EDİTÖRE MEKTUP LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The Story of Searching for Living Life in Space from the Ancient Age to the Present in the Context of the Relationship Between Philosophy and Astronomy

Felsefe-Astronomi İlişkisi Bağlamında İlk Çağdan Günümüze Uzayda Canlı Yaşamı Arama Öyküsü

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ABSTRACT The researches about the universe so far gives us very little information about space and all other beings in space. It cannot be said that the point reached by science in subjects such as the beginning of the universe, its size, infinity, eternity, space and galaxies in space, planets, parallel universes, and black holes is at a very advanced level. As science develops and research on the universe and its contents progresses, we always come across new information. This information also gives us some secrets about whether there is life on other planets. One of the most important issues that people wonder about the universe is whether there is life or other living things on other planets. Today, when the world has become uninhabitable, this issue becomes more important as new researches about the universe is added. Man has always been in an effort to reach information about the universe as a whole. However, the desire to find out whether life exists on other planets lies at the heart of every space-related research. The mind does not consider it unlikely that other living things, albeit different, could live on other planets in the infinite universe. Physics, astrophysics, and astronomy studies on the age and existence of the universe provide us with new and convincing information that the universe is infinite, contrary to existing theories. Based on the idea that there may be infinite beings in an infinite universe, it is possible that there may be other living things on other planets. This article deals with this issue in the context of metaphysics-astronomy.

Keywords: Philosophy; astronomy, space, Islamic Philosophy, living life

ÖZ Evrenle ilgili şu ana kadar yapılan araştırmalar, bize uzay ve uzaydaki diğer bütün varlıklar hakkında çok az bilgi sunmaktadır. Evrenin başlangıcı, büyüklüğü, sonsuzluğu, ebediliği, uzay ve uzaydaki galaksiler, gezegenler, paralel evrenler, kara delikler gibi konularda bilimin ulaştığı noktanın çok ileri düzeyde olduğu söylenemez. Bilim geliştikçe, evren ve içindekilerle ilgili araştırmalar ilerledikçe hep yeni bilgilerle karşılaşıyoruz. Bu bilgiler bize başka gezegenlerde yaşamın var olup olmadığı konusunda da birtakım sırlar vermektedir. İnsanın evrenle ilgili merak ettiği en önemli konuların başında başka gezegenlerde hayatın veya başka canlıların olup olmadığı meselesidir. Dünyanın yaşanmaz hale geldiği günümüzde, evrenle ilgili yapılan araştırmalara yenileri eklendikçe bu mesele daha da önemli hale gelmektedir. İnsan, her zaman bir bütün olarak evrenle ilgili bilgiye ulaşma çabası içerisinde olmuştur. Ancak uzayla ilgili yapılan her araştırmanın temelinde başka gezegenlerde canlı yaşamın var olup olmadığını öğrenme arzusu yatmaktadır. Akıl, sonsuz evrende başka gezegenlerde farklı da olsa başka canlıların da yaşayabileceğini ihtimal dışı görmemektedir. Evrenin yaşı ve varlığı konusundaki fizik, astrofizik ve astronomi ile ilgili araştırmalar, evrenin mevcut teorilerin aksine sonsuz olduğu yönünde her geçen gün bize ikna edici yeni bilgiler sunmaktadır. Sonsuz bir evrende sonsuz varlıkların olabileceği düşüncesinden hareketle başka gezegenlerde başka canlıların olabileceği de muhtemeldir. İşte bu makale, felsefe - astronomi bağlamında bu meseleyi ele almaktadır.

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Anahtar Kelimeler: Felsefe; astronomi; uzay; İslâm Felsefesi; canlı yaşam

Is planet Earth the only planet with living life? Could there be similar living life and living beings on other planets? When we look at the current data of astronomy, cosmogony, and cosmology, we see that they are far from the potential to tell us anything definitive or final on this subject. However, while the philosophers' thought of cosmic minds, heavens, bodies, and souls of the spheres forms the basis of the philosophy-astronomy relationship, it also reveals the metaphysical arguments for the existence of living beings on other planets. Just as we do not have the opportunity to say that there is life only on the planet Earth, we live in space consisting of an infinite universe, so countless galaxies, planets, and stars, so it does not seem possible for the moment to claim the opposite. However, philosophers who reason about everything have made a deep effort to clarify this issue as well. In my opinion, the idea of cosmic minds mentioned above must be a manifestation of this effort.

When we look at astronomical research, it would not be wrong to say that the research and conclusions about space studies are still in their infancy. Leaving aside information such as the law of relativity, the expansion of the universe, the discovery of black holes, the abundance of galaxies, and the discovery of other planets and moons, perhaps the most important achievement of humanity so far is the sending of a spacecraft to Mars. The reason for all research and effort in space is to learn the situation of other planets in space, to trace life on these planets, to determine whether there are living beings on these planets, and to determine what kind of living things they are. At this point, considering the data from astronomy studies, it should be stated that science is unable to say anything definite about this issue. Note that this issue has not been specifically addressed by philosophers philosophically, whether there is life on other planets other than those on planet earth, in the universe. However, it is possible to obtain some information or conclusions about whether there is life on other planets or not, based on the information given by philosophers about the conception of the world, the existence of the world, vitality, spirit, mind, and soul.

According to the ancient philosophers Plato, and Aristotle, Neo-Platonic philosophers Plotinus and Proclus, and Islamic philosophers Fârâbî and Avicenna, the world is eternal but ontologically after God. The first thing that comes from God is 'reason'. The mind is a spiritual and intellectual being. After the mind comes into existence, according to a certain degree, other heavens, which are material beings in space, galaxies in the sky, planets in each galaxy, stars, satellites, and other living-inanimate, material-spiritual beings that we do not know yet, come into existence. According to these philosophers, there is a soul in the heavens also have. In other words, each celestial sphere has a triple structure: mind, body, and soul. This tripartite structure is an explanation of the emergence of a whole entity (being) in rank and a certain order. The emergence of plants, animals, human beings, and material beings from living and non-living beings on this planet, both in order of existence and order until we come to the planet earth we live on, is connected with this triple structure. According to this triple structure, which means the theory of emanation, and the theory of existence, which is mostly shaped by the thoughts of Al-Fârâbî and Avicenna, who are among the Islamic philosophers a second mind occurs when the first mind thinks about God. From the first mind's thinking of itself as a necessary being because of God, the first celestial sphere comes into being; As the first mind thinks of itself as a possible being, the soul, which is the reason for the movement of the first celestial sphere, occurs. His self, which is the reason for the movement of the first sky, occurs because he thinks of himself as a possible being. As a supreme being created by God, the first mind causes the existence of its celestial sphere, the mind of the fixed stars, and the soul of its sphere, which is located just below it, respectively. Every over the moon mind-

except the active mind at the bottom-is the cause of three things: its destiny, the mind just below it, and its soul. In the later stages of the emanation, the first intellect emerging from God (al-Awwal) must be followed by other minds one by one. Since there is a universe with its substance and form-that is the soul-under every mind and the mind below it, there are three things under every mind in terms of existence: the matter of the universe, its form (nafs), and the next mind. Therefore, the possibility of these three things coming into existence from the first Intellect in non-existence must be due to the above-mentioned trinity.

So far, we have seen the emergence of minds and heavens and their souls or spirits. The issue that interests us more in terms of the importance of our subject is the issue of the planet we live on and its occurrence. Islamic philosophers generally divided the universe into two parts, namely, the superlunar and sublunary realms, as is the case with the ancient and Neo-Platonist philosophers. By the part they call the supralunar realm, they mean the heavens and celestial bodies outside the Moon and planet Earth. The sub-lunar realm consists of the Moon and the planet Earth we live on. According to them, the superlunar world is eternal and is not subject to creation and corruption (kevn and fesâd). The sub-lunar realm is actually eternal, but it will be subject to formation and decay and will realize its eternity in another dimension by changing its quality. According to Islamic philosophers, minds, their bodies, and souls (spirit), which we have stated above to come into existence according to a certain degree, end in this planet earth, which they call the sub-moon realm. According to them, the final mind is the angel they called the Active Mind and think of as Gabriel. As with the minds before the Active Mind, only this world and all the beings in it come into being, except for the mind, of the three types of beings. In other words, the Active Mind is known as the immediate cause of the existence of all things animate and inanimate. The distant and first cause is always God.

When we look at the philosophers' understanding of the world, it should be stated that it is relative that they divide the world into two parts the superlunary and sublunar realms. When we look at space and the depths of space, we can say that the concepts of lower and upper lose their importance. Namely, while other planets and stars can be seen as the upper realm for us, for any creature living on Mars or another planet, we and our world are considered as in the upper realm. Because when they look at planet earth, they will see it above. In this respect, it is obvious that these concepts are relative. For this reason, it should not be considered unlikely that there are many sub-realms in the features of our world. As we have stated above, is the Active Mind only concerned with this planet earth, which we see as the lower realm? Or can we talk about planets that can be counted as many sub-realms and the living and non-living beings living on these planets? Although it is not yet possible to find an astronomical or scientific answer to this question, of course, some conclusions can be drawn from the philosophers' conception of the world.

As we have mentioned above, a feature of cosmic minds in the theory of emanation is that they cause animate and inanimate beings to come into existence with the blessing they receive from God. While the Active Mind, which is the lowest mind in rank, is the cause of planet Earth and all kinds of animate and inanimate beings on this planet it also can be the source of the existence of another planets and animate-inanimate beings with the same carachteristics. Moreover, the Active Mind is the last mind at the level of the minds. As one gets closer to God, there can be beings of higher levels than the Active Intellect from other minds that are higher in rank. Considering the size of the realm and the innumerable number of planets and stars, it is not something that can be rationally explained to say that the en-

tire realm was created for only one planet earth. Because the world and everything on it is like a drop in the sea when space is considered. In this respect, it is highly probable that various living things, whether from superior minds or from the Active Mind, have come into existence on other planets, moons, in other words, celestial beings, whether they are similar to us or not, or that they will occur in the future. Although astronomical data do not provide us with precise information at the moment, it may be possible to come across this at some point in space in the future. It seems that the story of searching for life on other planets of the universe will continue for a long time in the future, as it did in the past.