

## Preface

Where did we all come from? This is a question that has haunted humanity for millennia. It is a question that is the basis of many a belief system. Everybody has their own answer to this question, and while many of the answers contain truths within them, no one is completely sure. So how are the conclusions I have drawn from my research any different from the beliefs of billions of men before me? Well, they're not. Like my fellow man, this is a question that has haunted me for my entire self-aware existence, and ever since I became conscious, this is a question I have since been drawn to. But, what I believe makes my case different from the past is that I am living in a golden age of information, thanks in large part to the internet. It used to be that you were raised with a particular religion or belief and you would be educated in that particular system, but were largely isolated from other ideologies. Now with this massive influx of knowledge that comes to each and every one of us on a day-to-day basis also comes a greater and more expanded understandings of foreign belief systems. And, as my paper will illustrate, these cross-cultural understandings begin to connect humanity in a manner similar to when there were only a few thousand human beings on earth. And that's when you start to see the similarities. You see, when you begin to put each belief system up together side-by-side, you start to see consistencies, similarities, and all kinds of crazy coincidences. Most importantly, you begin to find patterns, which create answers. Finally, answers of some of the greatest mysteries of the universe are within our reach. It's just a matter of researching and evaluating each belief system, while looking through a lens unadulterated by centuries of filtration. Okay, well maybe that is a lot to ask of a single person, but I still believe it's a worthy endeavor to just try. If I fail, then there will always be others who shall continue to research and to find answers.

## Introduction

Where can the answers to how this universe came to exist be found? Historically, various answers to the question of cosmogony, how the universe came to be, have been proposed by different belief systems. Many religious systems believe that the Universe and life were near-instantaneously created by God or Gods who wanted to create something and did so merely by thinking or acting. On the other hand, present scientific knowledge suggests that the Universe and life were created randomly over the course of billions of years. Though clearly these views are very different, it is important to look at the significant ways in which they intersect. The answers to how this universe came to be can be found by reconciling the differences between religion and science, and thus treating the two as part of the same entity.

## Religious Belief Systems

Perhaps the most famous story of the creation is the one found in the Book of Genesis, which begins, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters." According to Genesis, God created the entirety of the Universe in six days. Later, Genesis explains how God created man, saying, "Let us make mankind in our image,

in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” Some approach this story as a literal account of the origins of the Universe. Others approach the story more metaphorically. They say the Bible is a collection of moral stories or a series of riddles or abstract accounts that are meant to be interpreted. Clearly, there is an immense difference between believing that the Universe was created in six days rather than six cosmic phases; these differences create division within the Judeo-Christian-Islamic community.

According to many ancient myths, such as those of the Egyptians or the Greeks, the Universe is a supreme order, mathematically linked and built with a very specific purpose. These belief systems assert that God or gods likely created the Universe, though polytheism was more common for these older religions. Many of these ancient belief systems paid heavy attention to astrology, the study of celestial bodies and the effects they have on mankind and life on earth. Some versions of astrology attribute the creation of the Universe to Greek gods, while the Chinese Zodiac attributes the creation of the Universe to spirits. In the Mayan version, known as Popol Vuh, four deities created the Universe, only one of whom was on the terrestrial plane known as Gucumatz. The other three lived in a celestial realm known as Tepeu. Ancient Egyptians propose the beginning of the world to be created by Atun, the first God. They believed that in the beginning there was only water, and one day, a hill rose up and on it, Atun began creating the other Egyptian gods, who then proceeded to create the universe, as we know it. There are many other belief systems that draw inspiration from the cosmos. These civilizations include the Ancient Nords, the Sumerians, the Mesopotamians, and many more.

## Scientific Discoveries

Two radio station repairmen trying to figure out a buzz on their satellite. In locating the source of the buzz, they found microwaves that were billions of years old and were remnants of an explosion that happened 14 billion years ago. According to the Big Bang Theory, all mass is as part of a singularity, which existed outside of the third dimension. This massive singularity “exploded” causing a rapid expansion of matter to be gradually dispersed throughout space, gradually creating the Universe that we know of today.

Another important scientific theory of creation is Charles Darwin’s Theory of Evolution. According to Darwin, all life in the world started off as a single cell organism. Through the process of cell division, these single cell organisms eventually replicated and grew in complexity, forming multi-cellular organisms. These multi-cellular organisms then grew in complexity and diversity, learning to adapt to a variety of different environments. Over great amounts of time, these organisms became the varied species of life we see today. The way that these organisms developed, according to Darwin, was through Natural Selection and the survival of the fittest. When resources are limited, only the strongest will be able to survive and reproduce. Evolution does not strive to make perfect species but rather it seeks to create life that is able to adapt to the particular challenges of life. Humanity only exists because our distant ancestors were the organisms best adaptable to our environment. Evolution also emphasizes randomness. There is no central purpose to existence or life. These days, the theory of evolution is, of course, notorious for contradicting the Bible. As opposed to suggesting that God created humans with a purpose, evolution says that we are the descendants of ape and were slowly created over incredibly long periods of time.

The Multiple Universe Theory is another recent scientific theory. Massachusetts Institute of Technology students have discovered the possibility of more than one universe, demonstrating the existence of multiple big bangs throughout time. We don't have enough information now to say anything substantial about the other possible universes, but the possibility of multiple universes is certainly a fascinating idea. The central idea being that if we have more than one universe, then it means we only have enough information to discuss this universe. To delve into the creation of the other universes would be impossible as no neither scientific nor religious belief systems have proposed an answer to this question.

## Reconciliation and Analysis

It may seem difficult to reconcile scientific and religious ideas of creation. But as we have found, there are more similarities than either side would make apparent. An example of this would be the similarities between all religious accounts, and the scientific origins of everything. In both cases, all accounts begin with the concept of nothing and then a mention of water. As science will tell you, water is absolutely necessary for life; in fact, according to Darwin, the first single-celled organisms were found in water.

Another similarity between religious belief systems includes the concept of one God creating the beginning of the universe alone. Then that singular God proceeds to create other gods, or in the Bible's case, angels, who have powers but are not as powerful as God. In many cases, they do God's errands. The central point being that in the beginning, there was one God, and He created the heavens and the earthly realm.

Another parallel many religions share is the conflict between gods and men. In the Bible, there is the initial conflict between Adam and Eve and God. God does not want Adam and Eve to eat the fruit from the tree of knowledge, but out of curiosity and temptation, they do so anyway. Eating from the tree bestows Adam and Eve knowledge comparable to God. In this instance, knowledge distinguishes man from other beings. God made us to govern his creations and nothing more; He didn't count on us thinking for ourselves. Another interestingly similar story involves the legend of Prometheus. The story involves a demigod by the name of Prometheus stealing fire from the reigning god of gods Zeus. With the fire, Prometheus gives it to human beings. Fire, as we know, is man's first invention and is the first example of knowledge present in humans. Like the book of Genesis, the story demonstrates that knowledge is a desirable commodity that the Gods do not want humans to have, which creates conflicts between Man and God.

Though ancient creation stories may not be accurate according to science, it is important to remember that the Egyptians were stargazers and architects. They were a very mathematical people who studied the Universe. And so it should not be a surprise to discover that their myths about creation, though flawed, were also remarkably insightful about basic scientific principles about the origins of the universe and the creation of man.

Reconciling the Big Bang and Genesis may seem an impossible task, but there are some significant points of comparison between the two. The Big Bang is described as a massive release of energy 14 billion years ago; on the contrary, the Bible says that the Universe is 6,000 years ago. Before the Big Bang, there was mass that concentrated itself into a singularity. The singularity was so massive that it sunk into the third dimension-our universe-and then it released the singularity into being. However, God created light on the first day and as The Big Bang

teaches us, light was the first entity to enter the third dimension. Following that was matter, which expanded over time. In the beginning, according to the Bible, there was only darkness and a world without form. But once light came to be, this world began to form. This suggests that the writers of Bible understood that for mass to have form, light might exist. This parallel demonstrates that whoever wrote the Bible understood the laws of the Universe far more than one may expect.

Another point of comparison worthy of study would include the Jainist, and following Hindu and Buddhist, teachings of the origins of the universe. The Jains, and subsequently the Hindus and Buddhists, believe that the entire universe started as a single consciousness that created a bubble of existence around it. The space in which this consciousness existed was no longer a void, but something real and physical, something it could move in. This idea is roughly similar to God as similar beings of superior intellects in all faiths; God or the gods are an extension of man. Nearly in every religious belief system, the gods made man in their image. To postulate that a singular consciousness was the forerunner of mankind is a universal concept found in every belief system. Additionally, all religious beliefs, even polytheistic ones, acknowledge the presence of a single being at the beginning, which predated all life.

Another Jainist belief that draws similarities to other belief systems, even including science, is the concept that consciousness and life require one another. What differentiates some religious belief systems from science is the belief that consciousness is the essence of a soul. Furthermore, this disagreement is demonstrated in the debate of whether or not consciousness is a part of the brain, or if exists separately; the question being: are brain waves a part of the soul, or are they different? Jainist belief systems propose that consciousness is similar to brain waves in that all life has them, even plants and single celled organism, albeit small and negligible ones.

In both the book of Genesis and the theory of evolution, man is a more recent creation. In Genesis, man was created on the sixth and final day of creation; nothing else came afterwards. Similarly, in Darwin's theory of evolution, many forms of life predate the development of man. However, it is known that man is a step in the development of life on earth, and not the end result. Despite this contradiction, the argument that man is a more recent development of life still stands in both creationism and evolution. Another interesting similarity is that all seven billion human beings on earth can their lineage traced back to a common ancestor who started humanity, which is a lot like how the first human beings in Genesis were Adam and Eve. Even if this is all just a coincidence, it at least demonstrates that the author of the Bible understood that every human being has to be related to a common ancestor.

Still on the topic of Genesis and how it is similar to the more modern scientific findings, there exists that fact that all matter and life on earth basically comes from stardust created during the big bang. Everything we are is from matter present in the Big Bang. Interestingly enough, in the book of Genesis, God forms humans from dust, the central idea being that God cannot make something from nothing. God needs matter that existed in order to make man.

What all of these similarities suggest is that whoever wrote Genesis had a scientific understanding of how life is formed. Through observation, the author determined that life requires water, that all of humanity has a common ancestor, and that man is the product of preexisting matter found from the universe.

Looking at the differences and similarities apparent between religious and scientific theories of creation, trying to reconcile the similarities and differences between the two has been attempted many times throughout history. Among these attempts includes the belief system of

Deism, a popular belief during the eighteenth century among the Founding Fathers. Deism is the belief that God is like a grand clockmaker and the universe is like a clock, in that God created the laws of science and the universe and just allowed for the mechanisms to run their course. Occasionally, God may intervene, fixing a cog, to extend upon the clock metaphor, but he is largely absent in the day-to-day workings of the world. This sort of compromise would explain many of the differences between religion and science, such as the longevity of the Universe's existence or the theory of evolution. However, there still remain many questions that these proposed belief systems fail to answer.

To this day, there are still mysteries that neither science nor religion can answer separately. Amongst these mysteries are: why are we self-aware when other forms of life on earth are not? Another question is why are humans special? Evolution and science tells us that we are not, whereas religion explains that man is burdened with purpose. The truth is likely somewhere in between. On one hand, man may not be destined for greatness; we may one day destroy ourselves and that will be it. On the other, we have not, and that is likely because man has civilization, which moves towards self-preservation and advancement. Man has an indomitable will to survive and prosper, a will not commonly seen in other species. We're special, we may just not be divinely so.

## Conclusion

This paper is not the end-all-be-all. I hope I have made it very clear that I really do not have any of the answers. What I've been doing is asking the same questions that have existed since the dawn of man. I am just looking at few more sources. But in truth, the origins of the universe cannot be known. Even if man does one day attain apotheosis, I still do not believe that we will have any of the answers. Truth is a funny thing; it's something that may not even exist. All I can do in my mortal form is to assess the various answers that have been proposed to determine if they can work together. And hopefully, my paper has demonstrated that Religion and science are just two sides of the same coin. Mankind, as a whole, needs to stop seeing this dynamic reality as a duality. Ultimately, seeing things as black and white harms our species more than it advances it. Now, I am not suggesting that you have to treat both religion and science as one hundred percent truth. All I am suggesting is what if we entertain ideas that we may not necessarily agree with. As Aristotle said, "It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it."

It is your decision to determine whether or not the origins of this universe are important, or if it is irrelevant to us. Perhaps the question is too great for man to ever answer. I think the mere act of asking these questions is worth more than the answers they produce, because in the end of this universe, there is no singular answer to anything. No answer will ever be the end-all-be-all of any question. But just trying is good enough for me, and at times, reminds me that I'm human.

## Works Cited

- Ashton, John. *In Six Days: Why 50 Scientists Choose to Believe in Creation*. French Forest, N.S.W.: New Holland, 1999. Print.
- Bryson, Bill. *A Short History of Nearly Everything*. New York: Broadway, 2003. Print.
- Darwin, Charles. *On the Origin of Species*. N.p.: n.p., n.d. Print.
- Duchnycz, Jordan D. "Spirit Science 5 ~ The Keys of Our Past." Video blog post. *Youtube*. N.p., 30 Dec. 2011. Web. 13 Nov. 2012. <[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=adyqBP5selM&list=PL2C2FBAB7E002EE3E&index=5&feature=plpp\\_video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=adyqBP5selM&list=PL2C2FBAB7E002EE3E&index=5&feature=plpp_video)>.
- Duchnycz, Jordan D. "Spirit Science 6 ~ The Flower of Life." Video blog post. *Youtube*. N.p., 30 Dec. 2011. Web. 13 Nov. 2012. <[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ss1ajWeY\\_wc&list=PL2C2FBAB7E002EE3E&index=6&feature=plpp\\_video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ss1ajWeY_wc&list=PL2C2FBAB7E002EE3E&index=6&feature=plpp_video)>.
- Genesis. Comparative Study Bible: New International Version, Amplified Version, King James Version, Updated New American Standard Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1999. Print.
- Lundy, Miranda, Daud Sutton, Anthony Aston, Jason Martineau, and John Martineau. *Quadrivium: The Four Classical Liberal Arts of Number, Geometry, Music & Cosmology*. New York: Walker &, 2010. Print.
- MacNeice, Louis. *Astrology*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964. Print.