

## THE CREATION OF THE WORLD IN TIME ACCORDING TO FAKHR AL-RAZI

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The eternity or creation of the world in time is a question that many scholars from different fields have tackled, regardless of their religious affiliation. In the Islamic tradition, theologians generally affirmed the temporal creation of the world. On the other hand, philosophers rejected this notion. These philosophers usually interpreted religious texts that indicated the creation of the world to refer to the idea that the existence of the possible beings of this world is preceded by the non-existence that they contained in their quiddities. One of the individuals who discussed this subject in detail was Fakhr al-Din al-Razi. Razi presented many proofs to substantiate the temporal creation of the physical world. He also fortified these proofs by answering many of the objections that might be leveled against them. One of these proofs revolves around the idea that a physical being cannot be in a state of rest or movement in eternity. Thus, it could not exist in eternity. This proof depends upon the idea that rest is something positive or existent in nature. It also depends upon the idea that things which are eternal and positive in nature must subsist. Since movement and rest are preceded by something else, they cannot exist in eternity. This is because eternity is that which is not preceded by anything. Many of the objections that might be leveled against this proof are objections directed to self-evident propositions. Thus, they must be rejected.

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## *Introduction*

Discussions surrounding the nature of the world are numerous. One of the most important of these discussions is concerned with whether the world is eternal or created. A majority of Muslim theologians have been of the opinion that it was created in time (Allamah Hilli 2009: I/238–240). Meanwhile, many philosophers said that it was eternal, yet essentially created. This implies that its existence is accidental and stems from a cause external to it. Its quiddity, however, does not necessitate its existence. In any case, one of the thinkers who discussed this issue in detail was Fakhr al-Razi. In many of his works he has discussed this issue at great length (Fakhr al-Razi 2015: I/388–396). In these, he has presented many proofs to substantiate the temporal creation of the world and to answer the objections which philosophers have leveled against this concept. In this paper, we will attempt to examine one of those proofs. This proof revolves around the idea that a physical body cannot be in a state of movement or rest in eternity. Since it could not exist in eternity without any of these attributes, we must negate its existence in eternity altogether (Fakhr al-Razi 1990: 18; Al-Suyuri 2003: 122). We will begin our discussion by presenting the proof itself and then turn to the objections that might be leveled against it, as well as to Razi's answers to these.

### *The Philosophical Proof for the Creation of the World in Time:*

This proof, which comes to us in the form of an exceptive syllogism, goes as follows:

1. If physical bodies were eternal, then in eternity, they would either be in a state of movement or a state of rest.
2. However, both of these options are incorrect.

Conclusion: It is therefore impossible for physical bodies to be eternal.

In order for this proof to be properly established, it is necessary to prove three premises. We will look at each of these matters separately (Fakhr al-Razi 2009: 20).

#### *The First Premise:*

The first of the abovementioned premises is the idea that there is no third option at play here. In other words, if a physical body really did exist in eternity, then it would either be in a state of motion or a state of rest. It is impossible for it to not be in one of these states. The way that this is proven

is the following: First of all, it is necessary to understand that every physical body occupies a specific place. This implies that it is capable of being pointed to. We point to it so that we can say that it is ‘in such-and-such a place.’ Now that this has been established, we may state the following:

In eternity, it either remains in one place or it does not; rather, it moves from the place it occupied to another. There is no third option here. In the first case, it will be in a state of rest and in the second it will be in a state of motion. Thus, we have proven that the physical body will either be in a state of rest or in a state of motion (ibid).

*The Second Premise:*

The second premise that needs to be established here is the idea that it is impossible for a physical body to be in a state of movement in eternity. There are many proofs for this idea some of which we will present hereunder (ibid).

The First Proof:

This proof rests upon the idea that it is impossible for movement and eternity to be combined together. In other words, if eternity and movement are combined in a physical body, that would lead to a contradiction. The reason for this is the following:

1. The reality of eternity opposes something being preceded by something else.
2. However, the reality of movement necessitates being preceded by something else. The reason for this is that movement is the act of being transferred from one state to another. Thus, in movement there are two states one of which precedes another. The state that precedes the second state is other than the one that is preceded by the first. Thus, in movement, we have something that is preceded by something else.

In conclusion, if movement and eternity are combined in one physical body, then it would imply that the body under question would not be preceded by anything and be preceded by something and this is a contradiction in terms (ibid).

The Second Proof:

The idea that the physical world is eternal demands that each one of the revolutions of the celestial spheres is preceded by another one like it and that

this goes on ad infinitum. Based upon this idea, each revolution would be preceded by its own non-existence and this non-existence would be eternal. Thus, an infinite number of non-existences would be present in eternity. Now, it is meaningless to say that there is a sequence between non-existences. Rather, there can only be a sequence between beings. This is an important part of this proof and we need it so that no one may object by saying that this infinite number of non-existences is impossible as the proofs for the impossibility of an infinite regress would also include them. The reason why those proofs do not include this case is that they are conditioned by the infinity having a real sequence to it. Thus, there will be an infinite number of non-existences in eternity, each of which precedes the existence of a revolution of the celestial sphere.

Now that this has been established, we may ask the following question: Do any of those revolutions exist in eternity with the sum total of those non-existences or not? The first option is clearly impossible as it would lead to the existence and non-existence of the revolution existing at once. This is clearly an instance of a combination of contradictory concepts. That is impossible. Thus, we have to say that in eternity none of those revolutions exist. As a result, the celestial spheres will not exist as movement is something necessary for them. What is more, the sub-lunar realm will also not exist as it depends in its existence upon the celestial spheres. Thus, in eternity, the physical world will not exist. This goes against the assumption that it is indeed eternal.

#### The Third Proof:

In this proof, if we say that the physical beings are in a state of movement in eternity, then we ask a question in this context: In eternity, do any of the movements occur or not? If, in eternity, none of the movements occur, then it is necessary that there be a beginning in time for the totality of these movements and phenomena. This is what we are seeking to prove and it goes against the assumption that the physical world is eternal. If we say that in eternity at least some of these movements occur, then we ask the next question: Is the movement that occurs in eternity preceded by something else or not? If we say that it is not preceded by something else, then that movement will be the first of the movements. This again proves what we are seeking to establish, i.e. the beginning of the world. Also, this goes against the assumption that the world is eternal. However, if we say that the movement that exists in eternity is preceded by something else, then it implies that eternity is preceded by something else. This is clearly impossible (ibid: 21).

#### The Fourth Proof:

In this proof, we compare the rotations of the Sun and Saturn around Earth with one another. One of the rotations of Saturn around Earth is equal to thirty rotations of the Sun around it. Thus, the rotations of Saturn are less than that of the Sun. Now, everything that is less than something else is limited. From these two premises we can reach the conclusion that the movements of Saturn are limited and thus, they have a beginning. Since this is so, it is necessary for the movements of all of the heavenly spheres and their stars to be limited. This is because even though they are bigger than that of this sphere, they are only so in a limited manner. Now, everything that is limitedly bigger than something else limited, will be limited. Thus, the movements of all of the heavenly spheres will be limited. If they are limited, they will have a beginning. If they have a beginning, the physical beings of the sub-lunar realm will also have a beginning as they depend upon the heavenly beings in their subsistence.

#### The Fifth Proof:

This proof, in essence, is one of the proofs which philosophers have mentioned in relation to the impossibility of an infinite regress of causes (Fakhr al-Razi 2008: I/602). It is well known as *burhan al-tatbiq* (the Demonstration of Application). However, here it is being used to prove the impossibility of an infinite chain of phenomena that come successively into existence.

Razi says that it is possible to take the successive phenomena of the physical world into consideration from the present time up to eternity into consideration as a whole. Also, we can take the successive phenomena of the physical world into consideration from the time of the Flood up to eternity as a second whole. After having done this, we can align these two chains with each other so that their sides, which are opposite to eternity, are parallel to each other. Having done this, this we ask the following question: Are the two chains equal or not? In other words, is the second chain smaller than the first or not? If we say that they are equal and that the second chain is not smaller than the first, then it implies that something without something is equal to something with that thing. This is clearly impossible. However, if we say that the second chain is still smaller than the first, then we have to ask: Where does this limitation show up? Where does this limitation manifest itself? It cannot be on the side that is facing the present as under the assumption they are parallel to one another over there. Thus, it has to be smaller than the first chain on the side that faces eternity. Thus, it will be limited and have a beginning. However, under the assumption, the first chain is only bigger than the

second chain by means of a limited number of events and phenomena. Now, anything that is bigger than a limited being by means of a limited quantity will also be limited. Thus, the first chain is also limited and will have a beginning. This goes against the assumption that it is limited and goes on forever and into eternity (Fakhr al-Razi 2009: 21).

#### The Sixth Proof:

This proof comes to us in the form of an exceptive syllogism:

1. If the previous rotations of the heavenly spheres went on into eternity and were unlimited, then the occurrence of the present would be impossible. The reason for this is that if the previous rotations of the heavenly spheres went on eternity, then it would imply that the occurrence of the present depended upon the termination of that which is infinite. In other words, in order for the present to occur, the events that precede it must come into existence and finish. However, under the assumption, the events that precede the present are unlimited. Since they are unlimited, they can never finish. It is impossible for something that is infinite to finish. Thus, the occurrence of the present depends upon something that is impossible. However, anything that depends upon something impossible will be impossible. Thus, if the previous rotations of the heavenly spheres went on eternity then it would mean that the occurrence of the present would be impossible.
2. However, the occurrence of the present is not impossible. This is because it has occurred and anything that occurs is possible, not impossible.

Conclusion: The previous rotations of the heavenly sphere do not go on eternity. Thus, they are limited and have a beginning (ibid).

This brings to a close the proofs for the idea that it is impossible for a physical being to be in a state of movement in eternity.

#### *The Third Premise:*

Now we will turn to the idea that it is impossible for a physical being to be in a state of rest in eternity. However, before we can do this we must establish a very important matter. That is the idea that rest is something existent. It is not non-existent. However, philosophers say that it is something non-existent. It is the non-existence of movement in a body that has the

capability of movement. The reason why this premise is so important is that our proof for the idea that it is impossible for a physical body to be in a state of rest in eternity runs as follows:

1. If a physical body were in a state of rest in eternity then it would always remain in a state of rest and this rest would never cease.
2. However, it has ceased as there are bodies that are in a state of movement.

Conclusion: Thus, it is impossible for a physical body to be in a state of rest in eternity.

However, if we do not prove that rest is something existent and positive in nature, then this proof will not be sound. This is because if rest is something non-existent, then it will be possible for it to cease. The reason for this is that even theologians agree with the idea that eternal non-existence is possible to finish. Otherwise, if we say that eternal non-existence does not cease, then we will not be possible to establish the creation of the world. This is because it is possible for someone to present the following proof:

1. If the physical world was created in time, then its non-existence would be eternal and if its non-existence was eternal then it would not cease when its existence occurred.
2. However, it has ceased.

Conclusion: Thus, the physical world is not created in time.

Thus, it has been clarified that it is not possible for us as theologians to say that everything eternal – regardless of whether it is existent or non-existent – subsists. Thus, we have to establish that rest is something existent. It is not the *non-existence* of movement from a body that has the capacity for movement. Rather, we have to limit this ruling to things that are existent in nature. Thus, things that exist in eternity can never cease to exist. Consequently, we need to establish the fact that rest is something existent and positive in nature so that our proof and our claim may be firmly established (ibid: 22).

Rest is existent in Nature:

The proof for the idea that rest is something existent in nature is the following:

1. We see that a body comes to a state of rest after being in a state of movement. Sometimes, it starts moving after being in a state of rest.

2. These two states of the body are different from one another.
  3. It is impossible for both of these states to be non-existent in nature. The reason for this is that two instances of non-existence are never different from one another (Tabatabai 2001: 31).
  4. Thus, at least one of these two states is existent in nature.
  5. Now that at least one of them is existent in nature, it is necessary for both of them to be existent. The proof for this is the following:
    1. Movement is *being in a place* after having previously been in another place.
    2. Rest implies *being in a place* after having previously been in the very same place.
    3. Thus, movement and rest are both of the same nature, i.e. *being in a place*. If they differ from one another, then they do so only in the qualities that are accidental to their nature. This is because being *preceded by another state* – as is the case with movement – and *not being preceded by another state* – as is the case with rest – are qualities that are not essential to movement and rest.
    4. Now, accidental qualities do not affect the unity of the essence of two beings. For example, Zayd and Bakr are both human beings, but they differ in the color of their skin. This difference in accidental qualities does not make the essence of these two individuals different from one another.
- Conclusion: Rest has to be existent in nature (Fakhr al-Razi 2009: 22).

#### The Argument for the Third Premise:

Now that we have established the idea that rest is existent in nature, it is legitimately possible for us to prove the third premise. As mentioned before, the basic structure of the argument of this premise comes to us in the form of an exceptive syllogism and runs as follows:

1. If the physical body was in a state of rest in eternity, then it would be impossible for this state of rest to finish for it.
  2. However, it is not impossible for the state of rest to finish for it.
- Conclusion: The physical body is not in a state of rest in eternity.

In order for this proof to be firmly established it is necessary for us to prove two points: 1. The necessary connection between the precedent and the antecedent. 2. The impossibility of the antecedent.

If the Physical Body was in a State of Rest in Eternity, then it would be Impossible for this State of Rest to Finish for it:

In order to prove this matter we can present the following proof:

1. The state of rest is either a necessary being or a possible being.



2. In the case it is a necessary being it is obvious that it would be impossible for it to finish. This is because a necessary being is eternal and everlasting.
3. If we say that the state of rest is a possible being, then its cause is either one that acts by means of choice or it is compelled in its actions.
4. The first option is impossible since the agent that acts by means of choice always directs its choice towards the thing that does not previously exist. Thus, everything that is created by means of an agent that acts by choice must be created. However, under the assumption the state of rest exists in eternity. Thus, we cannot say that the state of rest has been created by means of an agent that acts by choice.
5. However, we also cannot say that the agent of this rest is one that is compelled to act. The reason for this is that this agent is either a possible being or a necessary one.
6. If we say that it is a necessary being, then it will lead to an infinite regress of causes – which is clearly impossible.
7. Thus, its cause must be a necessary being. In this case, either its agency depends upon a condition or it does not.
8. In the case where its agency does not depend upon a condition, its necessity will lead to the necessity of its effect. Thus, it will be impossible for rest to terminate.
9. In the case where its agency depends upon a condition we must ask what the cause of such a condition is. Based upon the abovementioned proof, it will be necessary for its cause to be compelled in its agency and to be a necessary being.
10. Therefore, the total cause of rest will be a necessary being since its agent and the condition of its agency both will be necessary beings.
11. In this case, the effect, i.e. rest, will not be able to finish since its cause is necessary (ibid: 23).

Now that the minor premise of the abovementioned argument has been established, we can turn to the second premise, i.e. the idea that it is not impossible for the state of rest to finish for the physical body. Rather, it is possible for the state of rest to finish for the physical body.

It is not Impossible for the State of Rest to Finish for the Physical Body:  
It is possible for us to prove this premise in the following manner:

1. Everything that occupies space, such as the physical body under question, is capable of exiting the space that it is occupying.
2. Everything that exits the space that it is occupying will terminate the state of rest it was in.

Conclusion: Everything that occupies space – such as the physical body we are discussing – is capable of exiting the state of rest it was in.

In order for this argument to be definitely established we to prove the first premise of this argument. This can be accomplished in two manners:

#### The First Proof:

A physical body that occupies space is either simple or composite. However, even if we say that the physical body under question is composite, it will necessarily be composed of simple parts. Otherwise, it would lead to an infinite regress of parts which is impossible. Now that this has been established, let us turn our attention to one of the simple parts. If we can prove that it is possible for them to exit the space that they were occupying, the same possibility will automatically be proven for the whole that is composed of them. The simple part necessarily has dimension and two sides. The nature of these two sides must be the same. Otherwise, the part would not be simple. This goes against the assumption. Now, each one of those sides occupies a space that the other does not. In other words, each one of them faces a direction that the other does not. Now, if there are two things that share the same nature, then everything that is possible for one of them will also be possible for the other. Thus, it is possible for each of the sides to face the direction that the other one faces. However, this is not possible unless it moves. Thus, this part is capable of moving. When it moves it exists the space that it was occupying. When it does so, the state of rest that it had will terminate (ibid: 23).

#### The Second Proof:

While the previous proof was a demonstration, this one is rhetorical in nature. Philosophers are our opponents in this matter. According to them, physical bodies are either celestial in nature or they are elemental. According to philosophers, the celestial spheres are always in a state of motion. Rather, they *must* be in a state of motion. Also, each one of the parts of the elemental bodies can move according to them. Thus, all types of physical bodies can move (ibid: 24).

This brings the first argument for the creation of the physical world to a close. In brief, this proof ran as follows: 1. If a physical body was eternal, then in eternity, it would either be in a state of movement or in a state of rest. 2. However, it is impossible for it to be in a state of movement or rest in eternity. Conclusion: Thus, it is impossible for a physical body to be eternal.

Now that this proof has been established we can now turn to some of the objections that have been leveled against it.

### ***Objections to the Proof for the Creation of the Physical World:***

#### *The First Objection:*

This objection rests upon the denial of the first premise of the argument mentioned above, i.e. the idea that if a physical body existed in eternity, then it would either be in a state of movement or rest. The objection rejects the proof mentioned for this matter. That proof was the following: Every physical body must occupy a space. If it stays in that space, it is in a state of rest, otherwise it will be in a state of movement. The person making this objection asks what the meaning of 'space' or 'place' is. There are two possible choices here. Either space is something non-existent or it is something existent. In the first case, it would mean that when we say that a physical body occupies a space it would mean that it exists within non-existence. This is clearly impossible. However, if we say that space is something existent in nature, then it is either capable of being pointed to or not. It is impossible for us to say that it is existent, but cannot be pointed to. Otherwise, it would be impossible for the body to occur in it. This is because every physical body can be pointed to. Thus, if the body occurred within this space it would both be capable of being pointed to and incapable of being pointed to. This is a contradiction. However, if we say that it is capable of being pointed to, then it is either so independently or by means of something else. If we say that it is capable of being pointed to independently, then this is nothing but the physical body. In this case, when we say that a physical body is in a space it would mean that it is in a physical body. However, this occurrence either implies that the physical body inheres in space or it means it touches space. In the first case it would imply that when a physical body occupies space it means that it inheres in another physical body. However, this is impossible. If we say that being in space means that it touches space then it would mean that every physical body is touched by another physical body that encompasses it. However, this would entail an unlimited number of physical bodies each of which touches the other. This is impossible due to the impossibility of an infinite linear dimension. If we say that space is capable of being pointed to but by means of something else, then in this case 'space' would be nothing but an accident. However, this is also impossible for two reasons: First of all, every accident exist within the physical body. Thus, if we say that the physical body exists in space it would lead to a vicious circle, i.e. the space existing within the physical body and vice versa. Secondly, we know that physical bodies move from space to space. Thus, if we say that space is an

accident it would imply that they move from one accident to another. This is impossible since accidents are not transferable from one body to another, and they cannot exist without a body. Thus, the idea that a physical body occupies space and exists in place is meaningless and incorrect. Therefore, the division that was mentioned after it – i.e. the idea that the physical body either remains in that place (rest) or moves away from it (movement) – will be even more deserving of being incorrect (Fakhr al-Razi 2009: 24–25).

### An Objection to the First Objection:

In this objection, an attempt is made to define ‘space’ and in this way, to remove the objection just mentioned. ‘Space’ has been interpreted in two manners (Fakhr al-Razi 1999: V/65).

#### 1. The First Meaning of Space:

This is the meaning that the majority of theologians have agreed upon. It is not existent. Rather, it is something that the mind assumes and the intellect takes into consideration. Then, it affirms that the physical body exists in it. Based upon this interpretation of ‘space’, it would be something abstract.

#### 2. The Second Meaning of Space:

This is an interpretation which ancient philosophers mentioned. They say that ‘space’ is dimension or length, breadth and depth. However, this dimension is immaterial and does not exist in matter. The physical body however, is length, breadth and depth that exist in matter. So, when we say that a physical body exists in ‘space’ it implies that the body enters that immaterial dimension that is called ‘space’.

Philosophers have presented three proofs that this is the proper meaning of space and that this space exists:

#### *The First Proof:*

Between the sides of a vessel that is filled with water there is no doubt a dimension. At the moment when the water exists this vessel and before air enters it there must also be a dimension there. Otherwise, how would something that possesses a dimension (i.e. the physical body) enter it? This dimension is empty of the physical body in the moment between the time the water exists the vessel and the air enters it. At the same time, it lacks matter. The reason for this is that if it possessed matter it would also possess

a physical form – as the two are necessary for one another. However, under the assumption this dimension lacks all physical bodies. So, this immaterial dimension is such that physical bodies enter and exit it. This is the property of space. Thus, space is an immaterial dimension.

*The Second Proof:*

This proof is negative whereas the first proof was positive in nature. Meaning, the first proof attempted to prove that space was an immaterial dimension. However, this proof makes an attempt to disprove another view that opposes this one. This view is that of those who say that space is the two dimensional plane that touches the outside of a body. Based upon this interpretation, space is the inner plane of the body that encompasses the outer plane of the body that is encompassed.

This proof goes as follows: Imagine that a rock is suspended in a flowing river. There is no doubt about the fact that the rock remains in one place and is not moving. However, if we say that space “is the inner plane of the body that encompasses that the outer plane of the body that is encompassed”, then this would be incorrect as the plane that is touching the rock is constantly changing. Thus, we cannot say that this is the meaning of space. Rather, we have no choice but to say that space is the immaterial three dimensions that the rock fills – as this is what remains stable throughout the movement of the water (Mulla Sadra 1950: IV/43).

*The Third Proof:*

There is no doubting in the fact that between the walls of a vessel there is a specific dimension. The question is whether there is matter and the physical form there as well or not? If we say that there is a physical form there, then it would be impossible for another body to enter the vessel. Otherwise, it would mean that two physical bodies entered one another. This is something impossible. Thus, if we say that the dimension that is ‘space’ is something that possesses matter it would mean that movement would be impossible for bodies. However, we clearly see that movement is not impossible for them. Thus, this dimension must not possess matter. Thus, it must be an immaterial dimension.

*An Answer to This Objection:*

In the original objection, the person making the objection called into question the meaning of ‘space’ and said that such a concept is meaningless.

In response to this, two meanings were mentioned for 'space' the second of which was substantiated with three proofs. Now the original critic wants to reject these meanings for space so that his primary objection may once again come to life.

*The Rejection to the First Interpretation:*

In this objection, we ask what exactly the meaning of 'space' is. According to the first interpretation, space is not something existent. Rather, it is something abstract that the mind takes into consideration. If this was true, then it would be impossible to say that the physical body – that actually exists – exists within space. Otherwise, it would mean that existence existed in non-existence. This is clearly absurd. However, if you say that space is something that actually exists, then the division that we mentioned in our proof can be mentioned. In other words, it is either capable of being pointed to or not. It is impossible for us to say that it is existent but cannot be pointed to. Otherwise, it would be impossible for the body to occur in it. This is because every physical body can be pointed to. Thus, if the body occurred within this space it would both be capable of being pointed to and incapable of being pointed to. This is a contradiction. However, if we say that it is capable of being pointed to, then it is either so independently or by means of something else. If we say that it is capable of being pointed to independently, then this is nothing but the physical body. In this case, when we say that a physical body is in a space it would mean that it is in a physical body. However, this occurrence either implies that the physical body inheres in space or it means it touches space. In the first case it would imply that when a physical body occupies space it means that it inheres in another physical body. However, this is impossible. If we say that being in space means that it touches space, then it would mean that every physical body is touched by another physical body that encompasses it. However, this would entail an unlimited number of physical bodies each of which touches the other. This is impossible due to the impossibility of an infinite linear dimension. If we say that space is capable of being pointed to but by means of something else, then in this case 'space' would be nothing but an accident. However, this is also impossible for two reasons: First of all, every accident exist within the physical body. Thus, if we say that the physical body exists in space it would lead to a vicious circle, i.e. the space existing within the physical body and vice versa. Secondly, we know that physical bodies move from space to space. Thus, if we say that space is an accident it would imply that they move from one accident to another. This is impossible since accidents are not transferable from one body to another nor can they exist without a body. Thus, the idea that a physical body occupies space and exists in place is meaningless

and incorrect. Therefore, the division that was mentioned after it – i.e. the idea that the physical body either remains in that place (rest) or moves away from it (movement) – will be even more deserving of being incorrect.

*The Rejection of the Second Interpretation:*

There are three ways in which one can object to the second interpretation of space, i.e. the idea that space is an immaterial dimension.

The First Objection:

In this objection, we ask whether movement is something possible for dimension or not? If we say that movement is something possible for the nature of dimension, then ‘space’ – being a dimension – should be capable of moving. However, this is impossible since movement is from space to space. So, if movement was possible for space then space would have to have a space from which to go and a space to go to. This would lead to an infinite number of spaces. This is impossible. However, if we say that movement is not something that dimension is capable of performing, then the dimension that exists in the physical body would also be incapable of moving. However, this is clearly wrong. Thus, we cannot say that space is an immaterial dimension.

Objection to the First Objection:

It is possible that someone may make an objection here: Why cannot we say that movement is something possible for dimension? However, this possibility is conditioned with the fact that dimension exists in matter. In this way, space will not be capable of moving and it will not lead to an infinite regress of spaces and the dimension of the physical body will be capable of moving since it exists within matter.

Answer:

We can answer this objection by asking the following question: Does matter essentially possess dimension or not? If we say that matter essentially possess dimension then it would be meaningless to say that it accepts the dimensions of the physical form. This is because one can only accept what one does not have. However, under the assumption, matter already essentially possesses a dimension. If we say that matter lacks dimension, then it would be impossible for matter to move. Now, if it were impossible for matter to move then how could it be the condition by means of which the physical form became capable

of moving. Thus, we have no option but to say that possessing a dimension is enough for the capability of movement. However, under the assumption, space is a dimension. Thus, it should also be capable of moving from space to space. Thus, an infinite regress of space would arise. Thus, we cannot say that space is an immaterial dimension (Fakhr al-Razi 2009: 26–27).

#### The Second Objection:

According to the second interpretation, space is an immaterial dimension. In this objection we ask the following question: Essentially, does dimension need matter or not? If we say that a dimension does not need matter, then it would be impossible for the physical form to inhere in matter. This is because anything that inheres in something else needs that which it inheres in. However, under the assumption dimension does not need matter. Thus, it would end up needing it and not needing it at the same time. This is clearly a contradiction. However, if we say that dimension needs matter, then it would be impossible for space to be an immaterial dimension. How could it need matter and exist without it (ibid: 27)?

#### The Third Objection:

This objection comes to us in the form of an exceptive syllogism: If space was an immaterial dimension, then it would entail that two dimensions united with one another. This is because the thing that occupies space also possesses dimension. However, this is impossible for two reasons: The first reason is that it leads to the unification of two similar things. Secondly, if we assume that the space between the walls of a vessel is equal to one cubic meter, when we fill it with water there should be two cubic meters there. One is the cubic meter of the space and the other is the cubic meter of the water. At the same time, we know that between the walls of the vessel there is not more than one cubic meter. Thus, it would mean that one cubic meter is equal to two cubic meters. This is clearly impossible.

From all of what has been mentioned up to now it has been firmly established that it is impossible for space to be dimension or for it to be an abstract concept that does not exist in the external world. This brings to a close the first objection to the proof for the creation of the physical world (ibid).

#### *Razi's Response to the First Objection*

In this objection, the idea that every physical body must have a space was called into question. Various meanings for 'space' or 'place' were men-



tioned and then they were denied. In response to this query Razi does not try to affirm the necessity of space for physical bodies. Rather, he says that every person knows that every physical body can be sensibly pointed to by saying that it is ‘here’ or ‘there.’ This is something that no one can deny. It is not necessary for us to use the concept of ‘space’ in this argument. In other words, we can reword the argument and use the concept just mentioned. If we say that the physical body remains ‘there’ or ‘here’ then it will be in a state of rest. Otherwise, it will be in a state of movement. Thus, we have proven that a body is either in a state of rest or a state of movement and that there is no third option. In essence, this is what the first objection was trying to deny when it called into question the idea that every physical body must have a ‘space’ in which it exists (ibid: 31).

### ***The Second Objection to the Proof for the Creation of the Physical World:***

Our original proof revolved around the idea that a physical body must either be in a state of movement or a state of rest. Thus, if a physical body existed in eternity it would have to be in one of these states. Then we said that both of these states are impossible for the physical body in eternity. Thus, it could not exist in eternity. As you can see, one of the important premises of this argument is that it is impossible for a physical body to be neither in a state of rest or movement; rather, it must be in one of these states. In the second objection, this idea is called into question.

First of all, we must ask what the meaning of ‘movement’ and ‘rest’ are. Movement implies that a body is in a space after having previously been in another space. Rest implies that a body is a space after having been previously in the same space. Based upon these definitions, we can conclude that movement and rest only occur for a body when it previously existed. In other words, these two qualities are conditioned by the fact that the body previously existed. Therefore, in the first instance of its creation, the physical body is neither in a state of rest nor a state of movement. This is because it did not exist prior to that moment.

Under the assumption, the physical body exists in eternity. We cannot say that prior to eternity there was a moment when the body existed. Otherwise, that would not be eternity. Eternity is clearly that prior to which there is nothing. Thus, we cannot say that the body is in a state of rest or movement in eternity. In other words, these two concepts are inapplicable to it in eternity. Thus, one of the major premises of the first argument is invalidated (ibid: 20).

### ***Razi's Response to the Second Objection***

Razi agrees with the idea that in the beginning of its existence, the physical body is neither in a state of rest nor a state of movement. Nevertheless, our discussion is regarding the physical body that - under the assumption - exists in eternity. There could be no beginning for such a body. Otherwise, it would not exist in eternity. This is because eternity is that before which there is nothing. Thus, our discussion is regarding the physical body that is in a state of subsistence and there is no doubting in the fact that such a body is either in a state of movement or rest (ibid: 31).

### ***The Third Objection to the Proof for the Creation of the Physical World:***

In our proof for the creation of the physical world, we mentioned that it is impossible for the physical body to be in a state of movement in eternity. In fact, we mentioned six proofs to corroborate this claim. This third objection wants to call this impossibility into question. In order to do this we will present one proof that will prove that it is possible for the physical body to be in a state of movement in eternity. This proof is the following: We must ask the following question: Is the existence of movement and the creation of movement essentially impossible for the physical body or not? If we say that movement is something that is essentially impossible for the physical body, then this would mean that all physical bodies would be essentially incapable of moving. This is clearly contradicted by the movement of the physical bodies around us. It is clear that essential qualities do not vary. However, if we say that it is not essentially impossible for the physical body to be in a state of movement, then it is either accidentally impossible for it to be so or it is not. If we say that it is accidentally impossible for the physical body to be in a state of movement in eternity, then this implies that there is something that hinders it from moving in eternity. If this hindrance is something essentially necessary then it would mean that it always exists and this would lead to the impossibility of movement for all physical bodies. However, this is contradicted by the movement of the bodies that we see around us. If we say that this hindrance is something that is essentially possible and only accidentally necessary, then it would need a cause and it would lead to an infinite regress of causes. This is impossible. However, if we say that movement is neither essentially impossible for the physical body in eternity nor is it accidentally impossible for it then one of the basic premises of the first argument would be invalidated - as would the six proofs that attempted to prove this impossibility.

*Objection:*

It is possible that someone may make an objection to this objection by saying the following: The thing that makes movement impossible for the physical body in eternity is ‘eternity’ itself. This is because movement is preceded by something else. This is because movement is being in a place after having previously been in another place. However, eternity is essentially not preceded by anything. Otherwise, it would not be eternity; rather, that which it is preceded by would be eternity. This goes against the assumption. Thus, it is impossible for a physical body to be in a state of movement in eternity since movement cannot exist in eternity.

*Answer:*

In order to answer this objection, it is necessary for us to inquire into the nature of eternity. In the abovementioned objection it has been stated that eternity is what prevents the physical body to be in a state of motion. The question arises: Is eternity an essentially necessary being or not? If we say that it is an essentially necessary being, then it would mean that it would never cease to exist. In this case, it would always prevent movement from coming into existence in the physical body. However, we see that physical bodies are in a state of movement. Thus, we cannot say that eternity is an essentially necessary being and that it prevents physical bodies from moving. If we say that it is not an essentially necessary being then it would mean that its existence depends upon something else. We could then ask the same thing regarding its cause, i.e. is it an essentially necessary being or not? In any case, we cannot say that the chain of causes and effects goes on forever. Thus, it has to terminate at an essentially necessary being. Since it is impossible for the essentially necessary being to terminate its effects, one of which is eternity, would also never terminate. Thus, the impossibility of movement for physical bodies would also never terminate. However, this is not true as we see that physical bodies are in a state of movement. From this we come to the conclusion that eternity is not something that hinders movement. Thus, it is possible for a physical body to exist in eternity but be in a state of movement. So, the argument for the impossibility of the eternity of physical bodies would lose one of its premises and be invalidated.

***Razi’s Response to the Third Objection***

In this objection, an attempt was made to show that in movement is possible for the physical body in eternity. Razi says that there are two matters

that must not be confused with each another. Movement is possible with the condition that it is preceded by its own non-existence. There is no beginning for this possibility. In other words, in every instance that we take into consideration in the past it will be possible for this movement to exist. In other words, in eternity we could say the following: 'Movement is possible here, in eternity, if it was preceded by its non-existence.' However, this does not imply that movement is actually possible in eternity. This is because the condition of its possibility is not present in eternity. In essence, Razi wants to agree with the fact that movement is essentially possible and at the same time to deny it in eternity. The way he does this is by conditioning it with a clause that is impossible in eternity (ibid).

***The Fourth Objection to  
the Proof for the Creation of the Physical World:***

Even if we assume that movement is impossible for physical bodies in eternity we do not accept the fact that it is impossible for them to be in a state of rest in eternity. In the proof for the creation of the physical world this impossibility was proven by stating that stability is something positive in nature and those things that are positive in nature and eternal must continue to exist forever. Thus, if we say that physical bodies are in a state of rest in eternity then it would mean that they would remain so forever. However, this contradicts what we see around us now, i.e. the fact that some bodies are in a state of movement. In response to this proof we must say that rest is not something positive or existent in nature. Since it is not something positive in nature, rather it is something negative, it is possible for us to say that it existed in eternity but ceased to exist later on. This is because – as we mentioned previously – the person attempting to prove the creation of the world agrees with the fact that something that is negative in nature and is eternal can cease to exist – such as the non-existence of the physical world – which is for him eternal. Thus, we if can show that rest is negative in nature it would be possible to say that physical bodies are eternally in a state of rest and then exit this state later on and come into a state of movement. Thus, the argument for the creation of the world would lose one of its basic premises.

Previously, an attempt was made to prove that rest is something positive in nature.

The person making this objection says that the fact that one condition is replaced by another does not necessitate that one of these states is positive or existent in nature and there are a number of reasons why this is so:

*The First Instance:*

According to the person who believes in the creation of the world, it is impossible for physical bodies to exist in eternity. Then, later on it becomes possible for them to exist. Thus, the impossibility of their existence turns into the possibility of existence. This is while both impossibility and possibility are negative in nature. Possibility is the negation of the necessity of existence and the necessity of non-existence. And, impossibility cannot be positive or existent. Otherwise, it would mean that its subject of attribution, i.e. the impossible thing, does not exist while its attribute, i.e. impossibility does not. It would thus imply that an attribute is higher than its subject of attribution. This is clearly wrong. Thus, we have an instance where one state turns into another even though none of them are positive or existent in nature (ibid: 20).

*The Second Instance:*

In this second instance we also see that one state is changed into another state even though none of them are positive or existent in nature. Rather, both of them are negative and non-existent in nature. This instance can be explained in the following manner. According to the proponents of this argument, the physical world is created in time. Thus, there was a time that it did not exist and then it came into existence. Before it came into existence, we cannot say that God knew that it existed. Otherwise, it would imply that God thought that it existed whereas it did not. This would imply that God was ignorant of the fact that it did not exist. Following its creation, God must know that it exists. Thus, before it came into existence God did not have knowledge of its existence and then He came to acquire this knowledge. However, we cannot say that one of these states is positive in nature. Otherwise, it would imply that a change has occurred in God's essence. This is impossible according to the philosophers (Allamah Hilli 2005: 21).

*The Third Instance:*

Let us take a physical body into consideration. Let us say that this physical body was cold and then it became hot. Before it became hot, the physical body was not the locus of heat. However, once it became hot it became the locus of this heat. So, a change has occurred in the body in that before it was not the locus of heat and then it became the locus of heat. However, we cannot say that one of these qualities is existent or positive in nature. Otherwise, it would mean that in addition to heat it also has another attribute, i.e. that it is the locus of. This in turn would be a third attribute – for which it has to be a locus - and this would go on forever. This is clearly impossible (Fakhr al-Razi 2009: 20).

*Objection:*

In the context of this third case, it is possible that someone may make the following objection: We do not accept the idea that this would lead to an infinite regress of qualities for the aforementioned body. The reason for this is that when we say that this body is *the locus* for the heat then it means nothing but the fact that the heat *exists* in the body. Thus, the body's *being a locus for the heat* and the heat's *existing in it* are the same. Thus, even if we assume that this quality of being a locus for the heat is something positive it would not lead to an infinite regress. Thus, it is not problematic for one to say that one of these conditions is positive in nature.

*Answer:*

In this answer, a difference is made between the existence of the accident – in this case, the heat of the body – and the idea that the body is the locus of the accident. There is a difference between the existence of something *in itself* and the existence of that thing *for something else*. These are two distinct things. Thus, in addition to the heat there would also have to be another accident in the body – assuming that it is positive in nature. Thus, the infinite regress would return. The reason why this differentiation is true is that it is possible to know the accident but doubt in its existence for the body. It is clear that if the existence of the accident in and of itself was the same thing as its existence for the body it would imply that one thing is both known and unknown. This is clearly a contradiction.

***Razi's Response to the Third Objection***

In response to this objection, Razi presents a proof to corroborate the claim that at least one of the states is positive and existent in nature: If one of the two aforementioned states is positive in nature then this is what we were attempting to prove. Otherwise, if it were non-existent and negative in nature, then the other state would be positive and existent in nature. This is because the other state negates the first one. And, that which negates something non-existent and negative would have to be existent and positive in nature. Thus, the other state would have to be existent and positive in nature.

Regarding the three instances mentioned in which neither of the two states are positive Razi says that they are objections to something that is self-evident and thus they must be rejected (ibid: 31).

***The Fourth Objection to  
the Proof for the Creation of the Physical World:***

This objection is also an objection to the proof for the idea that rest is something positive in nature. Even if we assume that a change in qualities – such as a change from rest to movement – would necessitate that one of them is positive in nature we do not agree with the fact that in this case both of them would be positive and existent in nature.

The person making this objection does not agree with the idea that movement is being in a place after having previously been in another place. He presents two proofs for this idea:

*The 1<sup>st</sup> Proof:*

When the body attains the second place its movement terminates. Now, the termination and end of something cannot be the thing itself. So, the attainment of this second place or the existence of the body in the second place cannot be movement.

*The 2<sup>nd</sup> Proof:*

Rather, movement is the act of going from the first place to the second place. And, this act precedes its being in the second place. Thus, it cannot be the same thing as being in the second place.

Thus, we cannot say that movement is being in a second place after having previously been in a first place. However, rest is being in a place after having previously been in that very place. Thus, movement and rest are not of the same nature. Thus, even if we say that one of them is existent and positive in nature it does not imply that the other one is also so.

***Razi's Response to the Fourth Objection***

Razi makes an attempt to show why movement is in fact the existence of the physical body in the second place after it had previously existed in the first place. He says that the existence of the physical body in the first place terminates in an instant and then it continues in time. So, there are two periods of time between which there is an instant. Does the physical body exist in the second place in that instant or not? If we say that it does not then it would imply that a body could be devoid of place. This is impossible. Thus, there is no moment in which the body does not exist in either of the two places. Thus, it is erroneous to say that movement is the moment between

the existence of the body in the first and second place – as the person making the objection has assumed.

***The Fifth Objection to  
the Proof for the Creation of the Physical World:***

Even if we assume that rest is something existent or positive in nature we do not agree with the fact that something that is existent or positive in nature cannot cease to exist if we say that it is eternal. Rather, it is possible for something to be eternal and still cease to exist – if it is positive and existent in nature. Thus, if a physical body existed in eternity and was in a state of rest it would be possible for it to forgo this state of rest and come into a state of movement. The argument for the creation of the world is mentioned earlier.

In response to this argument, the person making this objection says the following: From one point of view, the people who agree with the creation of the world agree with the idea that the eternal non-existence of the world ceases to exist when the world comes into being. From another point of view, they say that it is possible for the effectiveness of a cause to depend upon a negative, non-existent and eternal condition. Now that this has been established it is possible to raise the following objection: Why is it not possible to say that the Necessary Being is the cause of the rest of the physical being that exists in eternity. However, His effectiveness in creating that rest depends upon some negative, non-existent and eternal condition. Then, this condition ceases to exist. In this way, the Necessary Being would no longer be able to create the rest of the body. Thus, the state of rest would cease to exist. Thus, it would be possible for the state of rest to be something positive and eternal and for it to still cease to exist (ibid: 30).

***Razi's Response to the Fifth Objection***

Razi says that it is impossible for the effectiveness of a cause to depend upon a non-existent condition. This is because in this case it would imply that something that does not exist has granted existence to something, i.e. the effectiveness of this cause. This is clearly impossible.

***The Sixth Objection to  
the Proof for the Creation of the Physical World:***

In this objection, a number of things that are eternal and positive in nature are mentioned that have ceased to exist. If this cessation of their existence is possible, then it would equally be possible for the state of rest to



be a quality of the eternal bodies and for them to forgo this rest later on. In this way, the proof for the impossibility of the eternity of the physical world would be negated. Those instances are the following:

*The 1<sup>st</sup> Instance:*

In eternity, God had knowledge of the fact that the world would be created later on. Then, when the world came into existence this knowledge could not remain. Otherwise, it would be wrong to say that once the world came into existence God thought that it would come into existence. Thus, we have a case where something eternal and positive ceases to exist. Thus, rest can also be of the same nature.

*The 2<sup>nd</sup> Instance:*

In eternity, God was attributed with the possibility of initiating the creation of the world later on. Then, when He created the world, it would be impossible for Him to be attributed with this possibility. Otherwise, it would imply that it would be possible for God to initiate something that had already been initiated. This is impossible as it would imply that He would be granting existence to something that already has existence. So, this possibility is something that existed eternally and was positive in nature but ceased to exist. So, what is the problem for rest to also be of the same nature?

*The 3<sup>rd</sup> Instance:*

In this third case, we take the abrogation of laws into consideration. Abrogation is the removal of a law after it once existed. This law that is abrogated was either eternal or created in time. However, it is impossible for us to say that the law was created in time. Thus, we have to say that it was eternal. The reason why it is impossible for us to say that it was created in time is that it would mean that God would come to learn this law at that point in time when it is created. This would imply that God is subject to change - which is impossible. So, there is no option but for us to say that the aforementioned law was eternal but was later removed. Thus, it is possible for something eternal and existent in nature to cease to exist.

***Razi's Response to the Sixth Objection***

Razi says that in all of these cases the thing that apparently existed did not really exist. This is because all of these things are relations (*al-idhafat wa*

*al-nisab*). Such things lack any type of real existence in the external world (Allamah Hilli 2006: 365).

***The Seventh Objection to  
the Proof for the creation of the Physical World:***

If the esteemed reader remembers, the argument for the idea that a physical body cannot be in a state of rest in eternity came in the form of an exceptive syllogism. It stated: If a physical body was eternally in a state of rest then this rest would not be able to cease. However, it is possible for it to cease. Thus, it cannot be in a state of rest in eternity. In the previous objections we were calling into question the necessary connection between the precedent and the antecedent of the minor premise of this argument. However, in this objection, we are calling into question the impossibility of the antecedent. In other words, we are rejecting the major premise of the argument. In order for this argument to be sound it is necessary for it to be universal in nature. In other words, we must unequivocally state that it is possible for every instance of rest can cease to exist. In this objection, we are calling this universality into question. The reason for this is that it is possible for some bodies to be in certain places and for it to be impossible for them to exit those places. This is a possibility that has not been negated in the argument. In other words, this objection is asking the proponents of the creation of the world to present a proof for the major premise of the aforementioned argument.

Actually, these theologians did present a proof for this matter. That proof hinged around the idea that every physical body is composed of sides. Those sides are equal in terms of their quiddities. Since they are equal in these terms what is possible for one of them would also be possible for the other. Thus, if one of those sides is touching something it would also be possible for the other side to as well. However, this is not possible unless the body moves. Thus, movement would be possible for the body. In this way, the person proved the idea that every physical body is capable of movement.

In response to this proof the following objection may be leveled: If it were true that every physical body was capable of being divided into sides then it would mean that every physical body would be capable of being divided infinitely. This is impossible based upon the idea of the indivisible part that the theologians themselves adhere to. So, the belief in the truth of the indivisible part clearly would negate this proof for the creation of the world. In other words, one of the beliefs of the theologians is contradicting another one here (Fakhr al-Razi 2009: 31).

### ***Razi's Response to the Seventh Objection***

Razi says that this is – in essence – an objection to something that is self-evident. Everyone knows that everything that occupies space has two sides each of which faces a different direction. Thus, it is necessary to reject such an objection (ibid: 32).

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