

What Is The Purpose Of Creating The Heavens And The Earth ?In Six Days

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Question: The Almighty Allah says in Qur'an: He is your Lord, who created the heavens and the earth in six days.[1]

Here what is meant by six days, when at that time day and night did not exist? And besides why Allah did not create them in one stroke?

Answer: This question is based on two parts. First that, what is meant by six days, whereas in the earlier age there were no day and night.

The reply is this that basically the word 'Yawma', synonymous in English to 'a day', which is having special meaning according to the place and situation at different times. Generally this word is used in the sense as a day, which is a proof of night. And in the Holy Qur'an also mostly it is used in the same meaning, but sometimes it comes in the meaning of a period, then on every period the word 'Yawma' is applied. For example, an aged person says: One day I was a child - one day I was a young man also - but for today I have become old. Although these three periods are connected (linked) with each other like the links of a chain that is why he interprets those three different periods of his life with the word 'day'.

Imam Ali (a.s.) says, Age is not more than two days. One day it gives you benefit and the next day it is piercing loss on you.

It means that there are two periods in the life of man. One day he is on the highest point of his luck and the next day he is trapped in troubles and problems.

As per the statement of Bahadur Shah Zafar: "We brought four days, by asking increase in life. Two were spent in desires, two went in expectations."

Without any doubt, by 'day' Zafar also meant 'period' only.

From whatever is stated above six days in which the earth and the heavens were created are six periods. The earth and the heavens before coming to the present states have passed through these six ages. Meaning the present mode of earth and the heavenly bodies is as the result of these continuous changes, which transpired on them, and in the end after passing through all those changes they have acquired the present form. Now it is possible that the duration of one period might have been 10 million years or 10 billion years.

The second part of the question is that why Allah did not create them all at one time and why their creation happened gradually?

The reply is that the world in which we live is a material world. And counting of gradual evolution of material existing things is done in inseparable narratives and material things by nature change from one shape to another with passing of time and in this way pass through different stages. As a result it becomes a perfect phenomenon and the earth and the heavens are not exempted from this law.

You see any materially existing thing; you will find that all of it is going up by the ladder of gradual evolution. Grass and plants after some time, take the shape of flowery bush or fruit bearing tree. As time passes mines and fountains hidden under the earth after a long chain of actions and reactions turn into material mines. Animals and humans until they do not finish a certain period in the womb cannot live their life in this vast world. This law is applicable everywhere and to every material thing of this world

What Is Meant By 'Seven Heavens'?

Question: What is the purpose of the Qur'an in pointing towards 'seven heavens'?

Answer: Islamic scholars and commentators have narrated some clarifications regarding 'seven heavens' (towards which indication are made in the Holy Qur'an also).

1. Here by seven is meant to be multiplication (to be more). It means that He has created many heavens, i.e. He has created a number of times. And mostly it so happens that, in Arabic, Persian, Urdu or other languages, the mention of numbers is done in the sense of plenty. It means that a number is mentioned but no definite quantity is meant. The purpose of saying is to convey plenty.

For example, generally we say in Urdu that, I said this to you fifty times, or I have demanded from him ten times. However, it is not necessary that, the act should have been done for exactly fifty or ten times. But it is meant that I have said this many times or I have demanded that thing a number of times. The Holy Qur'an says about the word of Allah and the things known to Allah in this way: "And were every tree that is in the earth (made into) pens and the sea (to supply it with ink), with seven more seas to increase it, the words of Allah would not come to an end..."[2]

It is obvious, here seven indicates excess, otherwise as we know, if there is an addition of ten or hundred oceans also, then too the unfathomed knowledge of Allah cannot be written, because Allah is by all means beyond words.

In the same way many other numbers 'sabeen' 'seventy', etc. also, are used in the sense of excess in the Holy Qur'an or other words (either in speech or writing) in Arabic and other languages. And the meaning of those numbers is not some definite number, but it is intended

to point towards the excess of something.

2. By seven heavens it was meant to be those planets, which were known to the people of that period or they are those planets, which the general public of the present age can see with naked eyes.

3. By seven heavens are meant the multiple layers of different airs and gases that encircle the earth.

4. Still, according to the views of some great intellectuals, those small stars, galaxies and Milky Way, which are seen, all are part of the first heaven and beyond that six still bigger worlds are there. And by seven heavens the Holy Qur'an means all those seven worlds, which exist in the Universe.

May be man's present age of scientific knowledge and wisdom has raised the curtain from only one of it, still it is quite possible that in future, as a result of gaining more knowledge, on the back of present perceptible world six great worlds are discovered. Favoring this view we present the following verse as proof.

"We have adorned the nearest heaven with an adornment, the stars,"[3]

With this verse it is known that, all the stars are in the first heaven. (It should be remembered that in Arabic the word 'Duniya' means 'lower' and near.)

However, it seems necessary to mention that verses and traditions in which the number of heavens are said to be seven are not a corroboration of the theory of Ptolemaic astronomy in which he has presented the heavens as the layers of peels of onion like shape of heavenly spheres. (Because according to Ptolemaic theory the number of heavenly spheres and heavens are nine).

As long as seven earths are concerned (the mention of which is there in the Holy Qur'an is an indication and in some traditions, is given with specific mention). About them thoughts similar to the aforesaid are expressed.

For example, that the number seven is in the sense of many or that by seven earths it is meant seven planets. (Mercury, Venus, Saturn, Earth, Mars, Jupiter and moon). That is the same number in solar system, which we can see (no doubt, in solar system, there are other bodies and moon is also there but they cannot be seen with our naked eyes). And based on this explanation, by seven heavens is meant to be the same atmosphere, which exists on each of those seven heavenly bodies.

In other words, these seven bodies are counted as earth; the atmosphere surrounding them is their heaven. It should be remembered that in Arabic dictionary 'Samaa' is means all such things, which are placed towards the upper portion.

This was the summary of those different interpretations, which our scholars and writers of exegeses have presented about seven heavens and earths. Especially the last Tafseer, which seems to be more acceptable compared to all others and the narrations of those exegeses is in need of further explanation

Notes:

[1] Surah Aaraf 7:54

[2] Surah Luqman 31:27

:[3] Surah Saffaat 37