Panpsychism in philosophy of mind, Transcendent Philosophy & Quran

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Abstract

Panpsychism in philosophy of mind is the view that mentality is fundamental and ubiquitous in the natural world. The view has a long and venerable history in philosophical traditions -both East and West- and has recently enjoyed a revival in analytic philosophy. Thus, in conjunction with the widely held assumption that fundamental things exist only at the micro-level, panpsychism entails that at least some kinds of micro-level entities have mentality, and that instances of those kinds are found in all things throughout the material universe.

We can see something like this in Mulla Sadra's Transcendent Philosophy. Mulla Sadra claims that all things enjoy some kind of intelligence and understanding. On the other hand, many verses of the Holy Qur'an either explicitly or implicitly assert the presence of understanding and intelligence in all things. In this article, I will explain all three issues (Panpsychism, Mulla Sadra's view, and relevant verses of the Holy Qur'an), then I will make it clear that Mulla Sadra's view and Qur'anic statements are consistent with at least some versions of the Panpsychism.

Keywords: Panpsychism, mentality, fundamental, Transcendent Philosophy, intelligence.

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1. Introduction

The world is awake. That can stand as a slogan for panpsychism (William Seager 2020) and the result of some major ontological principles from the point of view of Mulla Sadra (known as Transcendent Philosophy) as well as the explicitness of some verses of the Holy Quran.

The panpsychism literally means that everything has a mind. However, in contemporary debates it is generally understood as the view that mentality is fundamental and ubiquitous in the natural world. Thus, in conjunction with the widely held assumption that fundamental things exist only at the micro-level, panpsychism entails that at least some kinds of micro-level entities have mentality, and that instances of those kinds are found in all things throughout the material universe.

But it should be kept in mind that, as Chalmers says, "They are not committed to the thesis that the number two has a mind, or that the Eiffel tower has a mind, or that the city of Canberra has a mind …. Instead, we can understand panpsychism as the thesis that some fundamental physical entities have mental states. For example, if quarks or photons have mental states, that suffices for panpsychism to be true, even if rocks and numbers do not have mental states. … The line here is blurry, but we can read the definition as requiring that all members of some fundamental physical types (all photons, for example) have mental states."

On the other hand, it seems that a large number of verses of the Holy Quran testify to the consciousness and awareness of all things in the universe. It means, however, that everything that is considered as a thing is aware including the elementary particles, and therefore shares this with the theory of panpsychism. But as mentioned above, it seems that the panpsychism has no obligation to the consciousness of complex objects such as mountains, trees and rocks, and hence

2. Notice that, I take, in this article, having a mind or mentality as almost equivalent to being conscious, and that consciousness as a phenomenal (or, in some terms, qualia) versus functional one. So, this kind of minimal consciousness is not ‘self-consciousness’ or ‘transcendental subjectivity’, or awareness of the self as a subject, or awareness of one’s own mental states, or the ability to conceptualize one’s own mental states as such. Consciousness is simply sentience, or the way things are present (to the mind).
seems as if contrary to the Qur'anic view which emphasizes the consciousness of complex objects such as mountains and firmament.

Just as you know, lack of commitment to existence of some things does not mean commitment to its non-existence. So, we can say that panpsychism is not inconsistent with the related verses of the Qur'an, in principle. In addition, you will see soon that some readings of panpsychism accept the emergence of consciousness in ordinary objects as well as in some fundamental physical entities.

Eventually, Mulla Sadra, on the ground of the principles which established by himself, urged that there is some kind of consciousness in all kinds of beings in the world. In this way, you can see that traditional Islamic philosophy and contemporary analytic philosophy and the Qur'an (the sacred religious text) are in the same direction. And this is what I will try to explain in this article.

Finally, I would like to remind you again that my aim in this article is only to show that the issue of the universal consciousness of beings, which is mentioned in various ways in the Holy Qur'an, is something that is philosophically defensible (especially in contemporary philosophy) and therefore, it is also acceptable from a non-confessional point of view. thus, here I will suffice with a brief report of the two philosophical views related to this discussion (panpsychism and Mulla Sadra's view) and not go into the reasons for the pros and cons. I will also speak of variant perspectives on the panpsychism as far as my purpose in this article requires.

2. A brief Overview of Panpsychism

There is no denying that panpsychism is intuitively implausible or contrary to intuition so that frequently subject to derision by philosophers, being labeled ‘absurd’ (Searle 2013) and ‘ludicrous’ (McGinn 1999: 97). Even sympathizers have qualms. Thomas Nagel worries that panpsychism carries the taint of ‘the faintly sickening odor of something put together in the metaphysical laboratory’ (1986: 49). So why have some of these people accepted such a view and tried to argue in its favor? One of the most important reasons is the failure or even disappointment of finding any adequate solution to the hard problem of consciousness.
The core of the problem is the apparent mismatch between the nature of the physical world as we understand our fundamental theories to have revealed and the subjective, ‘what it is like’ aspect of minimal conscious experience. It feels like something to be awake and this just seems utterly foreign to how we regard or how we ought to regard the material world. The explanatory gap is exactly the problem of how a world which is supposed to be completely described at the fundamental level by a science which has no place or need for subjectivity nonetheless somehow includes the subjective aspect of the world we call ‘consciousness’.

One can highlight several prominent philosophers of mind to illustrate why we have been tied in such a problem: William Seager has claimed that we have no idea whatsoever how consciousness ‘emerges’ from matter (1991: 195). Jaegwon Kim has held that we have reached a ‘dead end’ regarding the mind-body problem (1993: 367). Colin McGinn has alleged that we will never be able to understand the emergence of consciousness from the brain (1991: 1–2, 7). John Searle has suggested that most of mainstream philosophy of mind is ‘obviously false’ (1992: 3). And Galen Strawson has maintained that only a ‘revolutionary’ new way of thinking will enable us to respond adequately to the mind-body problem (1994: 92, 99).

The inability of various mind-body theories to solve this problem left great philosophers such as Thomas Nigel and David Chalmers with the only solution to say that consciousness is fundamental and ubiquitous. Otherwise stated, lacking an explanation of consciousness in physical terms and lacking any conception of material reality beyond the structural, the panpsychist steps into the opening and suggests that perhaps the fundamental reality of the physical world itself partakes of some aspect of subjective consciousness. Again, this does mean merely that minimal, unsophisticated and unreflective consciousness is much more common than its opposite. All the panpsychist needs to posit is that some form of subjectivity, some kind of primitive feeling, is at the foundation of the physical world.

Panpsychism promises to integrate our scientific and ‘personal’ view of the world and do so in a way that respects both the completeness of the physical picture of the causal structure of the world it investigates and the role of consciousness itself. The price has to pay is admission of subjectivity into the foundation of the world as one of its fundamental features.
2.1. The view in history of philosophy

As above mentioned, the view has a long and venerable history in philosophical traditions, so that sometimes insisted 'it is an ancient concept, dating back to the earliest days of both Eastern and Western civilizations' and urged 'until the past hundred years or so, panpsychism was a respected and widely held viewpoint. In many cases it was regarded as obvious and in no need of defense.' (Skrbina, 2017, p:2). Then he offers a long list of philosophers - from the past to the present - and claims that all of them have embraced panpsychism more or less.

Certainly, Plato is one of the most famous and important ancient philosophers, as Alfred North Whitehead writes: ‘The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato’ (Whitehead 1978: 39). Thus, it can be said that Plato is perhaps the first famous figure in the history of philosophy to be considered a panpsychist.

I followed Daniel Dombrowski (2019) in this claim: 'there is … evidence in favor of the claim that the … panpsychist option may be the best clue we have to understanding Plato’s overall view … In Plato’s dialogues we learn that soul is the universal cause (aitias tou holou – Epinomis 988d), that it is (metaphysically rather than chronologically) prior to body (presbyteras e somatos – Laws 892a), that bodies are derived from soul (soma de deuteron te kai hysteron – Laws 896c), that we receive our being from soul (Laws 959a), and that soul is the primary source of all things (psychen genesin hapanton einaiproten – Laws 899c). So, although Plato could not fully understand the full significance of panpsychism in that he lived over two thousand years before the discovery of cells and other microscopic centers of power, it would be a mistake to think that he was totally ignorant of such significance by defending dualism simpliciter. (Also see Philebus 28d, 29a-31b; and Timaeus 30b–c, 31a, 40b–e, 69c–70e, 77b.)'

Other philosophers on Skrbina list include: Spinoza, Leibniz, Arthur Schopenhauer, Gustav Fechner, Hermann Lotze, William Clifford, Samuel Butler, Ernst Mach, Haeckel, Morton Prince, Josiah Royce, C. S. Peirce, William James. And, of course, among the philosophers of the last century are Thomas Nagle and David Chalmers.
2.2. An initial distinction: Panexperientialism and Pancognitivism

At the first consideration we can distinguish between two important characteristics of human minds, *thought* and *consciousness*. According to the definition of consciousness that is dominant in contemporary analytic philosophy, something is conscious just in case there is something that it’s like to be it; that is, if it has some kind of experience, no matter how basic. Humans have incredibly rich and complex experience, horses less so, mice less so again.

Standardly the *panexperientialist* holds that this diminishing of the complexity of experience continues down through plants, and through to the basic constituents of reality, perhaps electrons and quarks. If the notion of “having experience” is flexible enough, then the view that an electron has experience—of some extremely basic kind—would seem to be coherent. Thus, *Panexperientialism* is the view that conscious experience is fundamental and ubiquitous.

Thought, in contrast, is a much more sophisticated phenomenon. The traditional view in analytic philosophy is that thoughts are mental states that can be modelled as psychological attitudes towards specific propositions. Believing that “Tehran is the capital of Iran”, hoping that “war is over”, fearing that “there will be another Financial Crisis” are some examples of thought. Although many doubts, that it is correct to ascribe it to non-human animals, never-mind fundamental particles, *Pancognitivist* claims that thought is fundamental and ubiquitous. That’s why Panpsychism is often caricatured as the view that electrons have hopes and dreams, or that quarks suffer from existential angst. However, whilst there have been some defenders of pancognitivism in history, it is panexperientialist forms of panpsychism that are taken seriously in contemporary analytic philosophy. So, it is not a miserable if I consider panpsychism and Panexperientialism as one and the same thing hereinafter (see: Goff, Philip, Seager, William and Allen-Hermanson, Sean 2017).

3. Mulla Sadra’s view

Mulla Sadra, based on the principles he explained and defended in his philosophy, insisted that a kind of consciousness is present in all beings in the world. In the first place, he argues that since Existence is *principial* for all things,
so it exists in all things, and consequently *existential attributes* will exist in all things.

By existential attributes he means attributes such as knowledge, power, volition and life, as opposed to attributes such as ignorance and inability and death. He claims that after thinking about this second group, you can clearly see that these show things that do not really exist. Take "ignorance", for example. What does this word really mean? Does it indicate the existence of an attribute in man (or other objects) or does it indicate that there is no such thing as knowledge in man? Obviously, "ignorance" is nothing but lack of knowledge, not to mean having the attribute of ignorance. For a person to be ignorant, he does not have to do anything special (such as going somewhere to be taught ignorance), but it is enough that he makes no effort to acquire knowledge. This is unlike the first group.

In the second stage, he goes on to argue that since Existence is not only principal but also graded - that is, it exists in all beings at a different level and with different grading - so existential attributes in objects also have degrees.

Mulla Sadra writes: “Just as the Existence is a unique fact which flows in all beings in a different and gradation way as perfection and/or imperfection, so the true attributes of Existence, namely, knowledge, power, volition and life, as *who firm in knowledge* know, flow in all things, just like the flow of being itself. So, all beings, even inanimate objects, are alive, praising God, testifying to the existence of their Lord, and knowing their creator.” (Hikmat Al Muta’alyah fil-asfar al-‘aqliyya al-arba‘a, volume 6 p.117).

In order to understand Mulla Sadra's theory, we need to become more familiar with the two main concepts in his view, the principiality of existence and the gradation of existence.

By the principiality of existence he means that - comparing with quiddities-it is Existence (Wujūd) which bestows reality upon things and that the quiddities (mahiyyat) are literally nothing in themselves and are abstracted by the mind from the limitations of a particular act of being. Roughly speaking, the principiality of existence, means: when we say that a horse exists, following common sense we think that the horse is a reality to which existence is added. In reality, however, what we are perceiving is a particular act of Existence which through the very fact that it is manifested is limited to a particular form which we
perceive as a horse. For those who have realized the truth, the fact that a horse exists becomes transformed into the reality that the act of being has manifested itself in a particular form which we call horse.

Reality is then nothing other than Existence which is at once ‘one and graded’, existentiatating the reality of all things. Existence is not only one but also graded. And it is not only graded but also principal or that which bestowed reality upon all quiddities, which in themselves possess no reality at all (see: Nasr 1996, p. 648).

In the light of his first principle, Mulla Sadra can say that “the Existence is a unique fact which flows in all beings” and concludes that “the true attributes of Existence, flow in all things, just like the flow of being itself.” And in the light of the second, he says that “the Existence flows in all beings in a different and gradation way as perfection and/or imperfection” and concludes that “because the existence of some objects is extremely weak these attributes do not manifest themselves”

He writes: “Existence (Wujūd) is in its varying degrees, the same as knowledge, ability, will and other existential attributes, but existence in some things is extremely weak and these attributes do not appear from these because of their limitations and their mixing with flags and darkness, and to that, God indicated by saying " And there is not a thing that does not glorify Him with praise, but you do not understand.” (Hikmat Al Muta'alyah fil-asfar al-'aqliyya al-arba'a, volume 6 pp.139-140)3.

In view of all the above, it is obvious that Mulla Sadra is not only a proponent of panpsychism but also it is a natural consequence of his philosophical principles. But, which of these two approaches in panpsychism, namely Panexperientialism and Pancognitivism, can be attributed to Mulla Sadra? It can be argued that Mulla Sadra's words suggest that he took both approaches. Because, he claims that everything has conscious experience even at the fundamental level of matter and at the same time everything can think even at that level.

2. ان الوجود علی تفاوت درجاته عین العلم و القدرة والارادة و سائر الصفات الوجودیه لكن الوجود فی بعض الاشیاء فی غایة قصورها فی فلکه الضعف لا يظهر منه هذه الصفات لغاية قصورها و مخالفتها بالاعلام والظلمات وآلا ذکر اشار بقوله " و ان من شيء لا يسمع بحده لا يفهم"
Here I do not have the opportunity to discuss in detail Mulla Sadra's view, and especially his view of panpsychism, so I will end this discussion here and look for panpsychism in the Holy Quran.

4. Holy Qur'an and panpsychism

It can be reasonably claimed that many verses of the Qur'an explicitly or implicitly confirm the existence of understanding in everything. At the first glance the verses related to this subject can be classified into five groups:

I: Verses indicate that some parts of body will testify in the Judgment Day.

This group of verses explicitly informs about the testimony of some parts of the human body on the Day of Judgment. But they implicitly say that these parts of the human body were already aware of what they had witnessed. Because it is essential that every witness who really witnesses an event is aware of that event and keeps it in his memory. Thus, it can be concluded that this group of verses affirms the existence of consciousness at least in some seemingly unconscious objects -that is, some parts of the human body.

1 - «یوم نُتَشِهِذُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَسِتَّتَهُمْ وَأَبْنَيْهِمْ وَأَزْجَالَهُمْ بِما كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ»
On the day when their tongues and their hands and their feet testify against them as to what they used to do. (An-Nur/24)

2 - «الْيَوْمَ نُتَشِهِذُ عَلَى أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَكَلَّمْنَا أَبْنَيْهِمْ وَأَزْجَالَهُمْ بِما كَانُوا يَكْبِسُونَ»
This day We seal up their mouths, and their hands speak out to Us and their feet bear witness as to what they used to earn. (Ya-Sin/65)

3 - «عَلَى إِذَا جَاءَهَا شَهَدَ عَلَيْهِمْ سَمَعَهُمْ وَأَبْصَارَهُمْ وَخَلْقَهُمْ وَخَلْقَهُمْ وَكَانَوا يَعْمَلُونَ وَقَالَوا لِخَلْقَهُمْ لَمْ يَشْهَدُهُمْ غَلِيْنَ»
«أَلَوْ أَطْلَقَنَا اللَّهُ الْأَفْوَاءَ الَّذِينَ أَطْلَقْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ كُلَّ سَتَّةٍ وَلَنَّا نَفْسِنَا وَلَا رَبُّنَا حَكِيمًا وَلَا أَبْصَارَ مُؤَتِّمَةٌ وَلَا خَلْقَةَ مُؤِتِّمَةٌ»
This day We seal up their mouths, and their hands speak out to Us and their feet bear witness as to what they used to do. And they say unto their skins: Why testify ye against us? They say: Allah hath given us speech Who giveth speech to all things, and Who created you at the first, and unto Whom ye are returned. Ye did not hide
yourselves lest your ears and your eyes and your skins should testify against you, but ye deemed that Allah knew not much of what ye did. (Fussilat/20-22)

Exegesis: These verses declare the testimony of the tongue and the limbs against the guilty man on the Day of Judgment. These organs will report what the sinner has done. This scene shows that a person's tongue and limbs were aware of what he/she had done while he/she living in the earthly world. Therefore, their testimony is valid on the Day of Judgment, otherwise, if the tongue and body in everyday life did not have the knowledge and ability to understand the actions of a guilty person, they would not be considered valid evidence. Note that in the third part of the verses He (God) also added eyes, ears and skin to the witnesses of the Day of Judgment. Therefore, it can be concluded that all the organs of the body can testify on that day, so it can be said that according to the Holy Qur'an, (at least) all parts of the body are aware.

II. Verses indicate that some inanimate objects are in awe of Allah.

This group of verses explicitly tells us that things like the earth, mountains, and stones are fearful of God and have a sense of fear beside the greatness of God. Add to this, it is impossible to have such a feeling without knowing God and His greatness. Therefore, these verses tell us about the awareness of some inanimate objects.

1 - «وَمِنْ آيَاتِنَا أَنْ لَّوْ تَرَى الْأَرْضِ خَاشِعَةً فَإِذَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا الْمَاءَ أَهْتَزَّتْ وَرَيْثُ إِنَّ الَّذِي أَحْيَاهَا لَفَتَحَى الْمَوْتَى إِنَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ»

And of His portents (is this): that thou seest the earth lowly, but when We send down water thereon it thrilleth and growth. Lo! He Who quickeneth it is verily the Quickener of the Dead. Lo! He is Able to do all things. (Fussilat /39)

2 - «لَوَ أَنْزَلْنَا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلَى جَبِيلٍ لَّوَأَيْنَّا حَاضِعًا مَّتَضَدًّا مِنْ خَشْيَةِ الْلَّهِ وَلَكُمْ الأَثْمَانَ تَطْرُشُونَ لَقَلِيسًا لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ»

If We had caused this Qur'an to descend upon a mountain, thou (O Muhammad) verily hadst seen it humbled, rent asunder by the fear of Allah. Such similitudes coin We for mankind that haply they may reflect. (Al-Hashr/21)
Then after that your hearts hardened. They were as rocks, or even harder. For there are some rocks from which rivers gush out, and others that splinter and water come out from them, and others that sink in awe of Allah. Allah is not unaware of what you do. (Al-Baqarah/74)

**Exegesis:** The verse number 1 indicates that the earth is in a mental state of fearing which requires consciousness.

The verse number 2: The point that can undoubtedly be made here is that the Qur'an can only be descend upon beings who are capable of understanding it and that this verse in the phrase that says "If We had caused this Qur'an to descend upon a mountain" shows that descending of the Qur'an on the mountain is possible. Therefore, the result is that the mountain has the power to understand the Qur'an. In the following, this verse reminds us that because of the greatness of the Qur'an, if the Qur'an were revealed on the mountain, it would have collapsed. This point also tells us about the high understanding of the mountains.

The verse number 3: The phrase that says: “and others [the rocks] that sink in awe of Allah” indicates that some of rocks fall down in the fear of Allah. And so it indicates that the rocks are aware.

Mohammad Hossein Tabatabai, one of the most important commentators on the Qur'an in recent years, who, in addition to his skill in interpreting the Qur’an, is a great and important philosopher explains this verse as follows:

“Surely there are some of them (i.e., stones or rocks) which fall down for fear of Allah: We see how the rocks and stones fall down - big rocks on the summits of mountains crack up, and then an ordinary earthquake is enough to dislodge them causing an avalanche. Also, the cracks fill up with ice and snow during winter, then the warmth of spring melts the ice sending the streams down the valleys. This phenomenon is related to its natural causes, yet Allah says that the rocks fall down from fear of Allah. Why? Because all the natural causes ultimately return to the First Cause, that is, Allah. Rocks, when they fall down because of the natural causes, are in fact obeying the divine decree which put them under the influence of those secondary causes. It may, therefore, be said
that they understand the command of their Lord - an understanding that is created in the nature. They obey the decree of Allah inasmuch as they are thus moulded by Him. Allah says: and there is not a single thing but glorifies Him with His praise, but you do not understand their glorification (17:44); all are obedient to Him (2:116). Fear too is based on perception, as are the glorifying and the obeying. It may therefore be said that the rocks fall down for fear of Allah. This sentence is of the same genre as the following ones: And the thunder declares His glory with His praise, and the angels too for awe of Him (13:13); And whoever is in the heavens and the earth makes obeisance to Allah only, willingly and unwillingly, and their shadows too at morn and eve (13:15). Here the sound of thunder has been counted as the declaration of divine glory and the shadow is said to prostrate for Allah. There are many verses of the same style and all are based on the same analysis as mentioned above."

III. This part of the verses shows that everything on earth and in heaven is obedient to God and prostrates to Him, as well as the earth and the heavens can cry, and that the heavens and the mountains refused to bear AlAmanah.

It is clear that everything on the earth and in the heavens obeys and prostrates to God because of their understanding of God. In one of these verses, God states that neither heaven nor earth wept for the sinners who suffered. This means that heaven and earth were able to recognize the torment that befell the sinners and they could weep, but they did not weep for the sinners. In another verse, God says that the heavens and the mountains refused to bear the burden of the trust given to them. This means that the heavens and the mountains both had the ability to understand that trust as well as the power to accept or reject it. That is, in addition to consciousness, they also have free will. Pay close attention to these verses:

1- « ... بنَّىَ الْجَهَّالُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ كَآيَةَ الْقَابِلِينَ»

... but whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth is His. All are subservient unto Him. (Baqarah/116)

5. the trust or moral responsibility or honesty and all the duties which Allah has ordained
"Do you not see that whoever is in the heavens and whoever is in the earth; and the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and the mountains and the trees and the (moving) animals and many of the mankind prostrate themselves to Allah…"

(Al-Hajj/18)

And the heaven and the earth wept not for them, nor were they reprieved.

(Ad-Dukhan)

Truly, we did offer AlAmanah (the trust or moral responsibility or honesty and all the duties which Allah has ordained) to the heavens and the earth, and the mountains, but they declined to bear it and were afraid of it. But man bore it. Verily, he was unjust (to himself) and ignorant (of its results). (Al-Ahzab/72)

Exegesis: Because, as God has informed us in verse 1, everything in the heavens and the earth, including inanimate objects, is obedient to God, and since they could not obey Him without understanding His commands, so they are all free-willed creatures. Because when a person could say that he has obeyed someone's command which he could also disobey it, that is, he has the power to choose between obedience and sin. This means that he must have free will. "Obedience" is an optional act and is only logical if it is done by an autonomous agent.

The verse number 2 clearly states that everything in the world - whether living or inanimate - including the sun, moon, stars, mountains, trees, and animals, prostrates to God. And since the prostration of someone / something for someone / something else is impossible without understanding oneself (self-consciousness) and one's environment and without having any understanding of the thing one is worshiping it, then this verse implies that everything in the world has consciousness -at least in lowest level of it- (and even self-consciousness).
Undoubtedly, someone who can cry for something must have a lot of knowledge and cognitive abilities. For example, he must be aware of the objects and events around him and be able to understand complex concepts such as profit and loss, obedience, sin and heavenly torment and the like. He must also have very complex cognitive abilities, such as perceiving joy and sorrow, and be able to display reactions such as laughter and crying. Thus verse 3 shows that heaven and earth, because they have the ability to cry, therefore have the knowledge and cognitive abilities required. So, the heavens and the earth are aware.

God states in Verse 4 that He has offered the heavens and the earth and the mountains to bear what is called “AlAmanah” but they declined to bear it and were afraid of it. God’s purpose of “AlAmanah” in this verse can be something like the trust or moral responsibility or honesty and all the duties which Allah has ordained. Whatever “AlAmanah” is, it shows that the heavens, the earth, and the mountains are capable of understanding very complex issues that even humans may not be aware of (see the last part of the verse that says humans who carry AlAmanah were very cruel to and ignorant of themselves.) This is indeed a great degree of awareness.

**IX. Verses that show that all beings obey and praise God.**

1. "َّثُمْ اسْت وَی إِل یَّس اَتِ وْعًا أَوْ کِرْهًا قَالُوا أَنْ تُسْبِیحَهُ وَلِلْْ رْضِ اتْیَثِی كُلُّ ۗ فِمِ الس م ا او اتِ و الْْ رْضِ ا و الط یْرُ ص اَتِکُلِّ قَدْ عَلِیم سَبِیحُهُ وَلِللهُ عَلِیم بِمّا تُفَعِّلُونَ"

   Then turned He to the heaven when it was smoke, and said unto it and unto the earth: Come both of you, willingly or loth. They said: We come, obedient.” (Fussilat/11)

2. "یوْمِ عَلِیم بِمّا تُفَعِّلُونَ ۗ فِمِ الس م ا او اتِ و الْْ رْضِ ا و الط یْرُ ص اَتِکُلِّ قَدْ عَلِیم سَبِیحُهُ وَلِللهُ عَلِیم بِمّا تُفَعِّلُونَ"

   That day she (Earth) will relate her chronicles. Because thy Lord inspireth her. (Az-Zalzalah/4,5)

3. "آَلِمُ ثُمَّ اَنَّ الل هَ یُسْبِیحَ لَهُ مّن فِی الس م ا او اتِ و الْْ رْضِ ا و الط یْرُ ص اَتَّبِعِی بِكُلِّ قَدْ عَلِیم ضَلَّالَةُ وَتَسْبیخَةُ وَاللهُ عَلِیم بِمّا تُفَعِّلُونَ"

   Hast thou not seen that Allah, He it is Whom all who are in the heavens and the earth praise, and the birds in their flight? Each [of them] has known his prayer and the praise; and Allah is Aware of what they do. (An-Nur/41)

4. "وَتَسْخَرْنَا مَعَ ذَاؤُودَ الْجِبَالَ یُسْبِیحَنَّ وَالْقَلِیلَ وَکَثِيرَا تَاعِیمَینَ"

   “We shall provide you with the mountains, the birds will praise Allah, the little and the great, and we shall make you a numerous community.” (Wa Al-Quraysh/70)
…And we subdued the mountains and the birds to hymn (His) praise along with David. We were the doers (thereof). (Al-Anbiya'1/79)

5. ﴿وَقَدْ كُنَّا ذَوُوْدًا مِّنَّا فَضَلَّ بِهِ سَبَّالٌ أَرْبَيِّ مَعَهُ وَالطَّيِّرُ وَأَلْتَا لَهُ الْحَدِيدَ﴾

And assuredly We gave David grace from Us, (saying): O ye mountains and birds, repeat his psalms of praise! And We made the iron supple unto him. (Saba'1/10)

**Exegesis:** The verse 1 clearly informs that heaven and earth - After they were created- agreed to obey the command of God willingly, not with coercion or reluctance. So, as previously mentioned, they are free-willed creatures.

Here I would like to draw your attention to the interesting point that this verse seems to show that the heaven which is a set of celestial bodies and the earth which is composed of various elements and objects, each having an independent and unique existence so that (at least God) can address them and talk to them. And this can lead us to the idea that the set of some objects can have an identity independent of their members and can be consider as an individual or even a person.

The verse 2 shows that the earth is aware of what is happening to it and somehow preserves it (that is, it has a very strong memory so that can memorize events in detail until the Day of Judgment) and is just waiting for God to Command it to describe the events.

Notice this part of verse 3: "Each [of them] has known his prayer and the praise" and see how God explicitly says that all beings in the heavens and the earth and even birds in flight pray and praise God and with full awareness know what do and what speak.

Verses 4 and 5 tell us that when the Prophet David prayed to God and praise him, the mountains and the birds sang with him and repeated his prayer.

**X. God’s Command to some inanimate beings**

1. ﴿فَبِلَّ أَرْضَ اَلْعِلْيِّيِّ مَاكْرُ وَا سَمَاءَ أَلْعِلْيِّيِّ وَغِيْضَ الْأَلْمَاءِ﴾
And it was said: O earth! Swallow thy water and, O sky! be cleared of clouds! And the water was made to subside. (Hud/44)

We said: O fire, be coolness and peace for Abraham, (Al-Anbiya'/69)

**Exegesis:** The first verse tells us that God (in the event of the flood of Noah) commands the earth to swallow the water that is on the surface of the earth and commands the sky not to rain anymore and they obey, and in the second verse God informs that He ordered to the fire to do something contrary to its nature, that is, not to burn, and it obeyed.

**XI. Other cases**

1. Till, when they reached the Valley of the Ants, an ant exclaimed: O ants! Enter your dwellings lest Solomon and his armies crush you, unperceiving. (An-Naml/18)

**Exegesis:** This verse narrates the story of an ant who with full intelligence alerts his friends to a potential danger and advises them to return to their nests lest they be killed under the feet of Solomon and his army.

2. And they say: The Beneficent hath taken unto Himself a son …Whereby almost the heavens are torn, and the earth is split asunder and the mountains fall in ruins, (Maryam/ 88-90)

**Exegesis:** This verse clearly shows that the heavens and the earth and the mountains are so distressed by the words and beliefs of the polytheists to the extent that reach them the point of explosion.

Finally, it should be noted that the verses that were categorized and described above in the five groups are the only examples of verses from which the consciousness of all things can be deduced. Therefore, with a little care and patience, it is possible to find many other verses in the Qur'an that refer to the same thing.
5. Conclusions

Given all that we have said so far, we can make the following points as the results of this article:

1. It can be said with almost certainty that the Holy Qur'an informs us of the existence of consciousness in all things of the world, whether living or inanimate, and insists on them.

2. Many philosophers, whether in the East or in the West, materialist or immaterial, theist or atheist, accept the existence of consciousness in all things in our world.

3. Therefore, what the Qur'an emphasizes - that is, the existence of consciousness in everything - is not an absurd notion but is accepted by many philosophers of the world.

4. From the previous point, it can be concluded that we can somehow accept the literal meaning of The verses mentioned above - that is, the existence of consciousness in everything - and therefore it is not necessary to show any other meaning other than what the literal meaning of the verses indicate (as some commentators on the Qur'an have done).

5. Before we say that everything has consciousness, we must correctly define the meaning of being an object and determine what can be philosophically considered a single object. For example, a presuppose of the Holy Qur'an that says that mountains are aware is that each mountain is a single object. But can it be claimed that "the mountain is a single object"? Is this logically, correct? This is an open question that needs to be answered elsewhere.

6. Finally, if we can claim that the Holy Qur'an, in harmony with philosophers, accepts the existence of consciousness in all things, we cannot accept it as a scientific miracle of the Qur'an. Because, in addition to the fact that this issue was an accepted fact among thinkers at the time of the revelation of the Qur'an, it is not considered a consensus and fully accepted issue among contemporary scholars.
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