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Quranic Narratives Addressing Atheism and the Rejection of God in Western Philosophy

Sujiat Zubaidi¹, Amir Sahidin², Harda Armayanto³,
Zahratur Rofiqah Binte Mochamad Sandisi⁴

^{1,2,3}Universitas Darussalam Gontor, Ponorogo

⁴Singapore Islamic Scholars and Religious Teachers Association (Pergas)

*Correspondence Author: *abufawwaz@unida.gontor.ac.id

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Abstract

Modern materialistic perspectives, combined with Western philosophical critiques that reject the existence of God, have contributed to the rise of atheistic worldviews. In response to this condition, this study aims to identify forms of atheistic rejection in Western philosophy, analyze Quranic thematic narratives related to faith and divine existence, and integrate both findings to demonstrate how the Qur'an addresses and counters atheistic thought. Using a qualitative literature-based method that employs Quranic thematic analysis and comparative philosophical analysis with references to classical and contemporary interpretations, this research finds that atheistic views reflected in the Qur'an include denial of the afterlife, moral accountability, religion, prophets, and the existence of God. The Qur'an counters these views through narratives on the purpose of life, the reality of the hereafter, divine justice, revelation, and prophetic guidance. This study contributes by offering a structured analytical framework that bridges Quranic epistemology and Western atheistic critique, highlighting the intellectual relevance of the Qur'an in addressing contemporary atheism.

Introduction

The issue of faith is a critical to discuss,¹ especially in the current era of modernization, which has negatively impacted all areas of human life.² The worldview in the modern era emphasizes materialistic understanding,³ coupled with the rejection of Western philosophy

¹ Yusuf Al-Qardāwī, *Al-Īmān Wa al-Hayāh* (Maktabah Wahbah, 1973), 5. Amir Sahidin et al., 'Faith, Life, and Multiculturalism in the Thought of Al-Qaradawi: A Study of Al-Īmān Wa al-Hayāh', *Al-Insyiroh: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 11, no. 2 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.35309/alinsyiroh.v11i2.314>.

² Nurhadi Ihsan et al., 'Implementation of Zuhd in The Islāh Movement of Shaykh Abdul Qadir Al-Jilani (D. 561 H./1161 CE.)', *Madania* xxv, no. 1 (2021): 125, <http://dx.doi.org/10.29300/madania.v25i1.4340>.

³ Nasikun, 'Peran Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial Dan Humaniora Bagi Liberalisasi Dan Humanisasi Teknologi', *JSP: Jurnal Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik* 9, no. 2 (2005): 132, <https://doi.org/10.22146/jsp.11031>.

towards God,⁴ which is the main reason humans turn away from spiritual and divine values, leading to an atheistic attitude.

Atheism, in general, is a philosophical view that does not believe in the existence of God⁵ or disbelief in God/ deity in the creation of the universe, which tends to be natural.⁶ In Arabic, the term atheist is called *ilhād*, which means anti-God, deviant, and opposed.⁷ For atheists, the only form that exists is the material world, and life is only life in the world. While spiritual life and after death are human fantasies that have not been proven to be true; thus, they must be rejected. A prominent Jewish religious figure, Benedict Spinoza (1632-1677), for example, states that there is only one substance, namely the material form of nature, as the basis of all objects in the universe. This substance is eternal and immortal and occupies an infinite space. Spinoza formulates the doctrine of the material unity of the world.⁸

Regarding the atheistic thoughts as above, if seen from the Qur'an's perspective, it turns out that the Qur'an has mentioned the existence of a group of people whose views can be characterized as atheists, for example, as Allah says, Q.S. Al-Jatsiyah [45]: 23-24, *"Do you know (Prophet Muhammad)? The person who turned his passions and desires into a deity and was permitted to lose faith in God's will. Allah has sealed his ears, heart, and eyes. Now that he has been left astray by Allah, who is able to lead him on the path? Have you (human beings) not taken enough lessons from the past? They say, "Life is only lived in this world. We are alive, we will die, and all that takes us is time". In fact, they indeed know nothing about it. "They are simply speculating"*⁹. According to Imam Ibn Kathir, those mentioned in the letter are the Arabian atheists who consist of infidels and polytheists. They are also called the *Dahriyyin*, namely the people who deny the resurrection of humans on the Day of Judgment and believe in the absoluteness of time.¹⁰

If referring to the Qur'an, this phenomenon or perspective of atheism has been responded to by rejecting their logical thinking, correcting it with strong arguments, and encouraging humans to use their common sense to find the truth of the evidence.¹¹ Thus, this article discussed the rejection of Western philosophy toward God and the Quranic narrative of Faith in fighting atheism.

Based on previous research, several articles were closely related to this study, including a research article entitled *"Atheism in the Qur'an"* by Muhtarom, published in 2018. Using the *maudlu'i* method, this study attempts to trace several things related to atheism in the Qur'an, namely: the phenomenon of atheism in human history contained in the Qur'an, the outlook on life

⁴ Tonny Ilham Prayogo and Hadi Fathurrizka, 'Ateisme Dalam Perspektif Barat Dan Timur', *Kalimah: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama* 17, no. 1 (2019): 102, <https://doi.org/10.21111/klm.v17i1.2943>.

⁵ William L. Rowe, *Atheism, Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, accessed on Tuesday, 3 December 2024, at 12.00 WIB.

⁶ Prayogo and Fathurrizka, 'Ateisme Dalam Perspektif Barat Dan Timur', 105.

⁷ Obaida Ahmed Majid, 'The Concept Of Atheism In The Qur'an (Objective Explanatory Study)', *Islamic Sciences Journal* 11, no. 2 (2020): 235, <https://www.iraqoaj.net/iasj/article/185218>.

⁸ See, Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam Agama Peradaban; Membangun Makna Dan Relevansi Doktrin Islam Dalam Sejarah* (Paramadina, 1995), 146.

⁹ See, Surah Al-Jatsiyah [45]: 23-24.

¹⁰ Ismail Ibnu Katsir, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-'Adzīm* (Beirut: Dar Thayyibah, 1999), vol. 7, 269; Muhammad Husain Thabathaba'i, *Al-Mizān Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Muassasah al-A'lamiy, 1997), vol. 18, 178.

¹¹ See, Muhtarom Muhtarom, *Ateisme Dalam Al-Qur'an* (Semarang: Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo, 2018), v.

and attitudes toward atheism, and the Qur'an's response to atheism.¹² Although there were similarities in the study theme, the study did not discuss the views of atheist figures. Meanwhile, this study explained the views of atheist figures on the existence of divinity. Second, a journal article entitled "*Atheism in Western and Eastern Perspectives*" by Tonny Ilham Prayogo and Hadi Fathurrizka was published in 2019. Using a comparative method, this article attempted to explain the West's rejection of God and Islam's explanation of the existence of God.¹³

Although both study atheism, this article was different from the author's research, which focused on the study of verses and interpretations of scholars. Third, a journal article entitled "*A Study of the Atheist View on Religion*", by Hanum Sito Rohmawati was published in 2022. This study explained three influential figures of the 21st century who opposed the existence of God, namely Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchen, and Sam Harris, using a descriptive qualitative method.¹⁴ Although these three figures are highly relevant to the present study, previous research has not connected their arguments with the Qur'anic narrative of faith, whereas this study specifically examines how the Qur'an responds to the claims of modern atheism.

Accordingly, the research gap addressed in this study lies in the absence of a comprehensive integration between Western atheistic philosophical arguments and the thematic Qur'anic narrative—together with classical and contemporary exegetical interpretations—as a structured framework for countering atheism, an aspect that has not been extensively explored in earlier research

Method

This study is a qualitative, library-based research employing a content analysis approach.¹⁵ Through this approach, the researcher systematically examines textual content by identifying themes, patterns, and meanings emerging from both primary and secondary sources.¹⁶ The primary data consist of the Qur'an al-Karim, supported by exegetical works authored by reputable scholars, both classical and contemporary. Secondary data include scholarly journals, books, and relevant articles related to atheism, Western philosophy, and the Qur'anic narrative of faith. All of these data were then analyzed by connecting, elaborating, and, where necessary, comparing them with other perspectives in an integrated and systematic manner to produce a comprehensive understanding.¹⁷ Content analysis was employed to organize, interpret, and integrate various perspectives, thereby providing a clear depiction of the relationship between Western atheistic philosophical arguments and the Qur'anic narrative on faith.¹⁸

¹² *Ibid*, v.

¹³ Prayogo and Fathurrizka, 'Ateisme Dalam Perspektif Barat Dan Timur', 101–16.

¹⁴ Hanung Sito Rohmawati, 'A Study of the Atheist View on Religion', *Syekh Nurjati: Jurnal Studi Sosial Keagamaan* 2, no. 2 (2022): 1, <https://doi.org/10.24235/sejati.v2i2.20>.

¹⁵ Mestika Zed, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan* (Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2024), 24.

¹⁶ See, Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* (SAGE Publications, 2019).

¹⁷ Kenneth M. Sayre, *Plato's Analytic Method* (University of Chicago Press, 1969), 22–25.

¹⁸ See, Hamzah Amir, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan* (Literasi Nusantara, 2020).

Results and Discussion

Definition and Brief History of Atheism

According to Lorens Bagus, etymologically, the word *atheism* comes from English, namely atheism, which is taken from Greek. *Atheos* means without God. The word comes from the basic word “a”, which means no, and “theos”, which means God.¹⁹ From the two combinations, the etymological meaning of atheism is not believing in God. In Arabic, atheists are often called *ilhād*, which means anti-God, deviant, and opposing.²⁰

In this study, “*ilhād*” or Qur’anic atheism is defined specifically as the denial of *ulūhiyah* (divinity) of Allah and the rejection of revelation, based on linguistic and Qur’anic context. It is as Allah says in the letter al-Haj verse 25:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَيَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ الَّذِي جَعَلْنَاهُ لِلنَّاسِ سَوَاءً ۖ الْعَاكِفُ فِيهِ وَالْبَادِ وَمَنْ يُرِدْ فِيهِ بِالْحَادِ ۖ يَظْلَمُ تُذَقُّهُ مِنْ عَذَابِ أَلِيمٍ

“Indeed, those who disbelieve and prevent people from the Path of Allah and from the Sacred Mosque--which We have made accessible to all humanity, both to those who reside in it and those who come from outside (will face a severe penalty)—along with whoever seeks to commit evil in an unscrupulous manner is bound to face an awful punishment”²¹.

The essence of *ilhād* (الإلحاد) in this verse, according to Muhammad Al-Asyqar, has several meanings, namely deviating from the truth, people who do evil outside the sacred land then flee into the sacred land, polytheism, and murder; or sinful acts in general.²² In its development, the word *ilhād*, which used to mean deviating from the path of Islam;²³ deviating from the truth towards falsehood;²⁴ and deviating from the outlined path,²⁵ then towards the contemporary meaning of denying the *ulūhiyah* of Allah and rejecting the evidence.²⁶

According to Lorens Bagus, in terms of terminology, atheism has several meanings that he has collected, namely: *first*, the belief that God or gods do not exist. *Second*, the view rejects the existence of the supernatural and the existence of the afterlife. *Third*, doubts about the existence of the supernatural that is assumed to influence the universe. *Fourth*, disbelief in a specific God. For example, the Greeks in ancient times called Christians atheists because they did not believe in their gods, and the Christians called the Greeks atheists because they did not believe in their God. *Fifth*, the rejection of all religions. In this context, the pantheism ideology in its various forms rejects a transcendent and personal God but recognizes and acknowledges something absolute (moral law, beauty, etc.).²⁷

¹⁹ Lorens Bagus, *Kamus Filsafat* (PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2005), 94.

²⁰ Majid, ‘The Concept Of Atheism In The Qur’an (Objective Explanatory Study)’, 25.

²¹ See, Surah al-Hajj [22]: 25.

²² Muhammad Sulaiman Al-Asyqar, *Zubdah Al-Tafsīr Min Fath al-Qadīr* (Dar al-Muayyid, 1996), 137.

²³ Muhammad bin Ahmad Al-Harawi, *Al-Zāhir Fī Gharīb Alfāz Al-Syāfi’i* (Dar al-Thalāi’, n.d.), 248.

²⁴ Mahmud bin Amru Al-Zamakhshari, *Al-Fā’iq Fī Gharīb al-Hadīts Wa al-Atsar* (Beirut: Al-Maktabah al-‘Ashriyah, 1996), vol. 2, 281.

²⁵ Muhammad Rawas and Hamid Shadiq, *Mu’jam Lughah Al-Fuqahā’* (Dar al-Nafais, 1988), 87.

²⁶ Ahmad Mukhtar, *Mu’jam al-Lughah al-‘Arabiyyah al-Mu’Ashirah* (Beirut: Dar ‘Alam al-Kutub, 2008), vol. 3, 1997.

²⁷ Bagus, *Kamus Filsafat*, 94–95.

Regarding these various interpretations of atheism, this study focuses on atheism as the rejection of God, which, in the linguistic and textual context of the Qur'an, can be understood as *ilhād*. This aligns with Endang Saifuddin, who defines atheism as an ideology that does not acknowledge the existence of God or, conversely, acknowledges that God does not exist.²⁸ From these understandings, it can be concluded that atheism encompasses all forms of belief or rejection concerning the being and existence of God, which serves as the central focus of this study.

Historically, the term atheism was first used to refer to a separate belief in late 18th-century Europe, primarily referring to disbelief in monotheistic Gods. In the 20th century, the influence of globalization broadened the definition of the term to refer to disbelief in all Gods or gods. However, it is still common to refer to atheism as a belief in a (monotheistic) God.²⁹ Subsequently, the term atheism was often defined as disbelief in God or gods rather than atheism as a belief itself.

According to Arqom Kuswanjono, atheism ideology, the disbelief against God, has several arguments as the foundation: *first*, all events in the universe are a continuous cycle; thus, they do not require the existence of other parties to contemplate the universe; *second*, the existence of crime and desperation, indirectly questioned the attribute of the God almighty and love; *third*, the existence of human autonomy, if God exists, human will not be free; in fact, human has freedom to live his life; *fourth*, the belief in God is only the result of people's thoughts, expectations, and habits.³⁰ These arguments are further reinforced by modern materialistic ideologies,³¹ and the rejection of God in Western philosophy.³² Consequently, these factors contribute to human turning away from God and adhering to atheism

Atheist Figure's View of God

After understanding the definition and brief history of atheism, the researchers studied the Atheist figures' views related to the existence of divinity. These atheist figures are Clinton Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, and Sam Harris, and will be explained as follows:

First: Clinton Richard Dawkins. He was born on March 26th, 1941, in Kenya. He studied at Balliol College, University of Oxford, in 1959, and graduated from zoology in 1962. Then, he continued his post-graduate and doctoral studies at the same university until 1966. Dawkins is known as a writer, popular scientist, and movie maker. He was also a president of biology from the *British Association for the Advancement of Science*. He then retired from his Oxford professor position in 2008.³³

Dawkins' view about God reveals that God is only a delusion or imagination of a human.³⁴ He also added that God is created by human thoughts, the mental construction of theists' speculations required to "explain" the universe's existence; hence, human indeed that create God,

²⁸ Endang Saifuddin, *Ilmu Filsafat & Agama* (Bina Ilmu, 1979), 111.

²⁹ See, Michael Martin, *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism* (Cambridge University Press, 2007).

³⁰ Arqom Kuswaanjono, *Ketuhanan Dalam Telaah Filsafat Parenial Refleksi Pluralisme Agama Di Indonesia* (Badan Penerbitan Filsafat UGM, 2006), 32–33.

³¹ Nasikun, 'Peran Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial Dan Humaniora Bagi Liberalisasi Dan Humanisasi Teknologi', 132.

³² Prayogo and Fathurrizka, 'Ateisme Dalam Perspektif Barat Dan Timur', 102.

³³ Rohmawati, 'A Study of the Atheist View on Religion', 6.

³⁴ Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Bantam Press, 2006), 5.

not God creates human.³⁵ This claim can be refuted through the concept of *fitrah* in Surah al-Rum [30]: 30, “*That is the natural disposition (fitrah) of Allah upon which He created humankind.*” Here, *fitrah* refers to the innate knowledge and acknowledgment that Allah is their Lord, as explained by Imam Ibn Katsir.³⁶ In addition, the Qur’an presents a cosmological argument that contradicts Dawkins’ materialism, as found in Surah Al-Thur [52]: 35–36. These verses offer a rational argument that something cannot arise from absolute nothingness, nor can something create itself; therefore, there must exist a non-material Creator. Al-Razi describes these verses as a very powerful proof for the necessity of a Creator.³⁷

Second: Christopher Hitchens. He was born in Portsmouth, UK, on April 13th, 1949, and died in Boston, Texas, USA, on December 15th, 2011. He ever enrolled in Balliol College, Oxford, in 1967, and was engaged in an international socialist community, a Trotskyist sect. He then graduated in philosophy, politics, and economics in 1970. Hitchens is an educated man and also well-known as a reporter, a political commentator, an intellectual, and a guest lecturer in 2005, in a new school, New York.³⁸

Christopher Hitchens’s views related to God are obviously contained in his book, entitled “*God is not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*”.³⁹ In this book, Hitchens emphasizes that God is not the Almighty, which is contrast with the believers of religion who acknowledge the mightiness of God. Moreover, he concluded that religion worsens people and does not make them better, due to a dispute of understanding the religion by the believers and potentially caused violation. The believers also claim that their religion is the truest religion than other religions, and commonly violated other groups in the name of God. He also stated that the afterlife is illogical and irrational. He considered that this universe is evolutionarily created by itself.⁴⁰

Such a view clearly contradicts the teachings of the Qur’an. *First*, regarding the majesty of God, it is explained in Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 255: “*...Preserving the heavens and the earth does not weary Him; He is the Most High, the Most Magnificent.*” Imam al-Qurthubi explains that this verse affirms that *al-‘Azīm* (the Most Magnificent) signifies absolute perfection that is not based on human perception, but is demonstrated through His power in governing the universe.⁴¹ *Second*, concerning the violence that occurs within society, the Qur’an explains that such wrongdoing originates from people who deviate, not from the religion itself. In Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 190, it is stated: “*Do not transgress limits. Indeed, Allah does not love those who transgress.*” *Third*, regarding the claim that the Hereafter is irrational, the Qur’an affirms that resurrection is a logical consequence of the Creator’s power, as stated in Surah Yasin [36]: 78–79. Al-Maraghi presents a

³⁵ Inoke Martalia Istanto, ‘Tinjauan Kritis Terhadap Pandangan Ateis Tentang Konsep Allah Sebagai Delusi’, *Consilium* 20 (2019): 21, <http://repository.scabs.ac.id/handle/123456789/661>.

³⁶ Ibnu Katsir, *Tafsīr Al-Qur’ān Al-‘Adzīm*, vol. 6, 313.

³⁷ Fahrudin Al-Razi, *Maḥāṭib al-Ghaib* (Beirut: Dar Ihya’ al-Turats, 1420), vol. 28, 215–216.

³⁸ Rohmawati, ‘A Study of the Atheist View on Religion’, 8–9.

³⁹ See, Christopher Hitchens, *God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (Boston, 2007).

⁴⁰ See, Rohmawati, ‘A Study of the Atheist View on Religion’, 11.

⁴¹ Abu Abdillah Muhammad bin Ahmad Al-Qurthubi, *Al-Jāmi’ Li Ahkām al-Qur’ān* (Dār al-Kutub al-Mishriyyah, 1964), vol. 3, 279.

philosophical argument that bringing back to life a being that has already existed is certainly easier to conceive than creating it from nothing in the first place.⁴²

Third: Sam Harris. He was born in USA, on April 9th, 1967. He graduated from Philosophy, at Stanford University, and was also co-founder of Project Reason. The Project Reason is a foundation dedicated to science and secular values development in the world. Sam Harris is also those who believe that religion should end its existence.⁴³ Through his work, *"The end of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason"*, he discussed organized religion, the dispute of religious faith and rational thinking, and also the intolerant issues correlated with religion fundamentalism.⁴⁴ Then, he concluded that religion does not offer peace, in contrast, religion is indeed full of violence and terrorism.⁴⁵

That assumption is also fundamentally at odds with the Qur'an's vision of religion—particularly Islam—as *rahmatan li'l-ālamīn* (a mercy for all creation), as stated in Surah Al-Anbiya' [21]: 107. Ibn Katsir explains that the "mercy" mentioned here is mercy for all beings; whoever accepts this mercy and is grateful for it will attain success in this world and the Hereafter.⁴⁶ Thus, the foundation of religion is not violence, but universal protection and goodness. In addition, the Qur'an also explains that relationships among human beings must be built on *ta'āruf* (mutual recognition and understanding), as stated in Surah Al-Hujurat [49]: 13. Quraish Shihab explains that *ta'āruf* is not merely a call for mutual understanding among Muslims, but among all humanity, including those who hold different beliefs.⁴⁷ Therefore, Islam teaches openness, dialogue, social engagement, and interfaith cooperation.⁴⁸

These three figures with their ideology become the example on how the western philosophers contradicted to the existence of God and related matters such as religion and so on. Furthermore, the next section of this research will explore the atheist's view on life – the Qur'an-based.

Atheist's View on Life – the Qur'an-based

When people deeply explore the series of Qur'an verses, there will be a description and views of life or the mindset of atheists. They have some views as details:

First: The rejection of the afterlife. The Qur'an describes the views of life of those who reject the afterlife and they only acknowledge life in this world in some verses. For instance, in the Surah Al-Anam [6]: 29, *"And indeed, they will say (also): We have only the current life on earth, and we will*

⁴² Ahmad Mushthafa Al-Marāghī, *Tafsīr Al-Marāghī* (Kairo: Matba'ah Mushthafa al-Babi al-Halabi, 1946), vol. 15, 55-57.

⁴³ See, Choirul Fuad Yusuf, 'Kritik Atas the Moral Landscape: How Science Can Determine Human Values', *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan* 11, no. 1 (2013): 135–36, <https://doi.org/10.31291/jlk.v11i1.54>.

⁴⁴ See, Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason* (W. W. Norton, 2004).

⁴⁵ Rohmawati, 'A Study of the Atheist View on Religion', 15.

⁴⁶ Ibnu Katsir, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Adzīm*, vol. 5, 385.

⁴⁷ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsīr Al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan, Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an* (PT. Lentera Hati, 2002), vol. 13, 387.

⁴⁸ A. Hadi and N. P. Sari, 'Dialog Antaragama Dan Pemikiran Moderat Dalam Tafsir Al-Misbah Karya Quraish Shihab', *Jurnal Ilmu Agama Dan Sosial Budaya* 12, no. 2 (2024).

not be resurrected".⁴⁹ Based on atheism, this life is only limited to the material world, they do not believe in the afterlife.⁵⁰ An atheism figure in the century, Hitchens, added that the afterlife is indeed untruths, which is not proven, illogical, and irrational. Similar to this universe, it is not the creation of the "One Intelligence", but it occurs evolutionarily within the natural law.⁵¹

Second: the rejection of God's rewards and sins. Along with the atheist's rejection of the concept of life and resurrection, they also deny the existence of God's rewards and sins as the consequence of their action in the world. Qur'an has described the atheists', from 'Ad people, manner and views of life regarding the consequence of their actions (God's rewards and sins) later in the afterlife. In the surah Al-Syu'ara [26]: 137-138, *"(Our religion) is nothing but the ancients' customs; and we will never be punished"* ⁵² In this verse, the atheists, from 'Ad people, assume that there are no God's rewards and sins, as well as heaven nor hell. Therefore, they always opposed the prophet's words conveyed to them.⁵³

Third: The rejection of religion. The next view of life on atheism is the rejection of religion in life; religion is only witticism that will take their freedom and worsen people. They viewed that the presence of violence and conflict is caused by the dispute of the believers i.e. the emergence claim of truth that leads to the violence of other groups in the name of God.⁵⁴ Therefore, the Qur'an has described their condition in the surah Al-An'am [6]: 70, *"And leave those who mock their religion and have been misled by the life of the world"*.⁵⁵ In this verse, Allah commands Prophet Muhammad and the believers to leave the people who make religion as witticism and amusement. Al-Maraghi explained that these people are those who are deluded by their worldly life and forget about the true life, namely the afterlife.⁵⁶

Fourth: the rejection of the prophets and apostles. One of the atheist's views of life is the rejection of the prophets and apostles, which sometimes without any clear argument. For example, Allah said in the surah Al-Isra' [17]: 90-92, *"And they proclaim, 'We will not place our faith in you (O Muhammad) until you make water flow abundantly from the ground for us, or you possess a garden filled with date palms and grapes and make rivers flow strongly from them, or you make the sky descend upon us in fragments as you claim, or you present Allah and the angels before us directly"*⁵⁷. These verses explain the manner of Quraysh leaders against the Prophet Muhammad's words, which indicated their rejection and reluctance to accept the Prophet's words. Hence, based on this manner, it will be useless to prove anything, they would not accept those proofs.⁵⁸

Fifth: the rejection of God's existence in life. The atheists also proclaim the rejection of God's existence in human life. For example, in the surah Al-Qashash [28]: 78 *"He (Qarun) responded,*

⁴⁹ See, Surah Al-An'am [6]: 29.

⁵⁰ Lajnah Pentashih Mushaf Al-Qur'an Kementrian Agama RI, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Tematik: Hari Kiamat* (Pustaka Kami, 2014), 4.

⁵¹ See, Agus Mustofa, *Beragama Dengan Akal Sehat* (Padma Press, 2008), 126.

⁵² See, Surah al-Syu'ara [26]: 137-138.

⁵³ Al-Marāghī, *Tafsīr Al-Marāghī*, vol. 19, 88.

⁵⁴ Mustofa, *Beragama Dengan Akal Sehat*, 125.

⁵⁵ See, Surah Al-An'am [6]: 70.

⁵⁶ Al-Marāghī, *Tafsīr Al-Marāghī*, vol. 7, 518.

⁵⁷ See, Surah Al-Isra' [17]: 90-92.

⁵⁸ See, Muhammad Rasyid Ridha, *Tafsīr Al-Manār* (Kairo: Dar Al-Manar, n.d.), vol. 15, 95-96.

*'Indeed, I was granted that (wealth) only because of the knowledge that I have'. Is not he aware that Allah has crushed the previous generation, who were stronger than him and collected more wealth? Those disobedient people do not deserve to be questioned about their faults'*⁵⁹. In this verse, Allah explained Qarun's attitude towards advice given by his people. Whereas, if Allah blesses someone with wealth due to their intelligence and virtue given by Allah, certainly, Allah will not destroy the previous people who are smarter, stronger, and wealthier than him.⁶⁰

In short, atheists' views of life according to the Qur'an are: the rejection of the afterlife, afterlife consequence, religion, prophets and apostles, as well as God. Those matters are obviously contrasted with the believers' views of life and faith. Hence, in the next section, we will discuss the Qur'an narration to counter atheism.

The Qur'an Narration to Counter Atheism

After delving deeper into the Qur'an's narration towards faith, some verses are obtained to counter the atheists' views of life, including arguments to strengthen them. The verses are:

*First: the description of worldly and hereafter. In surah Al-An'am [6] verse 32, "And this life is nothing but games and witticism, whereas the afterlife is better for the pious. Then, will you not understand?"*⁶¹. According to Ibn Asyur, this verse could answer the statement from non-believers (atheist) views as mentioned before,⁶² i.e., *"Life is only worldly and never be resurrected"*.⁶³ Moreover, Ibn Asyur explained that life they mentioned is only witticism and amusement, whereas, behind that matter, there will be a better and more honorable life for religious people. Thus, this verse is a repetition call for them to be religious and faithful.⁶⁴ In addition, Al-Maraghi also stated that believers should choose a longer way of life, namely the afterlife by committing good deeds and being faithful to Allah.⁶⁵

Allah Ta'ala has explained that there will be a resurrection day. Allah said in the surah Al-Isra' [17] verses 51-52, *"Be you all stone or iron, or a creature from a creature that is impossible (to survive) according to your thoughts'. Then, they will inquire, 'Who would bring us back to life?' Say: 'Who created you the first time?' Then they will shake their heads at you and ask, 'When will it (happen)? Say, 'Hopefully, the day of awakening is close."*⁶⁶ Ibn Asyur described this verse as the answer to the atheist's questions in the previous verse, i.e., *"And they say mockingly, when we are reduced to bones and ashes, will we really be raised as a new creation?"*⁶⁷

Furthermore, Ibn Asyur explained that Allah commands Prophet Muhammad to answer using these verses and to compare their argument *"bones and ashes"* with *"stone or iron"* as the comparison between thin and solid matters, which implies both thin and solid matters are the same

⁵⁹ See, Surah Al-Qashash [28]: 78.

⁶⁰ Al-Marāghī, *Tafsīr Al-Marāghī*, vol. 24, 18.

⁶¹ See, Surah Al-An'am [6]: 32.

⁶² Muhammad Tahir Ibnu Asyur, *Al-Tahrīr Wa al-Tanwīr* (Tunisia: Al-Dar al-Tunisiyah li an-Nasr, 1984), vol. 7, 192.

⁶³ See, Surah Al-An'am [6]: 29.

⁶⁴ Ibnu Asyur, *Al-Tahrīr Wa al-Tanwīr*, vol. 7, 192.

⁶⁵ Al-Marāghī, *Tafsīr Al-Marāghī*, vol. 7, 107.

⁶⁶ See, Surah al-Isra' [17]: 50-51.

⁶⁷ See, Surah al-Isra' [17]: 49.

in front of Allah *Ta'ala* to form as His will.⁶⁸ Moreover, creating an object which is existed before is easier than never existed. Thus, this verse is a counter against the atheist's response who does not believe that there will be a resurrection after death.

Second: the existence of the afterlife consequences. In the surah Thaha verses 74-76, *"Indeed, anyone who approaches his Lord in the Hereafter while being guilty (having sinned) will surely find hell, where he neither dies nor truly lives; and anyone who approaches Him with belief and has performed righteous deeds will be granted elevated abodes; (specifically) everlasting gardens, beneath which rivers flow, where they will dwell forever; and this is the reward for those who purify themselves from acts of kufr and vice"*⁶⁹. In these verses, Allah emphasizes the consequences of every action done by humans in this world, if they deny, they do not believe in Allah, or they ignore Allah's order, or violate Allah's prohibition, there will be a certain consequence, namely the hell. On the other side, those who obey and believe in Allah, or those who do the commands from Allah and stay away from Allah's prohibition, will get heaven as a blessing.

In addition, Allah *Ta'ala* also explains that no matter how small a human's actions are, He will definitely reward them. Allah says in Surah Al-Zalzalah verses 7 and 8, *"Those who perform good actions, even as small as a particle, will undoubtedly witness their impact; conversely, those who commit wrongdoings, no matter how minuscule, will also certainly observe the consequences."*⁷⁰ Regarding this verse, Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani explained that whoever does good or bad, even if it is the size of a *zarrah*, i.e., the weight of a small ant, will see it.⁷¹ In line with this expression, Fahrudin Al-Razi quoted Ibn Abbas's expression, which says, *"There is no believer or unbeliever who does good or evil unless Allah shows it to him"*.⁷² Ibn Asyur then explains that good deeds will not be considered good in the sight of Allah unless they are based on faith because good deeds have the condition of faith.⁷³ It is as stated in the words of Allah An-Nur [24] verse 39, *"Those who lack belief find their actions akin to a mirage on a level terrain, which a parched individual perceives as water; however, upon nearing it, he discovers it to be nonexistent"*⁷⁴. Hence, no matter how much the deeds of an atheist are, Allah will not accept these deeds.

Third, regarding the rejection of religion, prophets, and God, Allah reminds people of humanity's fundamental promise to God. In surah Al-A'raf [7] verse 172, *"When your Lord extracted from the loins of Adam's progeny their descendants, He took a testimony from them, asking, 'Am I not your Lord?' They affirmed, 'Indeed, You are our Lord; we bear witness'. It was done to ensure that on the Day of Resurrection, you would not claim, 'Surely, we were unaware of this'"*⁷⁵. Allah *Ta'ala*, in this verse, through the intermediary of His Messenger, explains the promises that all humans have made since their mother's womb before they were finally born on earth.⁷⁶ Thus, in this verse, Allah

⁶⁸ Ibnu Asyur, *Al-Tahrir Wa al-Tanwir*, vol. 15, 124.

⁶⁹ See, Surah Thaha [20]: 74-76.

⁷⁰ See, Surah Al-Zalzalah [99]: 7-8.

⁷¹ Muhammad Nawawi Al-Bantani, *Murāh Labīb Li Kasyf Ma'na Al-Qur'ān al-Majīd* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub Al-'Ilmiyah, 1417), vol. 2, 665.

⁷² Al-Razi, *Mafāṭīh Al-Ghaib*, vol. 32, 257.

⁷³ Ibnu Asyur, *Al-Tahrir Wa al-Tanwir*, vol. 30, 494.

⁷⁴ See, Surah An-Nur [24]: 39.

⁷⁵ See, Surah Al-A'raf [7]: 172.

⁷⁶ Ibnu Katsir, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al- 'Adzīm*, vol. 3, 500.

intends to explain to humans that the essence of human events is based on belief in the Almighty God.

Therefore, in another verse, Allah commands people to follow the religion that Allah shows. Allah says in Surah Ar-Rum [30] verse 30, *“Hence, adjust your face straight towards the religion (Islam) according to Allah’s fitrah, who created humans in accordance with that. There is no change in Allah’s creation. That is the straight religion, although most people are unaware”*⁷⁷. Regarding this verse, the Prophet explained that the essence of the religion of nature in this term is Islam,⁷⁸ It is as he said, *“Every child is born on nature, then the mother and father make their religion Jewish, Christian or Magian”*⁷⁹. In this hadith, Islam is not mentioned because nature itself is Islam.

Then, to explain the teachings of Islam, Allah sent His prophets to call people to believe in Allah and carry out the commandments of the religion that He is pleased with (Islam).⁸⁰ Regarding this, Allah Ta’ala says in the Surah Al-Hadid [57] verse 8, *“Why do you not have faith in Allah, even in light of the Messenger’s call? Indeed, He has acknowledged your (faithful) pledge if you are among the believers”*⁸¹. In this verse, Allah rebukes those who do not believe by highlighting the reason for not believing in Allah⁸². Meanwhile, the Messenger engaged people to believe and validated it by presenting real evidence.⁸³ As for the table that helps summarize all these explanations, it is as follows.

Table 1: Worldviews and Qur’anic Narratives in Rejecting Atheism

NO	Atheistic Worldview in the Qur’an	Qur’anic Narrative in Rejecting Atheism
1	Denying life after death	Providing a depiction of both worldly and hereafter life
2	Denying reward and sin	Affirming the existence of recompense in the Hereafter
3	Rejecting the existence of God in life	Reminding humanity of its fundamental covenant with God
4	Rejecting religion	Commanding people to follow the religion that He has approved
5	Denial of Prophets and Messengers	Sending prophets and His messengers to call humanity to follow divine commandments

⁷⁷ See, Surah Ar-Rum [30]: 30.

⁷⁸ Ibnu Katsir, *Tafsīr Al-Qur’ān Al-‘Adzīm*, vol. 3, 500.

⁷⁹ Muhammad Ismail Al-Bukhari, *Shahīh Al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dar Tuq al-Najah, 1422), no. 1358, vol. 2, 94; Muslim bin al-Hajjaj Al-Naisābūrī, *Shahīh Muslim* (Beirut: Dar Ihyā’ al-Turats, n.d.), no. 2658, vol. 4, 2047.

⁸⁰ See, Surah Ali Imran [3]: 85.

⁸¹ See, Surah Al-Hadid [57]: 8.

⁸² Ibnu Katsir, *Tafsīr Al-Qur’ān Al-‘Adzīm*, vol. 8, 11.

⁸³ Ibnu Asyur, *Al-Tahrīr Wa al-Tanwīr*, vol. 27, 370; Ibnu Katsir, *Tafsīr Al-Qur’ān Al-‘Adzīm*, vol. 8, 11.

Conclusion

The issue of faith is an important issue to discuss, especially in the current era of modernization, which has been impacted massively. Departing from the perspective of the modern era, which emphasizes materialistic understanding and the rejection of Western philosophy towards the existence of God, humans turn away from divine values and turn towards an atheistic attitude. Regarding this atheist attitude, when considering the perspective of the Qur'an, the Qur'an has mentioned the existence of groups of people who have views that can be characterized as atheists. This view includes denial of the afterlife, denial of rewards in the afterlife, and rejection of religion, prophets, and God. Therefore, the Qur'an also explains the narrative to fight atheism by providing an overview of daily life, confirming the existence of retribution in the afterlife, and reminding people of humanity's promises to God, including the religion that He blessed and the prophets He sent.

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