ed. Muḥammad Sa'īd Ramaḍān Al-Būṭī, 'Ikremah Salīm Şabrī, Muḥammad Juma'ah Sālem, Fārūq Ḥamādah and 'Abd a-Mu'ṭī al-Bayyūmī, Vols. 20 (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-'Aşriyyah. 2008 A.D. – 1429 A.H.) 1/ 94 – 95. .

¹⁰ Natalie Wolchover, "What If the Sky Fell?", <https://www.livescience.com/19949-sky-fell.html>; April 27, 2012; accessed December 26, 2020.

Another example showing how the universe is run under an absolute consistent system is the rotation of the sun and the moon in orbits at a fixed distance. Science proves that the sun, with a radius of 432,168 miles, goes around the center of the Milky Way Galaxy.¹¹ Besides, astronomers firmly believe that the distance between the sun and the earth is set in an absolute perfect manner that guarantees the continuity of life on the surface of the earth.¹² The same applies to the moon that is also proved to orbit around earth, with the distance in-between is set in an absolute perfect way that guarantees the continuity of life.¹³

Astonishingly, these two facts were recorded in the Qur'an wherein Allah, the Almighty, says, "Neither is it allowable to the sun that it should overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day; and all float on in an orbit" (The Qur'an, 36:40). Highlighting this very fact, Ibn Kathīr quotes Ibn 'Abbās that the sun and the moon are moving in *Falakaten Ka Falakate Al-Meghzal* (i.e. a circular item around the spindle).¹⁴ This shows that Prophet Muhammad, along with his followers was fully aware of this very fact recently concluded with contemporary scientists, which actually gives rise to several points like had Muhammad once had the advanced instruments to discover this fact? And if not, who told him about it?

Many similar examples are clearly seen here and there in the universe. Questions – such as how rain is formed, why mountains are created, how plants come out from inanimate seeds, how the stars are fixed in the sky, how oxygen is produced, how man is created within the womb of his mother, etc. are signs showing that the universe is controlled and run by an Omnipotent Creator that set everything in an absolutely perfect system that has no one defect.

¹¹ "Our Sun," *Solar System Exploration, NASA, In Depth*, <https://solarsystem.nasa.gov/solar-system/sun/in-depth/>, accessed December 26, 2020 A.D.

¹² Alastair Gunn, "How much closer to the Sun could Earth's orbit get and still be habitable?", <https://www.sciencefocus.com/space/how-much-closer-to-the-sun-could-earths-orbit-get-and-still-be-habitable/>, accessed December 26, 2020.

¹³ Nola Redd, "Does the Moon Rotate?", November 14, 2017; <https://www.space.com/24871-does-the-moon-rotate.html>, accessed December 26, 2020.

¹⁴ Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-'Azīm*, 5/579.

At this point, the following questions naturally jump to one's mind, what kind of creator that might create such a perfect system: is this creator the produce of *Al-Nawāmīs Al-Ṭabī'iyah* (i.e. natural laws)? And if yes, did these *Al-Nawāmīs* create themselves or are they created by another Power? Or is it (i.e. this Creator) created by chance as per the Chance Theory? And does the existence of evil, trials and diseases nullify *Adellatu Al-'Ināyah*?

1.1 *Al-Nawāmīs Al-Ṭabī'iyah* (i.e. Natural Laws)

Atheists and materialists promulgate the idea that the entire universe is run by what is called *Al-Nāwmīs Al- Ṭabī'iyah*, which means that the universe is independent from any creators. This actually inspires Wajdī to examine this point in his attempt to answer all the misconceptions aroused by the anti-religious, atheistic groups. So, how did Wajdī define this term? And how did he show its wrongness?

Wajdī believes that *Al-Nawāmīs Al-Ṭabī'iyah* is a term used to refer to these fixed laws under which the course of work of all the creatures in the universe runs.¹⁵ He believes that these reason-based laws are the product of a number of characteristics that enable natural phenomena to run as per a consistent system.¹⁶ In support of his rejection to this claim, he – as usual – at length quotes the French philosopher Émile Boutroux's (1845 – 1921 A.D.) *The Contingency of the Laws of Nature* wherein he states clearly that natural laws do not govern phenomena, believing that the main functions of these laws is to describe the relations due to these phenomena's earlier realized nature.¹⁷ Wajdī also relies on the point that the findings of science are continually changing, meaning that what is perceived today as a law may be rejected tomorrow under other circumstances.¹⁸ As such, there is no way to claim that these laws control the course of work of the universe.

However, even though the universe is run under a consistent system which is set in this perfect manner to guarantee that life on earth would continue, this claim on the point that natural laws created this consistency needs thorough examination, so that we could arrive at a sound conclusion on it.

¹⁵ Wajdī, *'Alā Aṭlāl Al-madh-hab Al-Māddī*, 1/64.

¹⁶ Wajdī, *'Alā Aṭlāl Al-madh-hab Al-Māddī*, 1/64; Wajdī, *Al-Islām fī 'Aṣr Al-'Ilm*, 547.

¹⁷ Wajdī, *'Alā Aṭlāl Al-madh-hab Al-Māddī*, 1/64 – 65; Émile Boutroux, *The Contingency of the Laws of Nature*, trans. Fred Rothwell (Chicago and London: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1920), 155.

¹⁸ Wajdī, *'Alā Aṭlāl Al-madh-hab Al-Māddī*, 1/66.

First, was the existence of these laws earlier to the existence of the creatures upon which they exert influence? This question would put us before two options, that is, either to claim that these creatures are the *Sabab* (i.e. cause) that led to the existence of these laws (*Al-Musabbab* or the effect), or vice versa. Based on the theory of Causality concerned with the relation between a cause and its effect or between regularly correlated events or phenomena, the second option should be excluded, since these laws are deemed to be the *Musabb-abāt* (i.e. effects) of *Al-Asbāb* (i.e. the causes), which are here none but these natural phenomena.

Second, these laws are the product of science which is subject to experimentation and observation. At this point, Wajdī's opinion on the continual change of the findings of modern sciences may be very helpful. The results of science are based on a number of observables, which means that they (i.e. the results) should not be necessarily fixed, since observation is the function of man's senses which cannot give absolutely correct results. "Continual change of opinions by scientists" is a very common phenomenon, even recently. Redefinition of the distance measurement between the sun and the earth is a case in point.¹⁹

Third, the system upon which the entire universe is set is highly consistent that opponents of religion started to promulgate the theory of determinism,²⁰ which means that the behavior of natural phenomena became predictable since acts are determined in light of causes. However, this theory shall be also rejected since this consistency might sometimes be violated for a reason or another, a point that means that even the theory of Causality cannot explain all phenomena. It frequently happens that a mature couple does not manage to give birth to children although medical reports unveil that there is no barrier against this. In light of this example, among many others, the two theories of causality and determinism stand futile, since the cause (i.e. the couple who is able to carry out this process) is found; however, the effect (i.e. deliverance of babies) is missed. It could thus be concluded that causes are not self-effective; rather, their effect is caused by another power superior to them.

¹⁹ Redd, "Earth-Sun Distance Measurement Redefined"; <https://www.space.com/17733-earth-sun-distance-astronomical-unit.html>

²⁰ Determinism is a philosophical theory indicating that all events, including moral choices, are completely determined by previously existing causes.

Encyclopedia Britannica, s.v. "Determinism," <https://www.britannica.com/topic/determinism>; accessed December 26, 2020.

Accordingly, it could be concluded that the violation of these natural laws is a conclusive proof that they are not working on their own, but according to profound wisdom that runs the affairs of the entire universe and sets everything in a due measure. Moreover, the very existence, consistency and continuity of these laws serve as evidence on the existence of *Adellatu Al-'Ināyah* as opined by Wajdī,²¹ since it did not happen that any of them rejected to work or stopped performing its due role in the universe and, consequently, life continues.

2. Spiritism

This sub-section highlights one of the most fundamental principles upon which Wajdī heavily relies in answering the allegations promulgated by atheists and materialists, that is, spiritism. It will thus attempt to examine how Wajdī defines this very term, the reasons why he relied on it within his battle against atheism and materialism, his own position on it and whether or not spiritism could actually be an effective weapon in this battle.

However, before delving into this topic, it is worth mentioning that Wajdī has extensively discussed this topic in some of his writings that he specified independent chapters in his books for it, maintaining that most of the chapters are translations for western, academic articles on this very topic.²²

For Wajdī, *Tahḍīr Al-Arwāḥ* (i.e. spiritism) is a union taking place between the spirits of the dead and those of the live through which the former could carry out *Khawāreq* (i.e. miraculous incidents) that cannot be witnessed except by those who are present when the session of spiritism is being carried out.²³

Although Wajdī was fully aware of the fact that some people would take a hostile stance against spiritism,²⁴ he believes that its importance stems from the following two points: - (1) it totally undermines the rules of the experimental sciences that believe only in what is subject to experiment or observation, and thus shatters the atheism-based and materialism-based theories and approaches; and (2) it is the most powerful advocate of Islam at that time,²⁵ since it asserts one of its fundamentals, that is, the existence of the unseen or the metaphysical world.

²¹ Wajdī, *Al-Ḥadīqah Al-Fekriyah*, 23.

²² See, for example, Chapter 13 of his *Al-Islām Fi 'Aṣr Al-'Ilm* and volumes 2 and 3 of his *'Alā Aḥlāl Al-Madh-hab Al-Mādī*.

²³ Wajdī, *Al-Ḥadīqah Al-Fekriyah*, 56 – 57.

²⁴ This is deduced from his statement, "It is as if some readers with sharp idea would deny this on the ground that it is some kind of myths that cannot be recorded in books." Wajdī, *Al-Ḥadīqah Al-Fekriyah*, 57.

²⁵ Wajdī, *Al-Islām Fi 'Aṣr Al-'Ilm*, 322 -324.

Wajdi's position on spiritism is clearly reflected in the aforementioned two reasons; however, his statement that he, unlike the majority of the advocates of this doctrine, does not believe that spirits are the makers of these miraculous incidents taking place during the mediumship sessions of spiritism creates confusion. He attributes these incidents to what he called *Quwwah 'Aqelah Mawjudah Haqiqatan* (i.e. a mindful power that truly exists);²⁶ however, he did not define the essence of this power, which gives rise to the following questions, "If he does not truly believe that spirits are the makers of these incidents, why did he quote this topic at length in different positions of his writings?"

However, if this question is examined in light of the fact that Wajdi always resorted to western scientists and philosophers to espouse his opinions, especially when it comes to the findings of modern science, the reason why he heavily relied on this topic would be unearthed to us. In other words, it seems that Wajdi wanted to convey the following message to the atheists and materialists of the west, 'Even though you take the findings of modern science as a means to deny the metaphysical world in general and the very existence of God in particular under the pretext that they are not observable, the same science had discovered the existence of this unseen world through the discovery of spiritism.'

This above-mentioned point may be supported by the fact that he recorded fifty-four (54) figures of the advocates of this doctrine in England, France, the US, Germany and Italy, maintaining that he could mention more and more if he wished.²⁷ The list of these prominent scientists he cited includes William Crookes (1832 – 1919 A.D.), Oliver Lodge (1851 – 1940 A.D.), Aldous Huxley (1894 – 1963 A.D.), Victor Hugo (1802 – 1885 A.D.), Emmanuel Meunier (1905 – 1950 A.D.), Camille Flammarion (1842 – 1925 A.D.), etc.²⁸

However, careful examination of Wajdi's writings indicates that he had firm belief in this doctrine as clearly shown in Volume II of his *'Alā Aṭlāl Al-Madh-hab Al-Mādī* in which he examined and described this topic in full detail that he even highlighted how the mediumship sessions are held, the protective procedures taken to secure that the medium would tell only the truth, the difference between witchery and mediumship, etc. – all of which are conclusive proofs that he had firm belief in this doctrine. In support of this opinion, Wajdi may be quoted, "... I really believe in the appearance of these ghosts and that they are real, since many testimonies on their authenticity have been consecutively

²⁶ Wajdi, *Al-Ḥadīqah Al-Fekriyah*, 57.

²⁷ Wajdi, *Al-Islām Fī 'Aṣr Al-'Ilm*, 325 – 326.

²⁸ Wajdi, *Al-Islām Fī 'Aṣr Al-'Ilm*, 325 – 326.

transmitted to us; I believe that it is not right to disregard the testimonies of all of these prominent scientists."²⁹

Nevertheless, it seems that Wajdī was not consistent with himself concerning this topic, since while he somewhere maintains that he does not believe that spirits of the dead are the doers of these miraculous incidents, he elsewhere affirms that they do, "Spirits of the dead appear before the living under certain conditions and make miraculous incidents that cannot be realized by senses or done by the natural laws."³⁰

Apart from the fact that this doctrine has been severely attacked and criticized by many Muslim scholars under the accusations of connections with international Zionism, glorifying communism and calling for a new religion,³¹ it would have been better if Wajdī examined it from the Islamic, Sharī perspective. In other words, "Can the unseen be seen to us in the life of this world?" Answer to this question may be clarified through the points I would provide herein.

First, the Qur'an stipulates having a firm belief in the unseen as one of the main conditions that should be fulfilled by a Muslim to be of a sound creed as clearly shown in (The Qur'an, 2:3), (The Qur'an, 2:285), etc., which, in other words, means that denial of the unseen would render a person a non-Muslim. Besides, the Qur'an states clearly that Allah is the All-Knower of the unseen and that He, Most High, does not reveal the secrets of the unseen to any of His creatures except to him He chooses from among His Messengers (The Qur'an, 72:27).³² As such, believing in the unseen is believed to be a test for people, so that they would be distinguished into believers and non-believers. This, however, does not mean that Allah does not give indications that empathically assert the existence of the unseen, so that people would be guided by them.

²⁹ Wajdī, *Al-Islām Fī 'Aṣr Al-'Ilm*, 354 – 355.

Wajdī's deep-seated belief in spiritism may be plainly reflected in the fact that the approximately 217-page volume III of his aforementioned book is a translation for an academic paper by the French writer Jean Vigneau – director of *La revue de Deux Mondes* – under the title of *Fath 'Ilmī: Al-Rūḥ Al-Khāledah* (i.e. A Scientific Discovery: The Eternal Soul) wherein the author extensively discusses this very topic of spiritism.

Wajdī, *'Alā Aḥlāl Al-Madh-hab Al-Māddī*, 3/1 – 217.

³⁰ Wajdī, *Al-Islām Fī 'Aṣr Al-'Ilm*, 757 – 758.

³¹ All of these points have been discussed in detail in *Al-Rūḥiyah Al-Ḥadīthah: Da'wah Haddāmah* by Dr. Muḥammad Hussein, Professor of Modern Arab Literature in Alexandria University, in which he also carefully examines the strongest advocates of this movement in Egypt, showing how they were deceived by the claim that it undermines atheism and materialism.

Muḥammad Hussein, *Al-Rūḥiyah Al-Ḥadīthah: Da'wah Haddāmah Wa Ṣelatuḥā be Al-Ṣuhūniyah Al-'Ālamīyah* (Beirut: Mu'ssastu Al-Resālah, N.D.)

³² Commenting on this verse at hand, Imam Ibn Kathīr says, "He (i.e. Allah) is the All-Knower of the unseen and the seen and He does not unveil the secrets of this unseen to any of His creatures except to whom He chooses from among the Messengers ..."
Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'an Al-'Azīm*, 8/247.

Second, the issue whether or not the spirit could appear after the death of its owner in the life of this world is a point not approved by Islam, with (The Qur'an, 17:85) offering conclusive evidence on this. This verse tells clearly that none is fully aware of the affairs of the spirits but Allah. Here comes the question, "Are spirits after death free to act as they wish?" The answer is that they are either pleased in Paradise or tortured in the Hellfire.³³ It is a well-established Shari fact that the Paradise has angelic guardians to guard it and so does the Hellfire, which means that none can come in or out any of them except through these angels, which demonstrates that spirits, even after death, are not free to act as they wish. This proves the futility of any claim that spirits could attend the so-called spiritual sessions.

Third, the majority of Muslim scholars believe that the spirit of the dead can visit the spirit of a live person only in sleep in a kind of vision by the Permission of Allah,³⁴ which means that spirits can in no way be materialized and thus cannot be seen anyway or even recalled in a state of wakefulness.

Fourth, Muslim scholars opine that Jinn cannot be seen by humans unless they take various shapes. The fact that Satan took the shape of Surāqah Ibn Mālīk Al-Ashja'ī may serve as a case in point, and does the Hadith of Abū Huryarah in which he narrates to us the story of the thief whom he caught stealing from the money of Zakat. Relying on (The Qur'an, 7:27), Imam Al-Shāfe'ī rejects the testimony of the person, if even trustworthy, if he claims that he saw Jinn – of course, in its very original state upon which it was created – unless he would be a Prophet.³⁵ This is already the same opinion held by Imam Fakhr Al-Dīn Al-Rāzī in his *Al-Tafsīr Al-Kabīr* and Ibn Ḥazm in his *Al-Fiṣal Fī Al-Melal Wa Al-Ahwā' Wa Al-Neḥal*.³⁶ This poses the question, "The spirit's nature, essence and actions are not known to us, so how could the advocates of spiritism claim that spirits are the makers of the so-called miraculous incidents?"

³³ Ibn Qaiyem Al-Jawziyah, *Ketāb Al-Rūḥ*, ed. Muḥammad Ajmal Ayūb Al-Iṣlāḥī and Kamāl Ibn Muḥammad Qālmī, Vols. 2 (Riyadh: Dār 'Ālam Al-Fu'ād Le Al-Nashr Wa Al-Tawzī', N.D.), 1/44.

³⁴ Ibn Qaiyem, *Ketāb Al-Rūḥ*, 1/58 – 59.

³⁵ Tāj Al-Dīn Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt Al-Shāfi'iyah Al-Kubrā Le Al-Subkī*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Al-Ṭanāḥī and 'Abd Al-Fattāḥ Muḥammad Al-Ḥelw, Vols. 10 (Cairo: Dār Hajar Le Al-Ṭibā'ah Wa Al-Nashr Wa Al-Tawzī', 1413 A.H.), 2/130.

³⁶ Al-Rāzī, *Al-Tafsīr Al-Kabīr*, 14/224; Abū Muḥammad Ibn Ḥazm, *Al-Fiṣal Fī Al-Melal Wa Al-Ahwā' Wa Al-Neḥal*, Vols. 5 (Cairo, Maktabat Al-Khānjī, N.D.), 5/9.

In addition to what is mentioned above, one of the biggest mistakes committed by Wajdī while promulgating this doctrine is recorded in his answer to a question offered to him on whether or not the so-called spirits had identified the true religion to be followed wherein he said that these beings had guided those who attended the sessions of spiritism of what is almost compatible with Islam and that they warned them against disobeying the mind or having many gods. Wajdī's answer to this question should have driven himself away from any belief in this doctrine, why?

It has been mentioned above that spirits after death are either pleased or tortured, with the first case the result of firm belief in Allah and the second the result of disbelief. This means that spirits after death became fully aware that belief in Allah is what saves the person from His Torture. If this is the case, why did they not tell people frankly in these sessions of this very fact after experiencing it? Besides, why did all the advocates of this doctrine not turn to Islam? Also, it was supposed that these spirits should have told those people not to have many gods in worship; rather, they should have specified for them the Essence of the One God Who deserved to be worshipped. Furthermore, this answer of Wajdī that spirits have told the attendants not to take many gods in worship goes against his central argument that this doctrine serves as an effective means to undermine atheism and materialism.

Of good intention like many Egyptian intellectuals and thinkers of his time,³⁷ Wajdī called for spiritism on grounds that it would serve as one of the effective weapons by means of which the fortress of atheism and materialism would come to its very end.

3. The Theory of Chance

The issue on the creation of the universe by chance has been addressed by Wajdī in his attempt to answer the atheistic and materialist claims on the non-existence of a creator running the affairs of the universe as per an absolutely perfect system. The following lines will highlight the definition offered by Wajdī to this theory, and the responses he presented to reject it, as well as a conclusion on it.

Believing that Democritus is the first who coined this theory, Wajdī quotes his definition for it, "[It is] the circulation of matters around themselves in the space under no law in a manner that led to the formation of these creatures, irrespective of their kinds and shapes."³⁸ Wajdī also defines it as "a term coined by people to refer to actions done unwillingly or unintentionally, with few of its results that might be accepted."³⁹ In his *Lemādhā Huwa Mulehd*, Wajdī describes this theory as being "entirely unsystematic," maintaining

³⁷ Egyptian thinker Sheikh Ṭaṇṭāwī Jawharī was one of the most staunch advocates of this doctrine that he was called "*Father of Modern Spirituality*" by the members of the Egyptian Society for Spiritual Research under the leadership of Aḥmed Fahmī Abū Al-Khayr.

De F. Jong, 'Djawharī Ṭaṇṭāwī,' *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, ed. P.J. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C. E. Bosworth, E. Van Donzel and W. P. Heinrichs, Vols. 13 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 12/263

³⁸ Wajdī, *Al-Ḥadīqah Al-Fekriyah*, 37.

³⁹ Wajdī, *Al-Ḥadīqah Al-Fekriyah*, 41.

that it could not be even described under the term "law", since it is based on randomness and chaos.⁴⁰

Wajdī's central plea for rejecting this theory is that it goes against the very existence of *Adellatu Al-'Ināyah* that shows, as proven by science, that every atom in the universe runs with an absolute accuracy and consistency in a due measure,⁴¹ "Is it (conceivable) that such a well-organized and absolutely-consistent system is based on mere chance?"⁴² For him, this universe acting as per a perfectly consistent system with all the wonders in it could not be the produce of such a randomness-based theory.

In his attempt to refute this allegation, Wajdī offers the following points. (1) Science proves that the universe is based on an absolutely consistent system, which is inconceivable to be the result of chance or randomness. (2) This Theory of Chance is based on the probability laws which are only functional in the well-established, organized laws, which means that this theory is based on a wrong priori hypothesis. (3) So that this theory would function, the universe should have been existed under no law before it is already established, which is even against the claims of the majority of atheists who believe that the universe is controlled by the so-called *Al-Nawāmīs Al-Ṭabī'iyah*.⁴³

However, Wajdī's opinion that Democritus is the first one who introduced this theory of chance is opposed by Badawī, who opines that Aristotle was the first to produce this theory.⁴⁴ Wajdī's responses, however, reflects how fully aware of this theory he was that his replies seems effective so far.

His own definition of the theory of chance introduces the fact that there is actually a cause behind all actions, even those done unwillingly. For example, if somebody has the desire to go to the Masjid to offer his prayers, and when he got there he by chance met his friend who has just come back home from abroad, philosophers believe that this "man's desire to go to the Masjid" is the main cause that led to the occurrence of the meeting, not chance. This tells that even this very theory of chance is based on *'Illāh* (i.e. cause), which means that it is subject to the theory of causality upon which the system of the universe is based.

According to Wajdī, the theory of chance is mainly based upon the laws of probability that are proven by science to give *Tarjīh* (i.e. preponderance) of something to another.⁴⁵ In light of these probability laws, the advocates of the Theory of Chance give a very famous example, stating that if there are six monkeys writing on typewriters for millions of years, their very act might eventually

⁴⁰ Wajdī, *Lemādhā Huwa Mulhed*, 116.

⁴¹ Wajdī, *Lemādhā Huwa Mulhed*, 114.

⁴² Wajdī, *Al-Islām Dīn 'Āam Khāled*, 9.

⁴³ All these replies are recorded in Wajdī's response to Ismā'īl Adham's epistle *Lemādhā Anā Mulhed* (i.e. Why am I an Atheist?).

Wajdī, *Lemādhā Huwa Mulhed*, 114 – 125.

⁴⁴ 'Abd Al-Rahmān Badawī, *Mulhaq Mawsū'at Al-Falsafah* (Beirut: Al-Mu'assasatu Al-'Arabiyah Le Al-Derāsāt Wa Al-Nashr, 1984 A.D.), 195.

⁴⁵ Andrea Farkas, 'The Law of Probability,' *Science*, April 25, 2017; <https://sciencing.com/law-probability-8657085.html>, accessed December 28, 2020.

result in one of the plays and poems of Shakespeare.⁴⁶ This example, however, stipulates that these six monkeys should have been working on these typewriters for millions of years and thus if applying this condition of time upon the creation of the universe, how many years would it require to be formed under such a marvelous, perfectly consistent system? Science proves that the formation of one molecule of protein within the live atom by chance under the laws of probability requires more than the entire lifespan of the earth from its very inception up till now.⁴⁷ This means that the universe cannot be created under this Theory of Chance. Besides, the probability laws are functional, as Wajdī states, only in already organized and well-arranged environment, which is in this example none but the typewriters whose existence was earlier to the so-called chance of theory. Similarly, the items upon which this theory acts were found before this chance, which conclusively proves that chance or randomness cannot be the creator of the universe.

In the same vein, in light of the claim of the majority of atheists that the universe is run under a set of natural laws that are automatically acting, the theory of chance should be rejected. Why? That is because this automatic, continual action of these laws is against the essence of the Theory of Chance that is based on probability.

Recently, scientists start to speak about a scientific finding that everything in the universe is self-aware, which puts the theory of chance before a difficult challenge that cannot be tackled. Panpsychism is a scientific theory that indicates that "everything has a mind and that mentality is fundamental and ubiquitous in the natural world."⁴⁸ One of the tries made by scientists in their journey to prove the authenticity of this theory is that they searched for whether the celestial bodies could adjust their behavior in response to stimulus and they were astonished by the results that they came to acknowledge that these bodies should have minds to act in this absolutely consistent way.⁴⁹ This theory gains momentum every day, a point that may be supported by the very strict well-established laws under which the universe smoothly acts.

Conclusion

Driven by his *Shakk* (i.e. doubt) and the point that "divinity" is the most important topic fully occupying man's mind, since he, unlike animals, always strives to quench his spiritual thirst through identifying the First Cause, Wajdī spent more than half of his life in resisting these atheistic and materialist approaches and philosophies.

⁴⁶ James Jeans, *The Mysterious Universe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1931), 5.

⁴⁷ Waḥīd Al-Dīn Khān, *Al-Islām Yataḥaddā: Madkhal 'Ilmī Le Al-Īmān*, trans. Zafar Al-Islām Khān, ed. 'Abd Al-Ṣabūr Shāhīn (Beirut (?), Maktabat Al-Resālah, N.D.), 89 – 90.

⁴⁸ Philip Goff, William Seager and Sean Allen-Hermanson, 'Panpsychism', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, July 18, 2017; <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/panpsychism/#DefiPanp>; accessed December 28, 2020.

⁴⁹ Corey S. Powell, 'Is the Universe Conscious?', *Mach, the Big Questions*, June 16, 2017; <https://www.nbcnews.com/mach/science/universe-conscious-nca772956>; accessed December 28, 2020.

In his attempt to refute the misconceptions of materialists and atheists, Wajdī offered several proofs that affirm the very existence of an Omnipotent, All-Wise Creator. In addition, he broke down the arguments given by atheists and materialists.

Wajdī believes that the findings of modern sciences give tangible evidence that everything in the universe is run with a due measure, which can be expressed otherwise as *Adellatu Al-'Ināyah*. How man's eyes and digestive system work, how cows and buffalos turn food into milk, why the mountains were created, and how the rain is formulated, etc. are all conclusive evidence that the universe is created with an Omnipotent Creator Who creates everything with a balance.

Relying on *Adellatu Al-'Ināyah*, Wajdī offered a counter narrative to the atheistic and materialist misconceptions that the universe is created by natural laws or the chance theory. He also managed to answer the misconception about the existence of the evil.

In rejection of the point that natural laws control the universal phenomena, Wajdī centers his argument, among many others, on the point that these natural laws are the result of the modern sciences, which means that they are subject to change; that is to say that, what is said to be a law today might be rendered null and void tomorrow. Besides, even though the work of these laws is highly consistent in the light of the Causality Law, they may be sometimes violated, a point supported by the failure of the determinism theory to explain a number of phenomena.

Spiritism is one of the hypotheses Wajdī extensively relied on in rejecting materialism and atheism. He employed it to prove the existence of a metaphysical world. Wajdī views it as one of the strongest supporters of Islam. His careful reading and examinations of the news of psychiatric and spiritual journals made him fully aware of the minor details of this subject that he was able to describe everything about it. However, Wajdī's heavy reliance on spiritism in proving the existence of a metaphysical world is a double-edged weapon, since it might be subject to change in the offing, a point at which it would exert reverse, negative results. Besides, Muslim scholars firmly believe that the spirit is one of the secrets known only to Allah. In addition, it is proven by the Shari texts that spirits after death are not free to act, because they are either pleased or tortured. Furthermore, texts of the Sharia state that belief in the unseen is one of the pillars of having a true belief, which means that the unseen would not be rendered seen to people except by the Permission of Allah as recorded in the Chapter of *Al-Jinn*.

The Theory of Chance has also been carefully tackled by Wajdī. He firmly believes that this theory is unreliable. In his attempt to refute this theory, he relied on the following points. (1) Science proves that the universe is controlled with very accurate, precise laws that cannot be the product of chance. (2) This theory necessitates that the creatures upon which the chance theory exerts influence should have been found before this theory. (3) This theory works in light of the laws of probability that are proven by science to give *Tarjih* (i.e. preponderance) of something to another, which means it is not decisive.

In order for the chance theory to be effective, an extremely long period of time is required; however, today's findings of modern science prove that this condition cannot be fulfilled. Furthermore, scientists are speaking today about Panpsychism which means that all the creatures of the universe act as if they were self-aware or had minds, a discovery that undermines the chance theory forever.

In a nutshell, Muḥammad Farīd Wajdī is one of the most important Egyptian intellectuals and writers at his time. He contributed greatly to defending Islam and proving that it is the religion that suits all times and places. Besides, his efforts to resist atheism and materialism can serve as a basis for today's scientists to build upon, since his arguments are able to answer most of today's atheistic approaches.

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ijeeps@yahoo.com/

communication555@yahoo.com

website: www.ijeeps.com