

Atheism in Contemporary Arab Societies: Motives, Effects, and Remedial Approaches — An Analytical Study in Light of the Qur'an

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Abstract

Atheism is not a recent phenomenon; its roots can be traced back to Iblīs's refusal to comply with Allah's command to prostrate to Adam (peace be upon him) [Al-Baqarah: 34], an event that represents an early deviation from the innate human disposition (*fitrah*), which necessitates divine guidance and belief in Allah. In contemporary Arab societies, atheism has emerged in diverse forms as a result of various intellectual, cultural, and social factors, and has often been exploited by opponents of Islam to undermine the moral and value system grounded in divine law. This study examines the phenomenon of atheism in the contemporary Arab context from a Qur'anic perspective by analysing its causes and effects, and by deriving a comprehensive Qur'anic framework for addressing and countering its influence. Adopting an inductive and descriptive-analytical methodology, the research analyses relevant Qur'anic texts alongside modern manifestations of atheistic thought. The study aims to offer a balanced, objective, and realistic scholarly perspective that can assist educators, researchers, and mentors in raising awareness among youth, strengthening intellectual resilience, and formulating practical recommendations grounded in Qur'anic guidance.

Keywords: *Atheism, Arab Societies, Causes and Motivations, Manifestations, Social and Intellectual Effects, Qur'anic Framework.*

Introduction

Islamic law, in its higher objectives (*maqāṣid*), is founded on the protection of religion, life, intellect, property, and honor. Thus, it has emerged as an integrated, comprehensive, and realistic system, leaving no aspect of human life unaddressed. Rather, it articulates clear rulings and positions, serving as a binding moral and legal framework that guides humans as they navigate life with all its challenges.

Grounded in the objective of safeguarding both the individual and society, the significance of the present study becomes evident when situated in comparison with earlier works, such as those by Al-Asmari (2012), Nabila Al-Rouni (2015), Ahmed Al-Khalili (2019), and Ahmed Al-Ramli (2022). These studies collectively affirm the persistence of the phenomenon under examination and its continued targeting of youth, particularly in light of media openness, spiritual courses, and related influences on youth. These dynamics have contributed to moral disintegration at both the personal and societal levels. Accordingly, this study focuses on examining the phenomenon within Arab and Islamic societies, highlighting its dimensions and implications in specific cultural and religious contexts.

Research Problem

Contemporary Arab and Islamic societies are witnessing the spread of intellectual phenomena that threaten social stability and raise doubts about their core beliefs and foundational principles. Among the most prominent of these phenomena is atheism, which manifests in diverse forms and employs a wide range of approaches to study religion. This study aims to analyze the phenomenon from scientific,

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religious, and empirical perspectives, examine the Qur'ān to elucidate its meanings and implications, and identify the most significant preventive and protective measures against it.

The study also highlights the seriousness of this phenomenon in light of the shortage of qualified specialists capable of addressing it and the scarcity of local scholarly research devoted to the issue, which has resulted in its marginalization and insufficient exploration of the topic. Moreover, the phenomenon has been associated with certain cases of suicide, further underscoring its social and psychological risks. Moreover, some of these manifestations involve a number of fallacious arguments that negatively affect religious belief and established doctrinal constants.

First: The Concept of Atheism in Scholarly Terminology

In linguistic usage, *ilhād* (atheism) is derived from the verb *alhada-yulhīdu-ilhādan*, and its plural forms include *luhūd* and **alhād* (Ibn Manzūr, 1414 AH). The original meaning of *ilhād* denotes deviation from something and an inclination away from the intended course (al-Farāhīdī, 1985). The term *lāhād* refers to a grave niche that is slanted away from the center (al-Asfahānī, 1412 AH) and signifies a deviation from uprightness or straightness (Ibn Fāris, 1986).

The term *ilhād* is mentioned in the Qur'ān with several connotations, including deviation and distortion. Allah the Exalted says: "Indeed, those who inject deviation into Our verses are not concealed from Us. So, is he who is cast into the Fire better or he who comes secure on the Day of Resurrection? Do whatever you will; indeed, He is Seeing of what you do.". [Quran:41:40]

They place words in contexts other than their proper positions, thereby engaging in *ilhād*, which denotes deviation from the signs of Allah, Exalted is He, whether through denial or mockery, distortion, or obstinate rejection. All of these constitute forms of *ilhād* with respect to the signs of Allah (al-Tabarī, n.d.). To this has been added the notion of *ilhād* toward the divine signs through diversion and frivolous clamor (*taṣdiyah* and *makā'*) (al-Makhzūmī, 1989), as well as through idle and meaningless speech (*laghw*) (Ibn 'Atīyyah, 1422 AH). Accordingly, the concept of *ilhād* extends beyond the mere denial of the existence of Allah, Exalted is He encompass the rejection of His signs, their irreverent manipulation, and the alteration of their meanings in ways that depart from their Qur'ānic context.

Allah the Exalted also refers to *ilhād* in the sense of false attribution and deliberate misrepresentation, as He says: "And We certainly know that they say, "It is only a human being who teaches the Prophet." The tongue of the one they refer to is foreign, and this Qur'an is [in] a clear Arabic language" [Quran:16:103]

Al-Dahhāk states that when the disbelievers caused harm to the Prophet ﷺ, he would at times sit near them, listening to what they said and seeking relief through their words. The disbelievers then claimed that Muhammad was learning from them, whereupon this verse was revealed to refute their allegation and expose the false implication toward which their speech was directed and inclined by means of this claim (al-Baghawī 1997). Accordingly, *ilhād* in this verse is understood as insinuation or pointed attribution.

Allah the Exalted says: "and [also] whoever intends [a deed] therein of deviation [in religion] or wrongdoing - We will make him taste of a painful punishment." [Quran:22: 25]

The expression *bi-ilhād* in this verse denotes deviation from what is right without justification or engaging in *ilhād* through injustice as a result of committing sins and associating partners with Allah (al-Baydāwī, 1418 AH). Thus, whoever intends to incline away from the truth has committed *ilhād*, whether through injustice such as polytheism or through the commission of other acts of disobedience. Such deviation may involve wrongdoing against oneself or others, and its consequence is painful punishment (al-Jazā'irī, 2003).

Goldman explains that the philosophy of atheism presents itself as a genuine and concrete representation of empirical science, with its aesthetic, expansive, and emancipatory possibilities, in opposition to a non-empirical world characterized by spirituality, miracles and revelation. This contrast, according to Goldman, ultimately leaves human beings in a state of incapacity and limitation (Goldman 1916).

Second: Causes of Atheism in Contemporary Arab Societies

Addressing the factors that lead individuals toward atheism is a necessary undertaking in the context of awareness and caution. Regardless of the nature or diversity of these causes, it is not justifiable for a person to deny the existence of Allah, Exalted is He, in any form—whether by associating

partners with Him, doubting His existence, or remaining ignorant of Him—all of which constitute grave misguidance. Much of the atheism observed today can be attributed to multiple and intersecting causes, including internal (psychological and social) and external (political, scientific, and technological) factors.

Researchers have identified and surveyed the causes of atheism in Arab societies as follows.

• **Heart disease.** Allah the Exalted says: "No! Rather, the stain has covered their hearts of that which they were earning." [Quran:83:14]

When disbelief and obstinate denial dominate the heart, they veil it from the truth, rendering it incapable of distinguishing between truth and falsehood (al-Ṭantāwī 1998). Such conditions expose individuals to numerous spiritual maladies, including mockery, resentment, arrogance, conceit, and envy. These are grave inner diseases through which a person elevates himself above humility and a sense of neediness before God. Consequently, the ego becomes inflated across many aspects of life, including acts of worship. This arrogance may stem from pride in one's perceived knowledge, physical appearance, lineage by which one boasts over others, or popularity and the abundance of followers through whom one disseminates ideas, secures allegiance, and attracts imitation. Some even go further, expressing admiration for their own views and prioritizing them over the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet ﷺ, claiming that such views are more compatible with the spirit of the age, align with notions of freedom, and promise an enhanced quality of life free from constraints and moral safeguards.

Moreover, the living conditions an individual may experience—such as oppression at the hands of those with whom he interacts, poverty that fails to meet basic needs, or illness that confines him and prevents him from living life in its natural course—can exert severe psychological pressure on him. The harshness of such circumstances may lead some individuals to drift toward atheistic thinking, accompanied by weakened faith and principles and an inability to endure trials, hardships, and challenges. Consequently, they may resort to resentment and discontent rather than patience and resilience.

• • **Human Desires.** If the instinct of desire within human beings is not disciplined and refined by the guidance of the Qur'ān, it becomes unruly and transgresses boundaries, reaching a level that incurs the displeasure and punishment of Allah, Exalted is He. Allah has made this clear in His decisive verses: But there came after them successors who neglected prayer and pursued desires; so they are going to meet evil —[Quran:19:59]

When they neglected prayer, they were even more negligent with respect to other religious obligations; for abandoning prayer—the pillar of the religion—necessarily entails abandoning duties of lesser rank. They turned toward worldly pleasures and desires, and their ultimate consequence was manifest loss (Ibn Kathīr, 1431 AH).

Human desires, in their diverse forms and expressions, often become a false refuge when life constricts, and the self tempts one to seek gratification by any means, without restraint, limits, or regard for the commands of Allah. Gradually, sin becomes familiar to the soul, losing its perceived reprehensibility. Allah the Exalted says: "Allah wants to accept your repentance, but those who follow [their] passions want you to digress [into] a great deviation" [Quran: 4:27].

That is, they desire that you deviate profoundly from the path of innate human nature (*fītrah*), yielding to desire and committing acts of disobedience without concern or fear of Allah, Exalted is He (Muhammad Rashīd Rīdā, 1990). Consequently, such a person flees from faith in Allah to its denial and rejection, imagining this to be an escape from reflecting on reward and punishment and a means of attaining absolute freedom in engaging with life's realities. Atheism thus becomes a pathway for the unrestrained gratification of desires, while disregarding the intense inner conflict, psychological turmoil, and cognitive dissonance that arise from denying a truth of which the soul remains inwardly convinced.

• **Intellectual and Scholarly Emptiness.**

One of the factors contributing to the fascination with atheism is the intellectual and scholarly void. Individuals may encounter atheistic ideas by reading books on atheism or browsing online atheistic forums, thereby becoming vulnerable to the dissemination of such ideas. What often begins as mere exposure or curiosity gradually turns into conviction as the individual lacks sound arguments, critical reasoning skills, and the capacity for careful evaluation. This deficiency stems from a weak or nonexistent scholarly foundation and the absence of intellectual immunity, rendering the individual easy prey to falling into the snares of atheism.

The Qur'ān affirms that those who possess knowledge are not equal to those who do not, and highlights the consequences of ignorance, including intellectual regression, susceptibility to doubts, and proximity to acts of disobedience—committed without the protection of sound knowledge. Allah, Blessed and Exalted, says: "And when it is said to them, "Follow what Allah has revealed," they say, "Rather, we will follow that which we found our fathers doing." Even though their fathers understood nothing, nor were they guided?" [Quran: 2:170] Such is the habit of the ignorant and the misguided: they turn a deaf ear to the call of truth conveyed by people of righteousness and knowledge whose aim is to return individuals to the path of uprightness and guidance—whether deviation takes the form of distancing oneself from the religion of Allah, as in the case of atheists, or through the introduction of innovations into the religion that Allah has not sanctioned (al-Khalīlī, 2024).

- **Weak Foundations of Faith among youth.** Many young people whose faith has been formed through a mixture of transmitted and rational approaches, alongside sensory and empirical methodologies, become vulnerable when they travel to other countries and are exposed to misleading doubts. As a result, they may retreat from their convictions and be influenced by such claims owing to inadequate foundational grounding. This occurs because they mistakenly assume that creed is confined to disputed theological (*kalām*) issues among Muslim scholars, while lacking a firm grounding in matters related to affirming the oneness and divinity of Allah, Exalted is He, belief in His attributes, His governance of the universe, and the methods of accessing the abundant signs present in the cosmos and within the human self. They are also deficient in understanding knowledge itself and its proper definition.

This situation reflects the weakness of educational curricula during the early stages of learning, especially in the context of an open world saturated with theories and doubts that cannot be realistically prevented. Moreover, many proponents of atheism and religious skepticism actively seek to instill the notion of an inherent conflict between religion and faith, thereby further influencing youth. This is compounded by factors such as desire, ignorance, inconsistency, excess, and extremism (Al-Kharūṣī, 2018).

- **Distorted Conceptions of God and Religion.** The emergence of atheism was historically linked to doctrinal conflicts between Judaism and Christianity; however, in the contemporary period, it has gone beyond this framework to position Islam at the forefront of hostility. Islam has been systematically associated with terrorism, and antagonism toward it manifests in the details of everyday life—beginning with thought, lifestyle, values, and principles, and extending to cultural production and intellectual output. Much of their literature and writings actively oppose Islam, even in the titles of their works, which reveal the deviation of their inclinations.

For example, Sam Harris's book *The End of Faith* presents a direct challenge to Islam; Richard Dawkins's *The God Delusion* argues for the supposed irrelevance of religion; and Christopher Hitchens's *God Is Not Great* deliberately chose its title in provocation of the Muslim slogan "Allāhu Akbar" (Allah is Greatest) (al-'Ajīrī, 2014).

- **Educational Scholarships to Western Countries.** Educational missions have often been viewed as fertile targets for those seeking to reshape Islamic thought and reconfigure it according to external agendas aimed at undermining Islam and molding Muslim societies in the image of the Western world. When educational scholarships from the Arab world to Western countries began, Western ideas began to spread and were promoted by some sponsored students under the pretexts of progress, advancement, and liberation.

Some of these individuals later returned to occupy influential positions that enabled them to impose their ideas on educational curricula. This was evident, for example, in the intellectual trajectory of Tāhā Husayn, who returned from the West and sought to impose Western writings and methodologies on Muslim students in schools and universities. The impact of this trend is not confined to education alone but extends to journalism, authorship, and cultural production. His Westernizing project became particularly apparent in his book *The Future of Culture*, which functioned as a blueprint for the cultural reorientation of the Arab world along foreign lines (al-Jundī 1984).

- **Civilizational Backwardness in Arab and Islamic Societies.** When a Muslim observes the significant scientific and material advancements achieved by Western societies—and by non-Muslim societies more broadly—he may fall into the illusion that Islam as a religion is incapable of fostering progress, innovation, and development. Such a damaging comparison, which undermines the grandeur

of Islam, can lead to disbelief or intellectual delusion, accompanied by admiration for the West's material capabilities. This, in turn, generates a sense of civilizational defeat.

Consequently, some believe that the spread of various systems, such as globalization and capitalism, and imported phenomena like atheism, feminism, and unrestricted notions of freedom are the primary causes of Western progress and development. What often remains absent from this perception is a critical awareness of the true nature of these systems, which frequently leads to intellectual and moral disintegration, strips Muslims of their religious, cultural, and civilizational identity, and replaces indigenous values and standards with Western norms across all spheres of life.

What must be recognized is that the true distinction lies between striving and inertia and between principled steadfastness and surrender. Striving is an instrument of progress, renaissance, and development, whereas steadfastness represents strength and the refusal to compromise foundational principles. In contrast, passivity and intellectual numbness are tools for regression, backwardness and humiliation. Western paradigms seek to impose utilitarian material standards as the sole foundation of progress and advancement, while simultaneously eroding the moral constants and ethical values that constitute the very basis upon which civilizations are built and sustained (Al-Zu'bī, 2017).

The Absence of Intellectual Security Institutions in Muslim Societies. In the absence of institutions dedicated to intellectual security, many young people find no one to embrace their ideas, respond to their questions, or dispel their doubts with sound knowledge or certainty. Consequently, they experience a state of intellectual alienation that generates fragmentation, confusion, psychological questioning, and an inner void filled with distorted ideas.

Moreover, the lack of sound scientific and pedagogical methodology among specialists and educators gives rise to theological questions and doctrinal doubts that require robust scholarly engagement capable of uprooting them from their sources. Without such intervention, these doubts may grow and intensify into serious problems that come into direct conflict with the cohesion and stability of Muslim society (Al-'Asīrī, 2023).

• **Technological and digital revolutions.** The technological and digital revolution has opened the Arab mind to ideas and terminologies that were previously unfamiliar in its social and cultural contexts. This has enabled the emergence of numerous online platforms that provide extensive content related to atheism. Some of these platforms take the form of influential personal blogs that actively disseminate atheistic ideas and promote their familiarity. Beyond this, there are organized institutions that support and sponsor such platforms, including online communities such as [reddit.com/r/atheism](https://www.reddit.com/r/atheism). Atheistic discourse is also present across social media platforms, particularly Facebook, and has extended further to the creation of dedicated websites targeting children, where images and materials promoting atheistic ideas are disseminated (al-'Ajīrī, 2014).

Third: The Effects of Atheism as Portrayed in the Qur'ān

The expansion of atheistic movements and their activities in Islamic societies reinforces their presence and increases the number of adherents. Revelation has affirmed this reality and made it clear that their harms are numerous and far-reaching. These effects manifest at the level of the individual's character and in the structures of society, ultimately weakening the strength of faith-based resistance within the targeted community. Consequently, such societies are exposed to many negative consequences.

The Qur'ān elucidates this issue and addresses the harmful effects that befall communities defeated by fragile and misguided ideas. In the following sections, some of these effects are examined and analyzed.

• **Casting Doubt on the Rulings of Islam.** Atheistic discourse seeks to sow doubt regarding the rulings of Islamic law and provoke suspicion in ways that persuade the listener, leading them to perceive the foundations and injunctions of religion as outdated customs and traditions incompatible with the progress of modern life. Consequently, the strength of uprightness and soundness of the heart are eroded. Allah the Exalted says: "Allah keeps firm those who believe, with the firm word, in worldly life and in the Hereafter. And Allah sends astray the wrongdoers. And Allah does what He wills." [Quran: 14:27].

Certainty in the greatness of Allah, Exalted is He, and faith in His noble law constitute steadfast adherence to the truth and decisive judgment. Through them, Muslims confront the challenges of life

and attain happiness and inner tranquility. Any information beyond this date represents misguidance and falsehood.

• **Absence of genuine adherence to Islam.** As a result of weakened faith, the human soul becomes a breeding ground for suspicions and illusions, overwhelmed by inner turmoil that shatters the meanings of calmness and spiritual tranquility. Allah the Exalted say: " while another faction worried about themselves, thinking of Allah other than the truth - the thought of ignorance". [Quran: 3:154].

Such a state gives rise to depression and anxiety, erodes the spirit of sincerity and devotion, and extinguishes willpower and determination due to the absence of faith in God. Consequently, it produces moral baseness in situations that demand sacrifice, courage, and nobility (al-Nadwi, n.d.). This condition is vividly portrayed in the divine statement: "Then, you are those [same ones who are] killing one another and evicting a party of your people from their homes, cooperating against them in sin and aggression. And if they come to you as captives, you ransom them, although their eviction was forbidden to you. So do you believe in part of the Scripture and disbelieve in part? Then what is the recompense for those who do that among you except disgrace in worldly life; and on the Day of Resurrection they will be sent back to the severest of punishment. And Allah is not unaware of what you do.". [Quran: 2:85].

In such circumstances, individuals relinquish their faith—already weakened by doubts and delusions—to become instruments in the hands of the enemies of religion, in exchange for trivial material gain and fleeting worldly benefit.

• **Dominance of Politics over Religion.** Political authority may impose its power and supremacy over religion in accordance with its own conceptions and ideological agendas. Consequently, religion—particularly in the minds of skeptics—loses its original and authentic form and retreats from its comprehensive guidance, fleeing toward a vision of life defined solely by material progress and change. This process produces a form of religiosity that is rigid, inert, confined to a narrow sphere, and specific to a historical moment. Allah the Exalted says: " And never will the Jews or the Christians approve of you until you follow their religion. Say, "Indeed, the guidance of Allah is the [only] guidance." If you were to follow their desires after what has come to you of knowledge, you would have against Allah no protector or helper." [Quran: 2:120].

This verse affirms the fundamental truth that Allah, Exalted is He, alone is the true Protector and Helper, and that true authority and supremacy lie in adherence to the religion of Allah. Any departure from this constitutes misguidance and deviation.

• **Lack of Proper Understanding of the Foundations and Rulings of Religion.** An incorrect or deficient understanding of the principles and rulings of Islam weakens the spiritual vitality that motivates human action and instills fear in the individual. As a result, strength and determination recede from one's theories, convictions, and principles, and the awe and moral authority of believers in the eyes of disbelievers are diminished. Allah the Exalted says: "We will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve for what they have associated with Allah of which He had not sent down [any] authority. And their refuge will be the Fire, and wretched is the residence of the wrongdoers" [Quran: 3:151].

Fear is among the soldiers of Allah, by which He grants victory to His sincere and free-believing servants. When Allah places this fear in the hearts of the enemies, He weakens and subdues them. The afflictions that have befallen Muslims in their religion and lands are nothing but the consequence of weakened faith and negligence toward the commands and prohibitions of Allah (Al-Khalīlī, 2025). This reality is evident in our contemporary context: the weakness of Muslims and their laxity in adhering to their religion have reduced them to a state of fragility and dependence on the West. Consequently, the foundations of progress have stalled, leading to stagnation and regression, as they increasingly rely on others to keep pace with advancement—leaving behind bewildered minds and unsettled souls, tossed about by waves of tribulation and the clamor of deviant ideologies.

• **Disintegration of social order and unity.** Under the influence of such deviant thoughts, society loses its order and cohesion; the meanings of obedience and principled commitment gradually fade, and religious authority and reference cease to function. Allah the Exalted says: "And when they are called to [the words of] Allah and His Messenger to judge between them, at once a party of them turns aside [in refusal] ". [Quran 24:48].

Those who expose themselves to the manipulation of self-interested agendas thereby embody a form of rebellion against the law of Allah, Exalted is He, for their ultimate authority becomes their own desires and wishes rather than divine guidance.

• **Social Fragmentation and Erosion of Communal Solidarity.** Atheism, in its various manifestations, leads to division and undermines services to society and the homeland. Those who act out of sincere faith and love for their community are often subjected to ridicule, mockery and disparagement. Allah the Exalted has clarified this reality in His noble words: "Those who criticize the contributors among the believers concerning [their] charities and [criticize] the ones who find nothing [to spend] except their effort, so they ridicule them - Allah will ridicule them, and they will have a painful punishment.". [Quran:9 :79].

Such dynamics further give rise to conflicts among groups and factions, with each group perceiving itself as superior and more correct than others. Allah the Exalted says: "The Jews say "The Christians have nothing [true] to stand on," and the Christians say, "The Jews have nothing to stand on," although they [both] recite the Scripture. Thus the polytheists speak the same as their words. But Allah will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that over which they used to differ" [Quran: 2:113].

This illustrates how the absence of a unifying religious reference fosters discord, mutual negation, and enduring division, leaving the ultimate judgment to Allah on the Day of Resurrection.

• **Deviation from the Truth and the Loss of Inner Resilience.** Deviation from the truth, as encapsulated in the concept of atheism, results in an inability to confront the challenges and trials of life. In such a state, there is no faith to refine the soul in its reception of affliction, nor creed to steady the intellect and the heart amid adversity. Instead, this deviation constitutes corruption and disbelief. Allah the Exalted says: "And [remember] when the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is disease said, "Allah and His Messenger did not promise us except delusion,"". [Quran:33 : 12].

Consequently, the doctrine of reliance upon Allah (*tawakkul*), trust in His commands, and belief in the divine decree and predestination gradually collapses. This spiritual vacuum may drive individuals toward superstition, sorcery, and occult practices as alternative coping mechanisms. Allah the Exalted says: "And they followed [instead] what the devils had recited during the reign of Solomon. It was not Solomon who disbelieved, but the devils disbelieved, teaching people magic and that which was revealed to the two angels at Babylon, Harut and Marut" [Quran: 2:102].

• **Unrestrained Proliferation of Sin and Moral Paralysis.** The door to acts of disobedience is flung wide open, and sins are committed with evident boldness without fear of guilt or punishment. Consequently, both intellect and heart become impaired, and no admonition or lesson leaves an imprint. The individual becomes resigned to a degraded condition in which there is neither progress nor moral elevation, but rather stagnation, backwardness, regression, and the paralysis of their intellectual and spiritual capacity.

A veil is cast over the perception of truth, distorted thinking prevails, and Satan beautifies deeds in their eyes. The faculties of reasoning and discernment are rendered inactive, while rigidity and incapacity to reach the truth infiltrate the sinner's soul. The individual neither advances nor retreats but remains trapped within a cycle of doubts and illusions, hurling accusations, suspicions, and trials against the people of truth. Allah the Exalted says: "with what your souls did not desire, you were arrogant? And a party [of messengers] you denied and another party you killed." [Quran:2:87]

After this exposition, it becomes evident that the Qur'ān does not overlook the consequences of deviating from its divine methodology. Rather, it has drawn attention to them and issued clear warnings against unknowingly falling into such deviations. Through rebellion and the tyranny of personal desire, humans become unable to perceive the light of truth, seeing instead through the darkness of ignorance and acting in accordance with the dictates of desire. In doing so, one champions personal opinions and the experiences of others, without sound evidence or proper guidance.

Atheism is therefore a grave matter whose harm is not confined to the individual alone but extends to the entire existential order. Within its conceptual framework, terms become contradictory, and meanings become confused, ultimately ensnaring the individual within ideological traps.

Fourth: Models of Atheism in Arab and Islamic Societies

• **The Media.** Media amplification of the phenomenon of atheism has contributed significantly to its spread, particularly through televised discussions and public debates in which prominent figures associated with atheism are given platforms to express their views. In many cases, the opposing side consists of individuals who lack the scholarly competence necessary to respond effectively to the doubts and arguments raised during such sessions and debates.

Moreover, social media platforms, online forums, and the proliferation of conferences often carry the toxins of atheism, whether directly or indirectly. A discerning Muslim must be aware of this reality and avoid immersing themselves in such global networks without caution and critical awareness of the implications. Those who manage and promote these platforms are frequently driven by hostility toward Islam, with the aim of undermining it and its adherents. This is in addition to the many insidious strategies embedded within influential programs targeting Arab societies, which conceal deception and seek to humiliate Muslims.

• **Concept of Humanity.** The Qur'ān articulates the Islamic conception of human beings. Allah, Blessed and Exalted, says: "And We have certainly honored the children of Adam and carried them on the land and sea and provided for them of the good things and preferred them over much of what We have created, with [definite] preference." [Quran:17:70]

Allah, Exalted is He, created human beings and honored them with comprehensive dignity: He fashioned them in the best form, endowed them with intellect and distinction, enabled them to manage their livelihood and life, and subjected the earth and all that is within it to their service, thereby granting them preference over many of His creatures (al-Zamakhsharī, 1907). This indicates that human beings are distinguished by two fundamental qualities: first, by intellect, reasoning, and sound management, and second, by the ability to organize life and enjoy lawful blessings.

Human intellect develops and advances within social, cultural, and economic relationships; however, it requires regulating principles to govern its function, as clarified by the Qur'ān and discussed in the first chapter of this study, to protect it from excess and recklessness. Thus, revelation comes to discipline the intellect, clarify purposes and objectives, and guide it in accordance with the divine law and the methodology that Allah, Exalted is He, has chosen for His servants.

Thus, every action performed by a human being should be undertaken for the sake of Allah, Exalted is He, arising from the innate disposition (*fītrah*) upon which one was created and from the principles imposed by a sound belief. It is not merely an expression of abstract "humanitarianism." While such actions may be deemed acceptable among non-Muslims on humanitarian grounds alone, Muslims' actions are fundamentally anchored in Islamic legislation.

In contemporary discourse, people increasingly celebrate "humanity" as the sole motivation for action: cooperation, solidarity, feeding the hungry, and supporting the oppressed are all framed purely in humanitarian terms, while overlooking the fact that Allah, Exalted is He, commanded these acts before anything else. This constitutes a serious matter and represents one of the manifestations of atheistic deviation, as the intention is diverted away from obedience to Allah and submission to Him toward a stripped-down notion of humanitarianism. For Muslims, actions must originate from religion, undertaken because Allah and His Messenger have commanded them—not as a concession to the opinions, impressions, or inclinations of others (al-Ma'marī, 2023).

• **Energy Science and Spiritual Courses.** This field purports to concern itself with the energy and spirit of human beings that Allah, Exalted, has embedded within human creation. It entered Arab societies primarily through the translation of Western books that address such notions, including rituals and pagan superstitions produced by spiritual emptiness, without being critically examined by the religious scholars. As a result, its ideas began to appeal to segments of the public, whether for treatment and healing or for promotion and commercial marketing purposes.

In recent decades, centers dedicated to this science have proliferated, presenting it as either a therapeutic or educational practice. It largely consists of ritualistic exercises claimed to "charge" the human body with spiritual energy. In reality, it is a pseudoscience grounded in speculative philosophies and belief systems. Such practices represent a form of atheistic deviation, often supported by Western—particularly American—stitutions that deny the existence of Allah, Exalted is He, and reject Islam. The influence of these movements has gone so far as undermined Muslim consciousness, fostering the notion that mosques—where Allah is remembered and worshipped—are of diminished importance. They even regard attending mosques as a form of alienation, claiming that Allah, Exalted is He, can be accessed at any time and in any place because He is, according to their assertions, the "cosmic energy" that supplies individuals with energy and keeps them charged. The trainers themselves acknowledge that such superstitions have become embedded in these training programs. Consequently, courses are now being offered in some societies that explicitly promote sorcery and atheistic ideas.

Many of the terms introduced in these programs—such as the five or seven “chakras,” said to descend from the heavens as manifestations of cosmic energy rather than divine power, or the concept of “vibrations” emanating from the human body, ascending to the sky, and then returning to it—are presented as established facts. Some individuals even travel to specific countries in order to experience what they claim to be a stronger form of this “connection.” Programs such as “X-Spark” courses and “feminine consciousness” courses are among these offerings. Such programs undermine the religious foundations upon which believers have been raised; they represent imported deception and constitute a form of atheistic deviation. Those who promote and disseminate them aim to redirect people’s loyalty toward themselves and their movements at the expense of religious commitment and national belonging (al-Rawāḥī, 2025).

Allah, Exalted is He, created human beings, as He says: "And in yourselves. Then will you not see?" [Quran:51:21]

He has placed within the human self secrets and capacities that qualify the human being for stewardship on earth and for its cultivation in a manner that ensures continuity and flourishing—all by the command of Allah, Exalted is He, whose word to a thing is “Be.” Therefore, it is incumbent upon Muslims to employ these capacities in ways that please Allah and strengthen their relationship with Him, drawing upon Qur’ānic guidance through reflection and contemplation of the dominion of Allah, Blessed and Exalted, and all His creation.

The believer is thus called to direct their intellectual and spiritual faculties toward the formation of a tranquil and assured soul, far removed from psychological disturbance and doctrinal confusion—conditions that ravage the human being, plunge them into disorientation and chaos, and ultimately lead to true loss in both this world and the Hereafter.

Here, we observe the close interconnection between religious guidance and its reliance on two fundamental pillars—reason and moral conduct—and the impact of both on determining the course of human life. For this reason, the necessity of religious guidance emerges as a primary requirement for clarifying Islamic creed in a manner that safeguards Muslims in both worldly and otherworldly lives.

The general lack of firm foundations in reason and transmitted knowledge among students, particularly female university students, renders them vulnerable in an age marked by rapid modernization and moral excess. Therefore, strengthening these foundations is essential for enabling students to confront trials and ideological challenges with resilience and discernment.

Fifth: Addressing Atheism in Light of the Qur’ān and Contemporary Practical Reality

After this overview, which has addressed the general dimensions of the phenomenon of atheism—its examination, analysis, study, and conclusions—and demonstrated how it constitutes a genuine affliction within Muslim society, it becomes incumbent upon every individual to possess awareness and insight into the aims, forms, and underlying motives of this phenomenon. Each person must strive, to the extent of his or her ability, to contribute to reform, adopt a path toward countering this intrusive phenomenon, and develop means and methods of treatment as well as safeguards that protect the youth of the Ummah from falling into it.

Based on this analysis, several remedial approaches have been identified, including:

First: Consolidating Islamic Creed and Strengthening Faith

The methodology of all the prophets—peace be upon them—in calling to Allah, Exalted is He grounded in affirming His oneness and magnifying His essence and attributes. This is due to its profound capacity to elicit swift responsiveness to the commands of Allah and its power to refine conduct, renew thought, and correct one’s course. The Prophet ﷺ devoted many years to calling his people to worship Allah alone. Allah the Exalted says: "So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the fitrah of Allah upon which He has created [all] people. No change should there be in the creation of Allah. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know.". [Quran:30 30]

These Qur’ānic verses address human beings through the creed of monotheism upon which they were created—one they do not inherently deny—because it resonates with reason and accords with the sound and upright orientation of life (Al-Zamakhsharī, 1987). Allah the Exalted also says: "Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding" [Quran:3:190]

Here, Allah commands reflection upon the horizons and the self due to its profound role in deepening the creed. When faith penetrates the depths of the heart, individuals receive its practical rulings with full compliance and submission to Allah.

Indeed, consolidating creed constitutes a seed planted in the heart of a Muslim, nurturing wholesome growth. It is strengthened and preserved through the rulings of Islamic law, guided by the Noble Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunnah. Thus, it becomes a firm and foundational base from which a person proceeds in life, confronting its hardships and comforts alike, striving to attain the pleasure of Allah, Exalted is He. Through this, the divine promise of protection, care, and success is realized for sincere servants.

It is a prerequisite for the soundness of faith and acceptance of deeds before Allah, Exalted is He. Allah the Exalted says: "Say, "I am only a man like you, to whom has been revealed that your god is one God. So whoever would hope for the meeting with his Lord - let him do righteous work and not associate in the worship of his Lord anyone." [Quran:18:110]

The Prophet ﷺ was therefore sent to call people to monotheism, affirm belief in the Day of Resurrection, and to perform righteous deeds. Thus, monotheism constitutes the origin and foundational principle upon which all pillars of faith and acts of worship are rectified and made sound (Ibn 'Āshūr, 1984).

This creed provides answers to the ultimate questions of human beings, clarifying one's origin, destiny, purpose, and the path that lies between them. It elucidates the attributes, perfections, and names of Allah, Exalted is He, deepens the bond with Him, and protects the believer from the doubts and suspicions raised concerning humanity, religion, and life—doubts carefully fabricated by the enemies of Islam in an attempt to undermine this creed, which obstructs the fulfillment of their ambitions, desires, and passions. Allah the Exalted says: "We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth. But is it not sufficient concerning your Lord that He is, over all things, a Witness? [Quran:41:53]

Through this, Allah reveals His cosmic and celestial signs, as well as the signs within the human self and the realities of human creation, time and again, until every question and doubt is dispelled and certainty is firmly established regarding the existence of Allah, Exalted is He, who is free from all imperfections (al-Rāzī, 1420 AH).

Second: Returning to the Qur'ān in Learning and Practice

The Qur'ān is a magnificent book that delivers from every distress and provides refuge from every escape. It is a blessed Book and a guidance for all mankind. Allah, Blessed and Exalted, says: "And how could you disbelieve while to you are being recited the verses of Allah and among you is His Messenger? And whoever holds firmly to Allah has [indeed] been guided to a straight path." [Quran:3:101]

The Prophet ﷺ also said: (*I have left among you that which, if you hold fast to it, you will never go astray after me: the Book of Allah*⁴).

The Qur'ān is thus the firm rope of Allah; it is guidance, light, and blessing that takes us by the hand amid the fluctuations of life, alleviates anxiety and tension, and brings about the balance and tranquility that human beings seek. It is the Word of Allah, Exalted is He, that instills in us a sense of nearness to Him. Within it lies a sound methodology that directs Muslims in worship, conduct, and social dealings, cultivating in the believer a spiritual and faith-based strength that enables sound decision-making. It also renders the individual more steadfastly committed to the principles and values of religion in all contexts, whether within the home or beyond.

A compelling contemporary illustration of this reality can be seen in the events of October 7 and the Ṭūfān al-Aqṣā battle in Gaza. These events demonstrate the deep attachment of the people to the Book of Allah, Exalted is He, and their strong commitment to it and its related sciences. This commitment was manifested institutionally through the establishment of the International Electronic Academy of the House of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah in 2015, alongside Qur'ān memorization centers,

⁴ Al-Naysaburi, Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj. (1955). Sahih Muslim. Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi. Edited by Fu'ad 'Abd al-Baqi, 'Isa al-Babi Press & Co. (Original work published 1374 AH). Hadith No. 1218, Chapter on Tamattu' in Hajj and 'Umrah, narrated by Jabir ibn 'Abd Allah, Vol. 2, p. 886.

⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dal>

recitation circles, and associated activities dedicated to serving the Book of Allah among the people of Gaza, young and old alike.

Among these initiatives is the *Mathānī* program, which seeks to revive and mobilize the Ummah through the Qur'an. Thus, the Qur'an functions as a source of profound spiritual strength, supplying patience and steadfastness despite the severity of war. It is for this reason that they remained firm and resilient in the face of extreme oppression and one of the most brutal forms of occupation, uttering nothing but words grounded in faith and conscious reliance upon Allah (*īmān* and *iḥtisāb*) (Muhammad Zakī 2025).

Third: Correcting the Media Trajectory

The media plays a major role in shaping thought and constructing intellectual frameworks, as media content, by its very nature, determines the prevailing mindset within society. We live in an age dominated by media and numerous social networking platforms, each of which presents diverse content that combines the beneficial and the harmful. In many cases, contemporary generations have traversed paths that distort their identities and undermine their faith.

Media is not merely a tool for entertainment or passing idle time; rather, it functions as an educational institution that produces generations through the ideas, values and messages it conveys. When media content is dominated by frivolity, triviality, and excess, and crosses into immodesty and moral laxity, it becomes a sequence of steps that ultimately leads to doubt, moral corruption, and ethical degeneration.

Given the profound influence of media in shaping human thought, it must be utilized in the most effective manner to guide people and encourage them toward what is good and virtuous. Media platforms should serve as forums for enjoying what is right and forbidding what is wrong, while also providing content that is both engaging and beneficial, thereby transforming the time spent with media into a constructive and meaningful experience.

Fourth: Preparing Scholarly Studies on Atheism

The significance of scientific research lies in its capacity to systematically and analytically examine phenomena through a structured academic methodology. Such research is capable of analyzing issues that constitute major obstacles to societal progress and flourishing and rigorously verifying research problems through tools designed to measure the scope and nature of the phenomenon and arrive at evidence-based conclusions and remedial solutions.

Methods such as experimentation, testing, and the use of questionnaires function as essential measurement instruments that strengthen scientific inquiry, enhance research robustness, and demonstrate the validity, significance, and credibility of the subject under investigation.

Fifth: Activating Forums, Circles of Knowledge, and Friday Sermons

This may be achieved by strengthening connections with scholars and organizing gatherings and forums that reflect their intellectual authority, reinforce the bonds of mutual respect and affection, and enhance the exchange of knowledge and experience. Such initiatives revive the nation's historical legacy and sources of strength, which were realized by holding firmly to the strong rope of Allah and adhering to the Sunnah of His Prophet ﷺ.

Sixth: Preparing and Religiously Nurturing Educational and Pedagogical Institutions

Examining the condition of educational institutions necessitates a concerted effort to develop a systematic plan and institutional framework aimed at activating religious guidance for students. This includes the dissemination of sound Islamic knowledge, which constitutes an essential form of intellectual protection, safeguarding students' thoughts and beliefs against deviation and confusion.

There is no doubt that institutional work is more effective and productive, as it operates according to a structured plan, embodies cooperation and collective responsibility, and is supported by effective leadership and management. It is also a form of sustained effort that does not cease with the departure of any individual for whatever reason.

Moreover, Muslims should contribute, to the extent of their ability, to preparing educational environments with ideas and tools that help shape students' intellectual framework and ensure their intellectual security, protecting them from falling into widespread phenomena that conflict with religion, weaken their personal character, and burden their moral conscience. Accordingly, coordinated efforts

among all relevant governmental and community institutions are essential to confront atheistic thought and safeguard children from its manifestations and early signs without compromising foundational beliefs under the pretext of conforming to reality or keeping pace with modern developments.

Selecting strong educational curricula suited to the Muslim personality, strengthening it in all its dimensions, and firmly connecting learners to their creed and principles are among the essential responsibilities that educational institutions must uphold. Such curricula should clearly and realistically reflect sound scholarly content without clashing with the practical realities of life—particularly with regard to social media platforms that now occupy much of people's time and have caused many to neglect important means of moral refinement and self-improvement.

Accordingly, educational curricula should clarify the risks associated with these platforms and warn against their misuse, emphasizing that they are a double-edged sword that requires vigilance and ethical discipline in their use. Simultaneously, learners should be equipped with sound moral values that govern their engagement with digital media. Moreover, the purposeful integration of selected social media tools in ways that align with the educational and pedagogical objectives of academic institutions can contribute to raising students' knowledge and scholarly competence.

Seventh: Building a Society that Is Politically, Socially, and Economically Strong

Islam has given significant attention to this dimension, emphasizing the values and principles that ensure the formation of strong Muslim character. It clarifies the centrality of creed and the necessity of teaching it, as it constitutes the foundational base upon which generations are raised within an ethical and behavioral framework. Creed ultimately determines the strength or weakness of society: when its members' resolve is firm, they become a source of vitality and motivation, enabling them to build their societies across all fields through creativity, sacrifice, knowledge, and unwavering principles that are not shaken by Western influence or modernity that transgresses the bounds of Islamic law.

It is incumbent upon societal leaders and those entrusted with authority to attend to the reform of every domain that constitutes a pillar of strength. The economic sphere, for instance, must be purified of prohibited practices such as usury, fraud, deception, and similar transactions. Likewise, the social system should be founded upon mutual solidarity and cooperation, the revival of prophetic traditions that promote affection and harmony, and the eradication of injustice.

Eighth: Implementing the Noble Rulings of Islamic Law

The divinely prescribed limits (*hudūd*) of Allah, Exalted is He protect against every form of corruption, and their application instills strength and authority within society, awakening a sense of caution against approaching acts of disobedience. Every member of society must possess a clear knowledge of the limits set by Allah and refrain from transgressing them.

What is observed today in the violation of Allah's sanctities and boundaries, the propagation of doubts concerning His religion, His Book, and the Sunnah of His Prophet ﷺ, and the audacious affront to the divine authority itself, necessitates the application of Allah's rulings. When deterrence is absent, transgressors persist in their deviation, opening avenues of doubt and destabilization among those weak in faith, seeking—even through trivial pretexts—to justify disobedience to the commands of Allah or to impugn the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ.

Sixth: The Islamic Conception of Engaging with the Atheist

Islamic law, in its higher objectives (*maqāṣid*), is founded on the protection of religion, life, intellect, property, and honor. Thus, it has emerged as an integrated, comprehensive, and pragmatic system that leaves no aspect of human life unaddressed. Rather, it articulates clear rulings and principled positions, serving as binding proof and a moral framework for human beings as they navigate the complexities of life in both ease and hardship.

From this perspective, atheism is regarded as a serious threat to the individual, society, and the legal order, and the atheist is treated analogously to the apostate within the Islamic conceptual framework. In its general sense, atheism denotes the denial of the existence of God; however, this concept has expanded to encompass the denial of all matters known to be part of religion. Such denial may manifest in speech, actions, or beliefs.

The phenomenon of atheism thus has profound doctrinal dimensions that lead its adherents toward spiritual ruin and departure from obedience to Allah, Exalted is He, and His law—and even toward a rupture with the very foundations of human moral order through the denial of divine existence. This is

further compounded by the absence of belief in the Hereafter and the rejection of metaphysical realities affirmed by the Qur'ān, whether explicitly or implicitly, in the literature. Atheism also results in an inability to confront life's trials, fostering surrender, despair, and depression, and the emergence of psychological disorders.

On another level, it may give rise to allegiance with disbelievers, polytheists, and enemies of religion, embolden transgression against the sanctities of Allah, and facilitate the commission of crimes without oversight, deterrence, or a religious or moral reference point, thereby posing a grave danger to both society and the state.

Seventh: Conclusion — Findings and Recommendations

This study demonstrates that the concept of atheism possesses a broad and multifaceted semantic scope. It is not limited to the explicit denial of the existence of God, but also encompasses forms of deviation from truth and departure from the path of moral and intellectual uprightness. The findings further reveal that contemporary atheism has developed new patterns and modes of expression distinct from its earlier historical manifestations, shaped largely by profound cultural, technological, and communicative transformations.

The study's findings indicate that atheism in contemporary discourse is generally not grounded in a coherent or systematic epistemological or philosophical framework. Rather, it is frequently articulated through the selective appropriation of certain concepts and data from the natural sciences, employed to lend an appearance of epistemic legitimacy to its claims while neglecting the complex social, psychological, and existential dimensions underlying the phenomenon. The analysis further suggests that atheistic tendencies are often associated with factors such as existential alienation, socio-economic pressures, identity crises, and weakened connections to religious and moral reference frameworks.

The study also highlights the significant role of contemporary media environments and digital platforms in facilitating the dissemination and cultural normalization of atheistic discourse. This influence is particularly pronounced in contexts characterized by limited intellectual resilience, insufficient critical methodological training among certain segments of society, and the absence of sustained institutional scholarly engagement. Despite this visibility, the study concludes that atheism does not constitute a pervasive social phenomenon within the societies examined; rather, it remains confined to a relatively limited number of individual cases.

Moreover, the findings underscore the risks associated with early exposure to atheistic content in the absence of adequate epistemic, critical, and intellectual preparation. This reality necessitates the development of comprehensive educational and institutional strategies aimed at cultivating critical thinking skills, enhancing intellectual competence, and strengthening the capacity to engage with existential and ideological questions through rigorous, informed, and methodologically sound approaches.

The study concludes that reinforcing religious and ethical awareness plays a vital role in strengthening intellectual resilience, reducing epistemic confusion, and enabling a more balanced and constructive engagement with diverse intellectual currents. Materialist philosophies, in particular, exhibit notable limitations in accounting for the totality of existence and the complexity of the human condition, often resulting in unresolved existential questions and epistemic tension. In contrast, a religious worldview offers an integrative interpretive framework that harmonizes reason and meaning, thereby contributing to greater cognitive coherence, moral grounding, and existential reassurance.

Recommendations

The researchers formulated a set of practical recommendations that are implementable, measurable, and evaluable, with the aim of maximizing the intended outcomes of this study.

1. Integrating analytical and critical thinking skills into educational curricula in order to equip students with the capacity to critically assess contemporary intellectual discourses within rigorous and methodologically sound scientific frameworks.
2. Activating specialized intellectual guidance within educational institutions to address students' existential questions at their early stages and prevent their conceptual escalation.
3. Encouraging interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary research in the analysis of contemporary intellectual phenomena, thereby enhancing the production of balanced, rigorous, and methodologically integrated academic knowledge.

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