SIMULATION THEORY IN THE ONTIC AND EPISTEMIC GROUNDS OF KALĀM

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Abstract

The simulation hypothesis is shaped by a combination of philosophical questions, scientific advances, and cultural influences. This concept has been prevalent in philosophical thought since ancient times. However, in the modern era, with the development of computer and virtual reality technologies, this topic has been increasingly discussed. In his article on the "simulation hypothesis", Nick Bostrom argued that our universe and everything in it could be part of some type of computer simulation. This concept has led to speculation and debates among scientists and philosophers. Support for this hypothesis has attracted increased attention. In this study, we attempt to critique this hypothesis, which is continuously on the agenda, by applying an understanding of the existence and knowledge of theology. Since theologians base the reality of knowledge on the ontic structure of existence, they have adopted the principle of "the reality of things is fixed". However, simulation theory challenges this understanding of

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existence and knowledge, which forms a paradigm of the reality of knowledge. Although theologians accept that reality is objective, simulation theory contradicts this view. When these two ideas are considered from a neurobiological perspective, objects do not need to correspond to ontic reality for knowledge to be real. Therefore, the simulation hypothesis led us to question the meaning of the world in which we live, along with the concepts of reality and knowledge. In this context, we discuss the possibility that the universe is a simulation, as well as the creator of the simulation, the divine qualities of the simulation, and its theological implications. This study addresses other important issues of how simulation affects the meaning of human life and how it can be viewed as a test of free will. When we consider simulation theory from a theological perspective, we conclude that it poses no problem in terms of concepts such as the existence of God, creativity, heaven, or hell.

Keywords: Kalām, simulation, God, being, realms

Introduction

The possibility of living in a simulation is shaped by philosophical inquiries, scientific advances, and cultural phenomena. The notion that reality may be an illusion is present in various philosophical traditions, dating back to antiquity. Plato argued that humans can make mistakes when they perceive shadows as reality. The idea of living in simulations has been intensively discussed in the modern era. Advances in computer and virtual reality (VR) technologies have led to the question of their potential to create highly sophisticated simulations. As computing power and the complexity of virtual environments have increased, the idea of simulating the entire universe has become increasingly realistic.

The debate on living in a simulation gained momentum when philosopher Nick Bostrom proposed the "simulation hypothesis".[1] In his 2003 article, "Are You Living in a Computer Simulation?" Bostrom argued that it is highly likely that we live in a simulation. Bostrom's arguments have generated widespread interest and debate.[2] After

[1] Nick Bostrom, "The Simulation Argument: Reply to Weatherson", *The Philosophical Quarterly* 55/218 (2005), 92.

[2] Nick Bostrom, "The Simulation Argument: Some Explanations", *Analysis* 69/3 (2009), 458-461; Bostrom, "The Simulation Argument", 90-97; Nick

Bostrom's statement, the renowned science fiction writer Philip K. Dick also claimed that we are living in a simulation. Stephen Hawking argued that there is a 50% chance that we will encounter a simulated reality. Neil deGrasse Tyson, on the other hand, has stated that it is very likely that the universe is a simulation.[3]

The idea of living in a simulation has also been popularized through popular culture media, such as movies, television programs, and books. According to the simulation hypothesis, the universe and world we inhabit may be a type of simulation. That is, the universe and everything in it, including ourselves, are part of a computer-generated simulation. This idea is sometimes referred to as the "computer game hypothesis" or the "matrix hypothesis". The "computer game hypothesis" refers to a philosophical hypothesis suggesting that the universe or reality is a type of simulation or computer program. This hypothesis has often arisen because of the rapid development of human technology and the increasing realism and complexity of computer games. The term "matrix hypothesis" usually refers to the 1999 science fiction movie "The Matrix". In the movie, people discover that they are living in a simulation of the real world, leading them to question their perceptions and beliefs about the real world. The movie has many themes, often exploring the boundary between reality and virtual reality and delving into philosophical issues. Films such as "The Matrix" have contributed to debates about the fundamental nature of existence, capturing the public's imagination by depicting a dystopian future where people unconsciously live in a simulated reality.[4] In this context, discussions on living in simulations have emerged from a confluence of philosophical inquiries, technological advances, and cultural influences, triggering speculation and debates about the fundamental nature of existence. The term "matrix hypothesis" has been extended to refer to a state of perception of reality that questions or alters humans' conscious perception of reality. This concept has emerged from the impact of modern technologies, which have led to

Bostrom - Marcin Kulczycki, "A Patch for the Simulation Argument", *Analysis* 71/1 (2011), 54-61.

3 Rizwan Virk, *The Simulation Hypothesis: An MIT Computer Scientist Shows Why AI, Quantum Physics and Eastern Mystics Agree We are in a Video Game* (Mountain View, California: Bayview Books, 2019), 17, 22.

4 Virk, *The Simulation Hypothesis*, 22; Ömer Faruk Görücü, "Simulation and God", *Tabula Rasa: Felsefe ve Teoloji* 42 (2024), 3.

a reflection on how reality is perceived and experienced and have even blurred the boundaries between reality and virtual reality. In this context, the "matrix hypothesis" refers to the complex relationship between reality and perception.[5]

When scientists and philosophers consider such hypotheses, they usually assess whether they are compatible with the available evidence. The scientists Max Planck and Amit Goswami have recognized this hypothesis as more of a speculative and intellectual exercise.[6] However, although it may seem like a work of science fiction at first glance, it contains important philosophical and theological claims. This hypothesis prompts a deep reflection on the nature of human experience and questions the boundaries between the reality of existence and simulation. This intersection of science fiction and philosophical debates raises important questions about the future of humanity and consciousness.[7] This encourages us to question conscious experiences and to consider the possibility of simulation in human existence.[8] Therefore, the question of whether humans live in simulations has inspired debates and research in various disciplines.

Rather than focusing on the truth or falsity of this hypothesis, we consider its theological implications, which lead thinkers to consider it seriously. If we truly live in a simulation and exist in a simulated universe, does this mean that our universe was created not by God but by other intelligent beings? However, given that theologians ground metaphysical knowledge in ontological reality, does the reality of metaphysical knowledge disappear if we live in a simulated world? Is there any point in discussing the meaning of life or believing in God in this world? This article also discusses the process of knowledge formation through the biological structure of human beings and the application of modern science to evaluate the perception of reality,

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5 Anna Longo, "How the True World Finally Became Virtual Reality", *Filozofski Vestnik* 42/2 (2021), 288.

6 Brian Weatherson, "Are You a Sim?", *The Philosophical Quarterly* 53/212 (2003), 425-431; Miloš Agatonović, "The Fiction of Simulation: A Critique of Bostrom's Simulation Argument", *AI & SOCIETY* 38/4 (2023), 1579-1586; Virk, *The Simulation Hypothesis*, 249.

7 Jonathan Birch, "On the 'Simulation Argument' and Selective Scepticism", *Erkenntnis* 78 (February 2013), 95-96.

8 Birch, "On the 'Simulation Argument' and Selective Scepticism", 96; Eric Steinhart, "Theological Implications of the Simulation Argument", *Ars Disputandi* 10/1 (January 2010), 23.

which is the foundation of the relationship between knowledge and existence. Finally, if it is possible to live in a simulated universe, this will be criticized in the context of God's existence, which is the main argument of theology.

Although many studies have been conducted on the claim of simulation in the West, we have not conducted a direct study on this subject in Türkiye. In this study, which employed the document analysis method, the primary and secondary sources constituting the research dataset were analyzed in detail.

1. The Claim that the Universe and Life are Simulations and That They Emerge

The "simulation hypothesis" is based on the philosophical claim that consciousness and its associated mental states are functions of material events and processes. According to one of the dominant interpretations of philosophical materialism, mental states and consciousness are functions of the information processed in the brain, which, in principle, is a system that can be reproduced on a sufficiently powerful digital computer. From this perspective, it is possible to construct a conscious mindset in a purely digital environment. This possibility is the basis for the view that it is theoretically possible and ultimately realizable to construct a complex "digital world" containing various conscious entities that would be epistemologically identical to our own (presumably material) world.

Modern simulation thinking is not new. In 1989, the physicist John Archibald Wheeler proposed that the universe is fundamentally mathematical and can emerge from information.[9] In 2003, philosopher Nick Bostrom published an article entitled "Are You Living in a Computer Simulation?" In this article, he argued that people lived in a simulation.[10] Bostrom argued that most "living worlds" are simulated and digitally generated rather than natural biological worlds and that most conscious beings in the universe are digital simulations. Bostrom argued that the currently constructed simulated worlds exist; however,

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[9] Meghan O'Gieblyn, *God, Human, Animal, Machine: Technology, Metaphor, and the Search for Meaning* (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2021), 84.

[10] Nick Bostrom, "Are You Living in a Computer Simulation?", *Philosophical Quarterly* 53/211 (2003), 243-255.

in the future, with increased computing power, these simulations will become much more complex, and the beings inhabiting them will likely become conscious and self-aware. Bostrom suggested that future technological advances could transform planets and other celestial bodies into powerful computers with the computational power to be used by posthuman civilizations.[11] Currently, we do not have sufficiently powerful hardware or software to create a conscious mind on computers. However, convincing arguments have shown that these shortcomings can be overcome if technological progress remains unresolved. Some authors have claimed that this stage may only be a few decades away.[12] However, the current study did not make any assumptions about time. The simulation argument is equally valid for those who believe that humanity will reach a "posthuman" stage of civilization in hundreds of thousands of years, having achieved most of the technological capabilities that can now be shown to be compatible with physical laws and material and energy constraints.[13]

The fundamental question that Bostrom asks us to ponder is how to determine whether we are now in a real 21st-century history or a simulation. He writes that most people's minds, including our own, perhaps belong to a simulation created by the advanced descendants of an original arc, not to the real world. Bostrom believes that we are almost certainly living in a simulation, emphasizing that we are now much more likely to live in a simulated world than in the real world.[14] Bostrom's argument for his trilogy is as follows. Futurists and scientists predicted that large amounts of computing power would become available in the future. Therefore, subsequent generations were likely to run several detailed simulations of their ancestors. Bostrom also argued that these simulated humans are conscious, assuming that the widely accepted view of the philosophy of the mind is correct. He then concluded by probability calculations that we were likely one of the simulated minds rather than among the original biological minds.[15]

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[11] Bostrom, "Are You Living in a Computer Simulation?", 249.
[12] Virk, *The Simulation Hypothesis*, 67.
[13] Bostrom, "Are You Living in a Computer Simulation?", 250.
[14] O'Gieblyn, *God, Human, Animal, Machine*, 84-86; Ding-Yu Chung, "We Are Living in a Computer Simulation", *Journal of Modern Physics* 7/10 (2016), 1226.
[15] Abraham Lim, "Why We Are Not Living in the Computer Simulation", *International Journal for the Study of Skepticism* 12/4 (2022), 333.

Like Bostrom, David Chalmers considered the possibility of humanity existing in a simulation to be high.[16] He said, "I do not rule out that we are in a simulation, and I think we cannot rule out that we are in a simulation. Therefore, there is at least one serious theoretical possibility to conduct simulations. I do not want to say that it is necessarily probable –it is difficult to put a probability on it-– but it is a hypothesis that I take seriously. However, to some extent, I am thinking about it as a philosopher, and I am not currently proposing it as a scientific hypothesis. It is a thought experiment about what reality might be like." This is also linked to practical ideas. We will spend much of our time in virtual worlds in the coming years, which raises many important questions.[17] If Moore's law is correct and higher-order beings truly simulate us, both make sense.[18]

Since Bostrom suggested that the universe and everything in it could be a simulation, public speculation and debate regarding the nature of reality have been intense. The physicist Seth Lloyd of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the United States took the simulation hypothesis one step further, suggesting that the entire universe could be a giant quantum computer. Meanwhile, NASA physicist Tom Campbell and Caltech physicists Houman Owhadi, Joe Sauvageau, and David Watkinson launched a Kickstarter crowdfunding campaign to conduct and document experiments to test the simulation hypothesis. In a 2017 study, they concluded that the simulation hypothesis could be tested.[19] Public intellectuals, such as Tesla leader Elon Musk, have argued that the statistical inevitability of our world is slightly more than a cascading green code.[20] In 2016, billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk stirred up an enormous controversy by arguing that advances in computer technology would make our videos indistinguishable from reality; therefore, the

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16 Florian Neukart et al., "Constraints, Observations, and Experiments on the Simulation Hypothesis", *SSRN Electronic Journal* (2022), 5.

17 Dan Falk, "The Simulated World According to David Chalmers", *Nautilus* (Accessed February 19, 2024).

18 Deep Bhattacharjee, *Mandela Effect & Déjà Vu: Are We Living in a Simulated Reality?*, preprint (September 29, 2021), 3.

19 Virk, *The Simulation Hypothesis*, 254.

20 Jeff Grupp, "The Implantation Argument: Simulation Theory is Proof That God Exists", *Metaphysica* 22/2 (2021), 201; David Kipping, "A Bayesian Approach to the Simulation Argument", *Universe* 6/8 (2020), 1.

probability of being inside a simulation was billions to one.[21] These claims gained some credence by being repeated by luminaries no less respected than Neil deGrasse Tyson, director of the Hayden Planetarium and America's favorite science popularizer.[22]

Currently, because we do not have conclusive evidence, it is not possible to arrive at a definitive conclusion regarding whether our universe is in a simulation.[23] Although it is conceivable that we live in a natural, physical, and biological universe rather than in a digital environment, there is no way to verify this.[24] At this point, one might think that the simulation argument is being accepted too quickly or that objections might arise regarding the obstacles and feasibility of creating a simulated universe.[25] In fact, the German physicist Sabine Hossenfelder argued against the simulation hypothesis.[26] Lim challenged the refutation of this hypothesis.[27] However, further research is needed to determine how well this hypothesis aligns with reality. Although this raises intriguing questions about the nature of reality and the limits of human knowledge, there is currently no empirical evidence to conclusively support or refute the idea that we are living in a simulation.[28] Therefore, further experiments are needed to gain deeper insights.[29] However, many constraints prevent us from designing experiments that directly answer the questions of whether the universe was created and whether it is an infinite hierarchical chain of simulations.[30] Bostrom, who proposed the simulation hypothesis,

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21 Sanford L. Drob, "Are You Praying to a Videogame God? Some Theological and Philosophical Implications of the Simulation Hypothesis", *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology* 84/1 (2023), 77-78.

22 O'Gieblyn, *God, Human, Animal, Machine*, 84-86.

23 Drob, "Are You Praying to a Videogame God?", 77-78.

24 Drob, "Are You Praying to a Videogame God?", 77-78.

25 Aykut Alper Yılmaz, "Simulation Hypothesis and Theism: An Assessment in the Context of Multiverse", *Eskiyeni* 51 (2023), 997.

26 Neukart et al., "Constraints, Observations, and Experiments on the Simulation Hypothesis", 7.

27 See Lim, "Why We Are Not Living in the Computer Simulation", 349-350.

28 Alexandre Bibeau-Delisle - Gilles Brassard, "Probability and Consequences of Living Inside a Computer Simulation", *Proceedings of the Royal Society A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences* 477/2247 (2021), 13.

29 Neukart et al., "Constraints, Observations, and Experiments on the Simulation Hypothesis", 25.

30 Neukart et al., "Constraints, Observations, and Experiments on the Simulation Hypothesis", 6.

noted certain obstacles to this claim. Therefore, we briefly consider the difficulties associated with the creation of a simulated universe inhabited by conscious beings.[31]

2. Ontological Views of Islamic Theologians in the Context of the Principle "The Reality of Things is Fixed"

Reality is a concept shaped by human perceptions and thoughts, yet it has an objective basis. On the other hand, the reality of existence as an ontological inquiry is the nature and quality of existence in relation to an object and its place in human perception.[32] Therefore, knowledge is the most important issue in kalām regarding the reality of existence. Discussions on the reality of existence in debates about the possibility of knowledge began with Muʿtazilī scholars.[33]

When we examine the history of thought, we observe that most scholars accept the truth of things and affirm the existence of certain knowledge of human beings. This is because they believed the human mind could accurately perceive the external world and understand objective reality.[34] The schools of kalām, namely, the Muʿtazilīs, Māturīdīs, and Ashʿarīs, also accept the existence of a fixed truth.[35] According to them, human beings become aware of the external reality of the universe through the information provided by their senses and certain rational principles. Any knowledge realized through any of these senses is necessary, in which there can be no doubt or hesitation

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31 Yılmaz, "Simulation Hypothesis and Theism", 997.

32 Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ṭayyib ibn Muḥammad al-Bāqillānī, *al-Tamhīd fī l-radd ʿalá l-mulḥidah al-muʿaṭṭilah wa-l-Rāfiḍah wa-l-Ḵhawārij wa-l-Muʿtazilah*, ed. Muḥammad Maḥmūd al-Khuḍayrī - Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Hādī Abū Rīdah (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, 1947), 24-29.

33 Hanifi Özcan, *Mâtürîdîde Bilgi Problemi* (İstanbul: İFAV Yayınları, 1993), 32-35.

34 Mustafa Bozkurt, *Fahreddin Râzî'de Bilgi Teorisi* (Ankara: Akçağ, 2016), 58; Abū l-Muʿīn Maymūn ibn Muḥammad al-Nasafī, *Kitāb al-Tamhīd li-qawāʿid al-tawḥīd*, ed. Ḥasan Aḥmad Jīb Allāh (Cairo: Dār al-Ṭibāʿah al-Muḥammadiyyah, 1986), 16.

35 İlyas Çelebi, "Giriş", *Mutezile'nin Beş İlkesi: Sharḥ al-Uṣūl al-khamsah*, auth. Abū l- Ḥasan Qāḍī l-quḍāh ʿAbd al-Jabbār ibn Aḥmad al-Hamadānī, ed. and trans. İlyas Çelebi (İstanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı, 2013), 1/27.

about what is perceived.[36] According to theologians (*mutakallimūn*), the knowledge that emerges in the human mind and the reality of external objects are compatible. Without accepting the reality of existence and objects, one cannot speak of them. Knowledge can be explained and proven only after the reality of the objects is accepted. In this context, the principle on which theologians base their possibility of knowledge is that the reality of things is fixed.[37] This principle provides an important foundation for understanding existence and divinity. In fact, Muslim scholars who interacted with different cultures encountered skeptics who rejected knowledge and evaluated their claims regarding existence and knowledge.[38] They argued that the domain of existence, which is the basis of knowledge, is real and emphasized that the subject and object, which are the basis of knowledge, have separate existences.[39] Therefore, the basis of their system of thought was an understanding that "the truth of things is fixed" or "our knowledge of things is a realized knowledge".[40]

According to theologians, the fact that things do not have an independent existence calls into question the existence of a

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[36] Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ṭayyib ibn Muḥammad al-Bāqillānī, *Kitāb Tamhīd al-awāʾil wa-talkhīṣ al-dalāʾil*, ed. ʿImād al-Dīn Aḥmad Ḥaydar (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Kutub al-Thaqāfiyyah, 1407/1987), 29.

[37] Saʿd al-Dīn Masʿūd ibn Fakhr al-Dīn ʿUmar al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿAqāʾid al-Nasafiyyah*, ed. ʿAbd al-Salām ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī Shannār (Beirut: Dār al-Bayrūtī - Dār Ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī, 1428/2007), 25; Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī, *Mevâkıf Şerhi: Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, ed. and trans. Ömer Türker (İstanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı, 2015), 1/276-277.

[38] Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Qāhir ibn Ṭāhir al-Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. Aḥmad Shams al-Dīn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1423/2002), 16; Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam* (Boston - Leiden: Brill, 2007), 301; Abū l-Yusr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Bazdawī, *Uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. Hans Peter Linss - Aḥmad Ḥijāzī al-Saqā (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Azhariyyah li-l-Turāth, 2003), 17; Mehmet Dağ, "Eş'arî Kelâmında Bilgi Problemi", *İslâm İlimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 4 (1980), 102; Abū ʿAbd Allāh Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-Rāzī, *Nihāyat al-ʿuqūl fī dirāyat al-uṣūl*, ed. Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Laṭīf Fūdah (Beirut: Dār al-Dhakhāʾir, 2015), 1/157.

[39] Fatma Aygün, "'Eşyânın Hakikâti Sabittir' İlkesini Benimseyen Kelâmcıların Sofestaiyye Eleştirisi", *KADER Kelam Araştırmaları Dergisi* 13/2 (2015), 828.

[40] Al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿAqāʾid*, 25-26; Aygün, "'Eşyânın Hakikâti Sabittir' İlkesini Benimseyen Kelâmcıların Sofestaiyye Eleştirisi", 830-831; al-Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-dīn*, 16-17.

hypothetical and imaginary world and the existence of a creator. This is because human beings can reason about the existence of God on the basis of real perceptions of the world and build a bridge between the known and the unknown.[41] If entities do not possess an objective reality, the entire universe would consist merely of transient attributes or illusions; in such a context, even the concept of God –like human constructs– would be reduced to an impermanent and illusory phenomenon. Similarly, if our knowledge is incapable of perceiving reality, everything we know is merely a relative and subjective concept. In this case, neither knowledge nor faith has value. Therefore, one must first prove and accept the existence of truth and the value of knowledge so that the issue of creation can serve as proof of the beginning of the universe and the existence of a creator. For this reason, when considering the issues of *ʿaqīdah*, we propose principles such as "things have a truth and our knowledge can comprehend them, which existed when they did not exist, and God has the power to create these truths out of nothing".[42]

Denying the reality of things can lead us to abandon all our beliefs and actions, rendering survival impossible. If we think we know God indirectly, the universe we observe provides us with indirect knowledge. Denying the reality of things makes it impossible for us to know God. Therefore, things and/or external realities have truths, and human beings can acquire this knowledge. Muslim theologians have no doubt about the reality of the external world and the objectivity of their knowledge of it.[43]

Consequently, the truth of things is the foundation of knowledge. Epistemologically, for something to have meaning, it must have reality. Thus, humans can only acquire knowledge about their existence. According to theologians, the reality of things and the unity of this reality are generally accepted. The knowledge formed in the human mind must be compatible with reality in the external world. Theologians' understanding of existence and knowledge, rooted in the

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[41] Aygün, "'Eşyânın Hakikâti Sabittir' İlkesini Benimseyen Kelâmcıların Sofestaiyye Eleştirisi", 829.

[42] Yusuf Ziya Yörükan, "İslâm Akaid Sisteminde Gelişmeler ve Ebu Mansur Matüridî", *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 2/2-3 (1953), 137; al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. Hüseyin Atay (Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, 1993), 1/62.

[43] Al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 1/21-23.

basic religious sources of Islam, is based on the view that knowledge is possible for human beings because existence is objective and knowable. The principle of "the reality of things is fixed" forms the basis for the ontological and epistemological approaches of theologians. Theologians believe that the fundamental realities of the world of existence are immutable and have a fixed structure. In Islamic theology, this principle is based on God's power to control the world.

3. Human Sensation and Perceptions of Reality

Our sensory system operates through the body's nervous system, stimulating neurons in the brain through electrical signals and thus activating our perceptions.[44] When they encounter phenomena such as light, sound waves, and chemicals, all our sensory receptors act to convert this change into an electrical wave that the brain can understand and send to the nerves and then to the brain.[45] Therefore, vision does not occur in our eyes, hearing in our ears, taste in our tongue, smell in our nose, or touch in our skin.[46] In our brain, changes are perceived, and as a result, sensations are realized.[47] For example, beams of light reflected from objects are converted into electrical signals as image information by the optical structure of the eye and sent to the brain. The brain that perceives these signals analyzes this information to perceive images. Similarly, the sound waves coming into our ears, the smells coming into our noses, and the tactile sensations on our skin are also sent to our brains via signals, where they are analyzed and perceived as relevant sensations. Therefore, if the brain receives similar signals from the virtual touch of a virtual arm, there is no discernible difference.[48] The so-called external world is constructed in our minds on the basis of these perceptions. This

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44 Savaş Ferhat, "Dijital Dünyanın Gerçekliği, Gerçek Dünyanın Sanallığı Bir Dijital Medya Ürünü Olarak Sanal Gerçeklik", *TRT Akademi* 1/2 (2016), 725-726.

45 Sinan Canan, *Değişen Be(y)nim* (İstanbul: Tuti Kitap, 2015), 200-201.

46 David Eagleman, *The Brain: The Story of You* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2015), 47; Ferhat, "Dijital Dünyanın Gerçekliği", 725-726.

47 Norman Doidge, *The Brain That Changes Itself: Stories of Personal Triumph from the Frontiers of Brain Science* (New York: Penguin Books, 2014), 22.

48 Mustafa Acungil, *Dijital Gelecekte İnsan Kalmak* (İstanbul: Tuti Kitap, 2021), 23.

construction also takes the form of consciousness.[49] Brain processes are also involved in consciousness. First, consciousness and all mental phenomena are created in the brain by lower-level neurobiological processes.[50] Everything we perceive and experience, from the smallest details to the galaxies in the universe, is a representation of our minds.[51] Therefore, the brain is the primary site where human sensations are formed and developed. Therefore, the perception of reality is created by the brain.

4. Simulation in the Context of Reality Experience of the Senses

As mentioned in the previous section, according to current scientific assumptions, our perception of reality is related to what occurs inside the brain.[52] Everything we experience is the result of electrical activity in the brain. If, using hardware and software, computer-generated representations of the virtual world are converted into signals that can be detected by human senses, it is theoretically possible to create a simulation that is indistinguishable from the real world.[53] Although a user moves between virtual objects, their brain perceives them as real. This is because the brain is essentially a structure that receives and sends signals.[54] The proposed method does not consider signal generation. If the brain is artificially stimulated, it feels things that do not truly exist as if they do. Therefore, when the brain receives a signal, it receives it as an image, whereas when there is no signal, it does not.[55] Seeing, hearing, smelling, and touching objects that do not exist through artificially created images, sounds, touch, smell, humidity, and temperature information make it possible for our brains to perceive them as real. If this artificial information were sufficiently detailed so our sensory organs could perceive it, these perceptions would be more

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[49] Ray Kurzweil, *The Singularity is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology* (East Rutherford: Penguin Publishing Group, 2005), 199-200.

[50] Leon L. Lau - Wang Lau, "Vital Phenomena: Life, Information, and Consciousness", *All Life* 13/1 (2020), 158.

[51] Canan, *Değişen Be(y)nim*, 138.

[52] Eagleman, *The Brain,* 47.

[53] Yuval Noah Harari, *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow* (Toronto, Ontario: Signal, 2016), 89-90; Matjaž Mihelj et al., *Virtual Reality Technology and Applications* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2014), 13.

[54] Ferhat, "Dijital Dünyanın Gerçekliği", 42.

[55] Acungil, *Dijital Gelecekte İnsan Kalmak*, 78-79.

realistic. In theory, the human brain can be removed and connected to a computer that sends electrical signals to provide artificial sensations, emotions, and false memories. However, a human being would not be able to tell whether it is a real or an artificial simulation of life.[56] The brain does not distinguish between being virtual and real. It only receives and sends signals. If it receives a signal, it accepts it as input and acts accordingly.[57]

There is no difference between the experience of living in a sufficiently advanced simulation and the everyday life we experience today.[58] The various senses of a user, such as hearing, smell, temperature, touch, and movement, can be stimulated very easily.[59] We have a theoretical possibility of enjoying the same pleasure in a simulation as in real life. To put it more clearly, the impressions, perceptions, and experiences of eating can be digitized.[60] Digitized human experiences can be created more effectively and to our liking than the actual taste and pleasure we obtain from physical eating. As knowledge is based on patterns of the brain's impulses, the capacity to make good inferences can be acquired independently of the nature of the objects with which we interact causally. This is because the structure of digital objects leads to brain states caused by the structure of the material objects. Consequently, most beliefs that are true in the material world are also true in the simulated world.[61] Thus, no difference is observed between the real and virtual spaces.

In a matrix scenario, the computer simulates the structure of the world. Although this structure is composed of data, the resulting brain

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56 Ferhat, "Dijital Dünyanın Gerçekliği", 726-727.

57 Acungil, *Dijital Gelecekte İnsan Kalmak*, 78.

58 Mike Treder, "Emancipation from Death", *The Scientific Conquest of Death Essays on Infinite Lifespans* (Buenos Aires: Libros en Red, 2004), 193.

59 Dadan Sumardani et al., "Virtual Reality Media: The Simulation of Relativity Theory on Smartphone", *Formatif: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan MIPA* 10/1 (2020), 13-24; Mihelj et al., *Virtual Reality Technology and Applications*, 177.

60 Ferhat, "Dijital Dünyanın Gerçekliği", 730; H. Hale Künüçen - Serpil Samur, "Dijital Çağın Gerçeklikleri Sanal, Artırılmış, Karma ve Genişletilmiş Gerçeklikler Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme", *Yeni Medya* 11 (2021), 42; Acungil, *Dijital Gelecekte İnsan Kalmak*, 70; İsmail Hakkı Aydın, *Beyin Sizsiniz 5.0 Metaverse Holistik Çağ* (İstanbul: Girdap Yayınları, 2022), 238; Emrah Kaya, *Metaverse* (İstanbul: Nemesis Kitap, 2022), 87-88; Kurzweil, *The Singularity is Near*, 376-377.

61 Longo, "How the True World Finally Became Virtual Reality", 291.

states and relationships are identical. For example, the brain state corresponding to the perception of a table will be the same whether the table is touched by my organic hands or by the hands of my avatar. Both the material and virtual worlds are visible because they are the phenomenal effects of the interaction between the brain and the structure of the elements that adapt it.[62]

Chalmers stated that a simulated brain can have the same consciousness as the original brain. In his view, a simulation of the human brain would have the same type of mind and the same type of conscious state as the brain it simulates. One way to achieve this is through a thought experiment in which we replace individual neurons in the human brain with silicon chips. At the end of this process, we would obtain a completely silicone brain that resembles the original brain. If this is the case, then a simulated brain can and will have the same consciousness as the original brain.[63] Chalmers claimed that we can acquire knowledge in simulations because we can control our avatars to interact in a satisfying way. [64] In this context, Bostrom is also a close collaborator of this idea. For him, consciousness was not necessarily a property that could be realized primarily in carbon-based biological neural networks inside the skull. In principle, silicon-based processors can perform the same task inside a computer.[65]

At the current stage of technological development, neither hardware nor software is necessary to create conscious minds in computers. However, convincing arguments have shown that if technological progress continues unabated, these shortcomings will eventually be overcome. Some scientists have argued that this stage may last only a few decades. However, the current study does not require any time-scale assumptions. The simulation argument is that humanity has developed many technological capabilities that can now be shown to be compatible with physical laws and material and energy constraints. [66] Having discussed the possibility of simulation theory in the context of the senses' experience of reality, we now attempt to

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62 Longo, "How the True World Finally Became Virtual Reality", 292.
63 Falk, "The Simulated World According to David Chalmers"; Alexander A. Berezin, "Simulation Argument in the Context of Ultimate Reality and Meaning", *Ultimate Reality and Meaning* 29/4 (2006), 247.
64 Longo, "How the True World Finally Became Virtual Reality", 291.
65 Bostrom, "Are You Living in a Computer Simulation?", 245.
66 Bostrom, "Are You Living in a Computer Simulation?", 247.

critique the idea of simulation in terms of theology's understanding of existence and knowledge.

5. Criticizing the Idea of Simulation within the Framework of Kalām's Understanding of Existence and Knowledge

The most important issue that *mutakallimūn* emphasize in their understanding of existence is the correspondence between knowledge in the mind and the reality of the object.[67] As we discussed in detail in the second chapter, according to the scholars of Kalām, the reality of things and the unity of this reality are accepted beyond doubt with the principle "the reality of things is fixed" (*ḥaqāʾiq al-ashyāʾ thābitat*[un]). The knowledge formed in the human mind must be compatible with reality in the external world. Denial of the reality of things can lead us to abandon all our beliefs and actions. If we believe that we know God indirectly, the universe we observe provides us with such indirect knowledge. Denying the reality of things makes it impossible for us to know God. Therefore, it is accepted that external realities possess truth and that human beings can attain this knowledge.[68]

Since the title of the chapter also has ontological content, the author can also discuss how Islamic theologians classify the universe ontologically by taking the theory of substance-accident theory as an axis. According to the *mutakallimūn*, the universe, which refers to everything outside God, is *ḥādith*. The entities in the universe consist of bodies, substances, and accidents. The substances that combine to form bodies occupy space (*mutaḥayyiz*), have size, and are self-subsistent (*qāʾim bi-dhātihī*). These substances cannot be devoid of accidents (*aʿrāḍ*), such as motion, rest, union and separation, color, heat, and cold.

These explanations reinforce the argument that the universe is grounded in objective reality, meaning that it is not a simulated construct. This is because both substances and accidents exist outside the mind in a real sense. It may not be sufficient to reject the theory of

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[67] Aygün, "'Eşyânın Hakikâti Sabittir' İlkesini Benimseyen Kelâmcıların Sofestaiyye Eleştirisi", 832.

[68] Al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿAqāʾid*, 19; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, 1/276-277; al-Bāqillānī, *Kitāb Tamhīd al-awāʾil*, 29; Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, ed. Bekir Topaloğlu - Muḥammed Ārūchī (Ankara: İSAM Yayınları, 2003), 46-52; al-Bazdawī, *Uṣūl al-dīn*, 17.

simulation on the basis of the principle that the reality of things is fixed. *Mutakallimūn* gives special attention to the corporeality of both this world and the hereafter and considers that they are composed of substances and accidents. They prove God through the properties of substances, bodies, and accidents (a cosmological argument, i.e., the proof of *ḥudūth*).

Since Muslim theologians do not doubt the reality of the external world and the objectivity of their knowledge, it does not seem possible for them to accept that human beings live in a simulation. In this case, the simulation contradicts the paradigm that they established on the basis of the reality of knowledge. As the possibility and reality of knowledge depend on the ontological structure of the object, humans appear unable to reach real knowledge in the metaphysical realm. Most human beings today agree that objects, things, and the universe have ontological realities. When we consider theologians' paradigms in terms of the truth of things, they can oppose simulations. However, theologians' understanding of the ontological structure of matter should be reviewed in the context of neurobiology. From a neurobiological perspective, objects do not need to correspond to ontological reality for knowledge to be real. Knowledge is realized in the human brain. Stimulating the brain is sufficient for realizing this information. Therefore, the fact that humans live in a simulation does not imply that the information obtained is not real. Chalmers argued that even if we are in a perfect simulation, it is not an illusion: "I am still in a perfectly real world; this conversation I am having with you right now is a perfectly real conversation. Everything makes sense as before". However, the philosopher of the mind Tim Crane supports Chalmers' views by commenting that "the tables you encounter in the simulation are real tables, but instead of wood and metal, they are made of bits and bytes." Psychiatrists, such as Carl Jung, have explored the question of mental projection, where each individual perceives the world slightly differently, depending on what is happening in their minds. According to this view, much of the physical world that we think is "out there" is actually "in here" in our heads; like a dream, there is no objective physical reality.[69] Thus, the idea of "simulation realism" emerges. Thus, we do not find "real" knowledge when we leave the

[69] Virk, *The Simulation Hypothesis*, 20.

simulation. Instead, we find a world in which most of our knowledge is valid. In other words, the objects of real information are not physical entities but regular brain impulse patterns. These patterns can be perfectly represented using bits of information. Therefore, we may not realize that we are brains in a jar rather than in real life. The hypothesis that we are living in a simulation without realizing it can be considered a thought experiment to prove that any perceived world is an effect of brain stimulation and that it makes no significant difference whether the causes of phenomenal representations are physical or digital objects (data streams).[70] In this context, the fact that the universe in which we live is a simulation does not necessarily render it meaningless. Although objects in a simulated universe are created by software rather than real subatomic particles, life in such a world can still be meaningful.[71]

6. The Concept of Simulation in Theological Debates

The possibility of conscious beings existing within a simulated matrix directly raises many thoughts beyond the universe, such as the nature of a creator God or an "absolute" God, the fundamental nature of reality, the theological significance of the "afterlife", and the place of values in the cosmos.[72] In this context, one of the most important debates in the simulation argument is the idea of a simulation creator. Since there is no argument against the existence and/or value of the traditional creator God, especially because we have no way of knowing whether our world is a simulation, we cannot determine whether our creator is merely an ordinary (but highly advanced) being (biological or digital). In such cases, our prayers and supplications are not philosophically different from those of an all-powerful, earthly ruler. In summary, the simulation argument posits the rather unpleasant possibility that when I pray to a traditional god, I am actually praying to a (highly intelligent, but neither infinitely nor revered) simulation operator. Such an operator or engineer is not bound by moral standards. However, the existence of the simulation does not mean that it is a human product.[73] Such a claim is theoretically

[70] Longo, "How the True World Finally Became Virtual Reality", 288.
[71] Yılmaz, "Simulation Hypothesis and Theism", 999.
[72] Drob, "Are You Praying to a Videogame God?", 79-80.
[73] Drob, "Are You Praying to a Videogame God?", 80.

not different from saying that the world was created by an intelligent being. Chalmers and Bostrom's simulation argument suggests that it is possible that intelligent beings may have brought humans into existence. According to Chalmers and Bostrom, those who brought us into existence could be considered our gods, not only because they created our universe but also because they have knowledge, control, and power over it.[74] In this case, it is necessary to examine whether there is a similarity between the God that theology recognizes as the only supreme and absolute being in all aspects, and the God that Chalmers and Bostrom refer to. Chalmers and Bostrom posit that the being who creates the simulation is omniscient in all respects. If we are in a simulation and the simulator, in a sense, created this universe, then it is understood to be omnipotent and omniscient in terms of what is happening in it.[75] This issue can be evaluated within the scope of categories in Islamic theology. In the science of kalām, the subject of existence is either eternal (*qadīm*) or created. An eternal being is considered an omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent being that is not created by any one being.[76] When we consider the possibility that this simulation of existence could have been created by a being, we can easily say that we can develop the concepts of an omniscient, omnipotent, and absolute creator. In fact, a being with these characteristics stands out as a being who possesses the indispensable qualities of God's conception, as envisioned by a divine religion. This conception is similar to the category of eternal beings characterized as God in theology.[77] The simulation and the beings living in it are also included in the category of *ḥādith*; that is, they create beings who can continue their lives according to the principles, rules, and customs established by the creator. Therefore, in this context, we can state that the understanding of a simulation does not contradict the

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74 Bostrom, "Are You Living in a Computer Simulation?", 253-254; David J. Chalmers, *Reality+: Virtual Worlds and the Problems of Philosophy* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002), 137.

75 Grupp, "The Implantation Argument", 205-206.

76 Mehmet Bulgen, "Mebdeʾ ve Meʿād: Kelam İlmi ve Modern Kozmoloji Açısından Evrenin Başlangıcı ve Sonu", *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 63/2 (2022), 912.

77 Falk, "The Simulated World According to David Chalmers".

understanding of an absolute God. Some thinkers have already suggested the possibility that all simulations were created by God.[78]

One of the most important points claimed in simulation theory is that we are simulated by others.[79] As Bostrom puts it, "virtual machines can be superimposed: it is possible for one machine to simulate another machine, and this can go on for as many iteration steps as you like".[80] If the world around us is a simulation, it naturally leads us to question who (or what) is outside the rendered world. Who created us, and who (or what) continues to run the simulation even now?[81] One possibility, put forward by individuals from Elon Musk to Stephen Hawking, is that creators are some type of alien life form.[82] This idea seems to negate the existence of a god. Such claims can be evaluated within the framework of the *ḥudūth* argument, which theology uses to prove God's existence and perpetuity. This argument is based on the proposition that a created thing (*ḥādith*) should have a creator (*muḥdith*). However, according to this argument, a creation must end in a being that is eternal (*qadīm*) in every aspect and whose existence is necessary (*wājib al-wujūd*). If this creation does not end, succession occurs. Succession means "to continue one after another without interruption".[83] Islamic scholars have attempted to prove the existence of God using the "evidence of the existence", which we can call the chain of cosmological arguments. According to this argument, because every being in the universe (*ḥādith*) has a beginning, a creator (*muḥdith*) must continue its existence. The creator must have been uncreated, eternal, or necessary (*qadīm wa-wājib*). If every being has a beginning, an infinite chain of cause and effect is encountered, which is incompatible with reason. This situation is referred to as "succession" and involves a logical contradiction. Therefore, scholars have concluded that the order in the universe and the formation of beings could only have been created by an eternal and necessary being.[84]

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78 Yılmaz, "Simulation Hypothesis and Theism", 996.
79 Görücü, "Simulation and God", 2.
80 Steinhart, "Theological Implications of the Simulation Argument", 34.
81 Virk, *The Simulation Hypothesis*, 271.
82 Virk, *The Simulation Hypothesis*, 275.
83 Osman Demir, "Teselsül", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 2011), 40/536.
84 Abū l-Maʿālī Rukn al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Malik ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Juwaynī, *al-Shāmil fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. ʿAlī Sāmī al-Nashshār et al. (Alexandria: Munshaʾat al-Maʿārif, 1969), 693; Abū l- Ḥasan Qāḍī l-quḍāh ʿAbd al-Jabbār

According to theologians, unless the chain of succession ends in an eternal creator, it is impossible to avoid the logical fallacy of judging the infinity of objects and events.[85]

When we consider simulation theory within this framework, the necessity of a necessary and eternal being that creates a simulation eventually emerges. An eternal and necessary being is one of its essences. It is not possible for an eternal and necessary being to have characteristics such as multiplicity, change, merger, and dissociation, as is the case with created beings. In other words, even if we are created by aliens or other beings, when we consider that they were also created by a being, it is logical that the simulation returns to a single necessary eternal being. Therefore, within the framework of the *ḥudūth* argument, it is possible that the simulation will eventually form a world created by God in theological terms.

Another important debate is whether it is possible to live a meaningful life in a simulation.[86] If we are in a perfect simulation, the idea that human life would be completely meaningless emerges. In addition, issues such as resurrection, heaven, hell, and trials are discussed. However, it must be emphasized that the simulation was not an illusion. The simulated world was completely realistic. In the simulated world, reality is experienced in the same way as in the current world. All of the actions individuals engage in, such as talking to people and eating, will be the experience of a completely real world, even if we are in a simulation. Therefore, the argument that being in a simulation renders life meaningless is unrealistic. When a person conducts a simulation, they will experience all phenomena that are indistinguishable from those in the real world, which can make life more meaningful. In fact, while living in a simulation, one does not believe that "I am in a simulation, so the goals and objectives and what I experience are illusions". Our conscious experiences and

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ibn Aḥmad al-Hamadānī, *Mutezile'nin Beş İlkesi: Sharḥ al-Uṣūl al-khamsah*, ed. and trans. İlyas Çelebi (İstanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı, 2013), 1/188; Demir, "Teselsül", 40/536; Bekir Topaloğlu, "Hudûs", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 1998), 18/304.

85 Al-Juwaynī, *Kitāb al-Irshād ilá qawāṭiʿ al-adillah fī uṣūl al-iʿtiqād*, ed. Muḥammad Yūsuf Mūsá - ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Munʿim ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1950),28.

86 Falk, "The Simulated World According to David Chalmers".

relationships with other people will be as present in a simulation as they are in ordinary reality.[87] Thus, the fact that the universe in which we live is a simulation does not necessarily render it meaningless. This means that life on Earth can still be meaningful, even if everything in the simulated universe is software-generated.[88]

If we accept that we live in a simulation, we can conclude that the concept of resurrection is one of the most important ethical problems that could arise. Simulation may be perceived as diminishing the value of the afterlife as a window to reality and truth. This is because any information or revelation of reality offered to us about the afterlife would be subject to the same epistemic doubts that all empirical phenomena are subject to in our current lives.[89] However, the idea of heaven and hell raises doubts about the ultimate reality. However, if we assume that we live in a simulation, then we can conclude that no theoretical problem arises. Death in simulation can be considered the point at which the human consciousness and mind cease to be related to the simulation after the loss of the functions of the human avatar.[90] The process we call resurrection, which involves making human beings conscious again and rematching mental functions with simulations, does not pose any theological problem. When we think in terms of heaven and hell, we cannot see situations that can cause theological problems. Living in a simulation does not require the idea of not going to heaven or hell. After the simulation is created in this world, it can be recreated in such a way that the perception of reality is formed at a perfect level, such that people desire to live. With the new technology developed in this study, humans will have unlimited opportunities. If we are truly digital beings in a digital matrix, it is a simple matter for the entity that controls us to provide digital consciousness after death, just as it provides consciousness to our lives in the simulation. Heaven and hell are other simulations, and we will be told nothing about the true nature of things.

With new software, in which all evils of the past are erased and all feelings of envy and jealousy are purified, a life based on constant

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87 Falk, "The Simulated World According to David Chalmers".
88 Yılmaz, "Simulation Hypothesis and Theism", 999.
89 Drob, "Are You Praying to a Videogame God?", 81-82.
90 Erhan Demircioğlu, *Makinedeki Hayalet Zihin Felsefesine Giriş* (Ankara: Fol Yayıncılık, 2022), 47.

happiness can be offered in a new simulation where there is no pain or hardship. This simulation, based on the constant happiness of humans, can be regarded as a form of paradise.

Similarly, the hell dimension can be grounded in a mechanism that causes people to suffer. Like heaven, a simulation can be created that people enjoy, whereas in hell, people can live in a simulation in which they suffer in the same way. At this point, we emphasize that the simulation does not differ from real experience. When we consider that human emotions, such as pleasure, pain, feeling, and lust, occur in the brain, there is a situation in which reality can be fully experienced in simulations.

From the perspective of testing, the religious belief that people are sent to the world to be tested can be more reasonably justified. Thus, the suffering, hardship, bloodshed, wars, and genocide that people have experienced in this world and the genocide that is taking place in places such as Palestine today can be seen as more reasonable from the perspective of God's image in terms of testing. In the Qurʾān, when God began to create human beings, the angels' questions about creating a being that would create mischief on earth are answered by God saying [91], "I know what you do not know", and the devil saying, "I will lead most of the people astray from your path", which clearly shows that the test was not a pleasant one for humanity. In most current religions, the concept of achieving salvation or reaching heaven is often seen as a state available only to followers of that religion, whereas others are condemned to hell or similar punishments. This can lead to potential conflicts, especially in faith relations and between individuals with different belief systems. Those who do not believe in Islam are more likely to go to hell. In Christianity, those who do not believe in Jesus are less likely to go to heaven. Judaism teaches that only those who follow the Jewish faith have access to God's favor. Combining these belief systems leads to the idea that a large proportion of the global population will return to hell. In this scenario, Satan's claim is realized, while at the same time, the idea that angels are beings who will cause mischief in the world is revealed. Given God's omniscience and eternal knowledge, the idea that the world was created only to test people does not seem to align with

[91] Q 7:16.

God's absolute goodness or mercy. It is difficult to understand painful events, such as starvation or the bombing of innocent babies to death. The question of why a creator who knows that such suffering is possible would create such a world does not make a connection between God's absolute goodness and reality theologically plausible.

To better understand theology, we can interpret the simulated world as a test. It tests what humans do with their free will and what evils they achieve with their unlimited nature. At the same time, we are presented with an environment in which humans, despite God's support and guidance, can abandon their nature and become good. Therefore, the simulation hypothesis can be interpreted as a test of the limits of human will and the strength of human free will. This interpretation can be meaningful in terms of showing angels (Q 2:30) and all of humanity a life that defies and rejects God. Thus, the consequences of human choice and the importance of freedom are emphasized. Consequently, the notion of life as a simulation may become more meaningful and plausible through the concept of testing. In conclusion, interpreting life as a simulation can offer a more coherent and meaningful framework for understanding human existence as a trial or test. This perspective not only highlights the traditional divine attributes of omniscience and omnipotence but also preserves the often-contested qualities of God's absolute goodness and mercy. Furthermore, it provides a possible explanation for the existence of suffering and evil in the world, suggesting that such experiences may be temporary and embedded within a broader, intentional design. The simulation hypothesis renders these phenomena more intelligible and justifiable in this context.

Overall, although the simulation argument seems to oppose the inherent value of human life, human responsibility, and human free will, a closer examination reveals that this opposition can be weakened or perhaps eliminated altogether.[92]

[92] Berezin, "Simulation Argument in the Context of Ultimate Reality and Meaning", 259.

Conclusion

The simulation hypothesis is a complex issue that raises philosophical and scientific questions. However, it is impossible to confirm this hypothesis with certainty. Although it lacks experimental data and is highly speculative, it has been influential for many thinkers. At least for the time being, there is no significant reason to assume that we live in a simulated universe. However, it is clear that these debates will be important in a world where the relationship between the real and the virtual will be completely severed after virtual reality tools become more refined. This hypothesis raises intriguing questions about the nature of reality and the limits of human knowledge. We address these questions within the framework of principles such as "the reality of things is fixed", "the universe is *ḥādith*", and "the universe is contingent", in which the possibility of knowledge is discussed and the reality of existence is addressed. The principle of "the truth of things is fixed" holds a central place in Islamic theology, used for the possibility of knowledge, the existence of God, and the foundations of morality. On the basis of this principle, theologians affirm the ontological reality of the world and derive from it a system of values that forms the foundational tenets of the Islamic faith. However, we conclude that their views should be interpreted in light of neurobiology. According to modern science, the brain is the primary site of sensation formation and development. Consciousness and mental phenomena occur through neurobiological processes in the brain. Everything we perceive and experience is merely a representation of our minds. The so-called external world is constructed in our minds on the basis of our perceptions. A sufficiently advanced simulation can send the same signals to the brain as in the real world. In this case, we would not be able to distinguish between the simulated and real worlds. In fact, experiments on the reality of simulations have shown that the meaning of life can exist in a simulated universe. The simulation hypothesis does not make the human experience unrealistic. In simulated environments, people experience real emotions, form meaningful relationships, and pursue goals. This hypothesis can be viewed as a threat to theology, but it also offers new perspectives and ideas. When it is considered in its structure and in relation to questions about God's role, there is no problem. God maintains a role as creator and manager of the simulation. However, it

can be a tool that God uses to test people or to create different types of beings. This is the basis for faith-related issues, such as resurrection, heaven, and hell. The fact that we live in a simulation does not diminish the meaning of life. However, we believe this can help us further develop theology in terms of God's absolute goodness and power and make it relevant to the modern world. We emphasize the need to conduct a comprehensive analysis of simulation theory –considered in relation to the nature of reality– within the framework of theological causality, the metaphysics of substance and accidents, and fundamental ontological principles.

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