

## **Ontological Analysis: The Quandary of God's Attributes and Spiritual Journey in Shafak's *Three Daughters of Eve***

### **Abstract**

*This study focuses upon the attributes of God and the significance of knowledge to understand the mystery of the divine in Three Daughters of Eve. It argues for the adoption of a rational way to approach God using Averroes' arguments.<sup>1</sup> The study also shows that people have lost faith in God and do not take a rational approach to understand God. The research also discusses the impact of family and society in shaping the mind of a person and in formulating their views about God as well as about the relation between divine and human beings. Thus, the study unfolds the confusions and questions of the protagonist regarding the existence of God.*

**Keywords:** *Spiritual Quest, Existence, Confusion, Ontological Arguments, Religious Journey Epistemological Dimension.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Mysticism is a constellation of practices, discourses, texts, institutions, traditions, and experiences geared towards human transformation. The term 'mysticism' has ancient Greek origin meaning 'union with the Absolute, the Unlimited, or God' in a wide range of religious traditions and practices. Mysticism is a way of achieving realizations which are usually considered 'deeper' or 'true'. A man needs to realize and understand the attributes of God and then he needs to realize these attributes as the divine potential in him. Since mysticism is the relation between the Creator and

---

#### **Ayesha Saleem**

BS English Govt. P.G. College (W) Satellite Town Gujranwala  
E.mail: ayesha.maher8372@gmail.com

#### **Hina Rafique**

Assistant Professor of English at Govt. P.G. College (W) Satellite Town Gujranwala  
E.mail: hinarafique43@yahoo.com

#### **Bushra Munawar**

Senior Lecturer in English, King Saud Bin Abdul Aziz University for Health Sciences, Al -Ahsa Campus, Saudia Arabia  
E.mail: bushmun@gmail.com

---

<sup>1</sup> Averroes (1126—1198) is the Latinized name of Abu al-Walid Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Rushd, the Spanish-Muslim philosopher who argued that a philosophical examination sheds light on religion and that literalist approaches should be avoided.

the creation so it varies for different people. Every human being has a different sort of relationship with the Almighty. During the troubled twenty-first century, belief in God is challenging. Therefore, a modern person questions the existence and nature of God. Contextually, the present study deals with the analysis of these ontological arguments and epistemological dimensions. Ontological arguments tend to prove the existence of God. This paper analyzes *Three Daughters of Eve* in the light of the religious arguments of Averroes, a Muslim philosopher, taken as the theoretical framework because the text is permeated with religious beliefs and counter-arguments of the protagonist, Peri, a wealthy Turkish woman. Hence, this research proceeds to present the quest of the protagonist in the context of faith and the dilemma of understanding God. It sheds light on the spiritual journey of Peri and her 'personal conflict' with God.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This section of the research paper deals with the elaboration of the relevance and attributes of God as elaborated by Averroes in the book *The Exposition of Religious Arguments* (2001). Arguments for the existence of God have been proposed by philosophers and other theologians since the middle ages since St. Anselm<sup>2</sup> was the first one to present his ontological arguments about God. Since that time, God has been conceived as the Supreme Being, Being-itself, the source and creator of all beings, or in other similar ways, and the question of His existence is of primordial importance in numerous cultures, societies, and belief systems. Today in the west the term 'God' typically refers to a monotheistic concept of a supreme being. Classical theism asserts that God possesses perfection including the qualities of omnipotence, omniscience, and perfect benevolence. Many of the arguments regarding the existence of God have an epistemological dimension.

### *Averroes's Religious Arguments*

Averroes was a medieval Andalusian polymath and philosopher. He lived during an important period in Western intellectual history, in which interest in Philosophy and Theology was waning in the Muslim world and just beginning to flourish in Latin Christendom. He gives his philosophical views on God's existence and God's attributes in *Religious Arguments*. His book opens with a chapter on the demonstration of God's existence and God's unity. The first part of the book thus consists of the discussion of divine action, which includes the creation of the world, the commissioning of messengers, divine justice, and the nature of resurrection. In the next part, he elaborates the attributes of God. He says that God's knowledge of

---

<sup>2</sup> Saint Anselm of Canterbury (1033/34–1109) was an Italian born theologian and philosopher, known as the father of scholasticism in middle ages, who died at Canterbury, Kent England. He was recognized in modern times as the originator of the 'ontological argument' for the existence of God (based on the idea of an absolutely perfect being) and 'the satisfaction theory' of the atonement or redemption.

the object is the cause of that object, whereas human knowledge is the effect of the object. He rationally answers the questions regarding the attributes of God. He reconciles reason and revelation and attempts to solve the dilemma of God in a logical way. His religious arguments bespeak of the bond between human beings and divine. It explicitly argues that the attributes of God are seven attributes of perfection found in man, namely; life, knowledge, power, will, hearing, sight, and speech.

Human beings are curious about the attributes of the Almighty. They confront existential questions such as how do we know that God exists? What are the attributes of God? Why did God create evil? Averroes discusses these questions with clarity and depth. These attributes are actually manifested in human beings in different degrees in different ways: resultantly, they connect God with its subjects. Furthermore, one attribute of God can be manifested through one human being, through granting him the ability to manifest that attribute and to practice that (If God is al-baser, then the few chosen men have also been granted with this power to know and see hidden and unpredictable things, hence manifesting an attribute of God). *Religious Arguments* also explicitly states that created entities are known to God and willed by Him at the very moment, He wishes them to exist, but the book does not determine whether such knowing and willing are temporal or eternal. As Averroes states:

This attribute [of knowledge] is an eternal attribute since it is not permissible that the Glorious one can be characterized by it for a given period of time only. He knows the created at the time of his creation by eternal knowledge. For it would follow from this [claim] that [His] knowledge the [created] world at the time of its not being and at the time of its being, is one and same knowledge. (45-46)

Averroes's *Arguments* focuses on the importance of God which is still applicable in modern times. It asserts that knowledge of God is not possible unless one knows the reality of things. *Religious Arguments* also posits the term 'agent' for God admits two senses, real and figurative (imitated). God is indeed the real and ultimate agent who operates by means of second agents or causes that He not only creates but also preserves. With respect to divine justice, *Religious Arguments* denies the contentions of those who have taken the position that justice and injustice are entirely dependent on divine commands, so no action is just or unjust in itself. Thus, Averroes' text takes the view that God is entirely at liberty to do what He pleases. The book, *Averroes (Ibn Rushd), The Philosophy and Theology of Averroes* translated by Mohammad Jamil-Ur-Rehman states as:

To the consideration of the knowledge of God, we Muslims should believe that rational investigation is not contrary to Law, for truth cannot contradict truth, but verifies it and bears testimony to it. And if

that is so, and rational observation is directed to the knowledge of any existent objects, then the Law may be found to be silent about it, or concerned with it. In the former case no dispute arises, as it would be equivalent to the absence of its mention in the Law as injunction, and hence the jurist derives it from legal conjecture. (Averros)

Robert Pasnua in his article “*The Islamic Scholar Who Gave Us Modern Philosophy.*” discusses Averroes’ contribution to philosophy. Concerning his views on intellect, he further states: “Averroes denies that we each possess our own intellect. Instead, he thinks, intellect is something separate from our souls, some singular, immaterial thing that we are able to access when we think, and that we all share” (Pasnua n.p). Thus, Averroes has mentioned the exercise of agency of logic/ intellect and God’s attributes.

## **RESULTS & DISCUSSION:**

### **The Spiritual Journey of the Protagonist in *Three Daughters of Eve***

This section aims to investigate the religious beliefs of the protagonist, Peri, in *Three Daughters of Eve* from the perspective of *Religious Arguments* by Averroes. This analysis section is divided into three sections; the societal impact on shaping Peri’s religious beliefs, man as image of God, and the spiritual journey at Oxford.

### **Societal and Domiciliary impact on Peri’s personality regarding her Quest for God**

The text is a sweeping tale of faith, uncertainty, friendship, love, and an unexpected betrayal that is set across Istanbul and Oxford, from the 1980s to the present day. Shafak tends to highlight the religions in the society of Nalbantoglu through the depiction of their locality. This depiction reflects the faith and beliefs of people living in Peri’s (the protagonist) neighborhood. As stated in the text:

The street on which the Nalbantoglu lived was a quaint, sleepy lane where the most cherished virtues were modeled on three states of matter: to obey Allah and the imams...with unswerving compliance, ultimate surrender, and unbroken stability; to accept the Divine River of Life no matter how much mud and debris it might sweep along. (Shafak16)

This description of Nalbantoglu’s community presents the idea of religion and beliefs of its residents. When the novel opens, the protagonist of the novel, Peri, is a wealthy Turkish housewife but she grows up in Istanbul where she heard her parents fighting over religion. The novel traces her childhood to her adulthood and finally to her present position in Istanbul unfolding her confused religious beliefs. The disputes between Peri’s parents, Selma and Mensur, and the locality where she lives were

prominent aspects which lead to her confusion about the Almighty. The Nalbantoglu house-hold was divided into *her zone and his zone*, Dar-ul- Islam and Dar-ul-Harp, the realm of submission, and the realm of war. The lines from the text justify their disputes regarding religion as said by Shafak: "Religion had plummeted into their lives as unexpectedly as a meteor, and created a chasm, separating family into two clashing camps" (Shafak 20).

The feeling of being stuck between her mother's rigid faith and her father's faithlessness confuses her. Selma's firmness had a forceful influence on Peri, who wore camel leather sandals, goat's wool socks and was ridiculed by her classmates because her mother was suspicious that glue from pig bones might be used in manufacturing foreign-brand shoes. In contrast, her father Mensur, indulged in infidelity and made her more confused about God. Although he didn't question the existence of God but he was confused about God. As Peri asked him: "What about God? I mean, do you still believe He exists? 'Sure I do', Mensur said half-heartedly 'That doesn't mean I understand what He is up to'" (Shafak 86). Once he stated, "When it comes to the Almighty, grown-ups are no less confused than kids" (Shafak 137). The strife between her father and mother and their firmness regarding their religious views made her thoughts regarding God uncertain. Shafak herself stated: "there was no fight more hurtful than a family fight and no family fight more hurtful than one over God" (Shafak21). Peri could not believe that the religious teachings which her mother held sacred and her father railed against belong to the same God. This two-dimensional attitude created a chasm in her mind and personality and whenever she strives to understand God, she became more confused.

Selma, her mother, considered every disaster and every dispute, every illness and every problem as a sign of God's wrath and tried to inculcate this belief in Peri. She thought the imprisonment of Umut, who was arrested by police on a charge of rebellion, was a punishment from God. He was a rebel because he possessed a variety of books on Western Literature: *The Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* by Friedrich Engels, *The Permanent Revolution* by Leon Trotsky. The police chief asked him: "Why are you reading this shit? The police chief grabbed a book \_ *The Kiss of Spider Woman*- and shook it in Umut's direction 'You are a Muslim Turk. ....What is it to you huh, all the foreign crap? "(Shafak 27). Peri also thought that God has shown His wrath over Mensur's blasphemies (her father) by making him suffer a heart attack. Peri also considered it a punishment. She used to think:

Was this the way of Allah? First, He allowed you to utter profanities and joke without inhibition. Next, He made you pay the price? It was almost as if He wanted for you to sin so that He could smack you with His wrath. Was the way of God one of camouflage, a trick to disguise calculated revenge? (Shafak76)

Selma and Mensur both had created their own image of God and led their lives according to their own concept of God. They both failed in their act of introducing God's true nature to their children which made them, especially Peri confused about God. Peri's personal conflict took a strong hold of her after the imprisonment of her brother, Umut. It was in the days after Umut's imprisonment that Peri began to reframe her relationship with Allah which is the focus of this research study. She believed that all crises that happened to Nalbantoglu was because of God's injustice. She questions, "Could God see and hear through prison wall and across cell bars?" (34). This statement brings forth her doubt about the existence of God.

Peri was determined to find a way and a source to God. She thought she could use some twisted logic that could bring together her mother's creator and her father's creator in order to restore harmony between her parents. Shafak reflects her this confusion about God in the following words: "God was a maze without map, a circle without a centre, the piece of Jigsaw puzzle that never seemed to fit together. If she only could solve this mystery she could bring meaning to senselessness, reason to madness and order to chaos" (Shafak 34). Thus, God appears as an enigma to her which Peri strives to solve through her study on God.

### **Man is Image of God**

The Creator created humans in His own image, thus humans have certain attributes possessed by the Almighty. Averroes in his *Arguments* explicitly states that there are in fact seven attributes of perfection found in man; namely life, knowledge, power, will, hearing, sight, and speech. Since humans are created in God's image what they see or think of God is a direct reflection of their own personalities. The statement from Shams Tabriz, a famous Muslim philosopher in *The Forty Rules of Love*, justifies this notion: "How we see God is a direct reflection of how we see ourselves. If God brings to mind mostly fear and blame, it means there is too much fear and blame welled inside us. If we see God as full of love and compassion, so are we" (10). Thus, human beings are a reflection of their thought patterns.

Every character in *Three Daughters of Eve* shares their perception of God which is an unconscious analysis of their own personality. For Peri, God is a confusion and a mystery because she herself is perplexed. In God-diary that she keeps to explore the nature of God, Peri reveals her confusion, "I think God comes in many pieces and colours. I can build a peaceful God, all loving. Or I can build an angry God, punishing. Or maybe I'll build nothing. God is a Lego set" (Shafak 55).

The spiritual experience of watching 'baby in mist'; an angelic baby she often used to see approaching her in a halo of bright light, made her more confused regarding this faith and reason notion. She once again wrote down in her God-diary:

Is there really no other way, no other space for things that fall under neither belief nor disbelief\_ neither pure religion nor pure reason? A third path for people such as me? Because there must be others who feel as I do. It is as if I'm searching for a new language. An elusive language spoken by no one but me---. (Shafak 51)

This passage confirms her uncertainty regarding faith and belief. Peri thinks that God is cruel and doesn't show mercy on His creatures. In her mind, she created an image of an aggressive God who is not merciful and made His creatures pay the price of their every sin. But Peri believed Allah would listen to the prayers of children, although, Peri had never performed the 'Salah' (prayer) before, she appeals to the Almighty,

Dear Allah,

Mother says you watch me all the time, which is nice, thank you; it's also a bit spooky because sometimes I want to be alone. Mother says You hear everything- even when I talk to myself. Even the thoughts inside my head. You also watch all that happens. ...If you are angry with my father, please forgive him and make him well again. He is a good man. (Shafak77)

Peri's prayer showed that although she was confused regarding the attributes of God, she knew in her heart that it was only God who could help her to overcome her troubles. This is an important step in her quest for God. Shafak narrates, "Had Peri been allowed to fill in the religion box herself, she would probably have written: 'Undecided'. That would be more truthful."(Shafak 85). Contextually, the word 'undecided' shows that religion has also poised a question mark to her identity.

Likewise, Peri also wrote in her God-diary "I'm perpetually in limbo. Maybe I want too many things at once and nothing at once and nothing passionately enough" (Shafak 86). Peri doesn't take a rational path to understand the attributes of God. She blames God for all the injustices or crises occurred to her when she didn't know anything about God who is just a question for her, a mystery that can't be solved, a puzzle that can't be put together and a maze whose exit cannot be found. Peri says,

The eye through which I see God is the same eye through which God sees me, Eckhart<sup>3</sup> says, if I approach God with rigidity, God approaches me with rigidity. If I see God through Love, God sees me through Love. My eye and God's eye are One. (Shafak 291)

---

<sup>3</sup> Eckhart Tolle ( 1948- present) is German born Canadian spiritual teacher and best- selling author, renowned for his books, *Power of Now (1997)* and *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose(2008)*. He has been listed in the OPRAH Winfrey list of *100 visionaries and spiritual influencers*.

Thus, the discussion implies that human beings have created their own image of God in their minds and worship and take him accordingly which is actually the reflection of their own personality. God is kind to kind people and harsh to hostile people. While worshipping their own image of God, they forget the true God. The same is the case with Peri; her own bewilderment creates the image of God; God who is just a question for her, a mystery that can't be solved, a puzzle that can't be settled, a maze that can't be explored. Her confusion about God is just the reflection of her confused nature.

### **Spiritual Journey at Oxford**

Peri goes to Oxford University, for higher studies and her journey to Oxford University is significant because Oxford is the place where she meets Professor Azur, and her life changes. Professor Azur was a philosophy instructor at Oxford who taught about God and gave Peri a new approach towards Him, a rational approach. The truth is that she admired Azur and deified him as she listened to his lectures about God, but when he didn't return her love, she responded with anger and hatred. Her uncertainty whether she should continue loving Azur or not, prompts her to leave her studies incomplete and return to her country.

Oxford was the place where she met the other two daughters of 'Eve', and the three of them are the title of novel, *Three Daughters of Eve*. The three of them, Peri, Shirin and Mona, were different in their views and appearances. Shirin was a British-Iranian faithless wanderer, the sinner daughter of Eve. When Peri interrogated her religion she simply asserted "Oh sister, I'm just a wanderer. I don't belong anywhere" (Shafak 114). On the contrary, Mona was an Egyptian-American Muslim, born in New Jersey, who moved with her family to Cairo when she was ten. Her father and mother were religious and they raised her in their faith. She not only follows the rules of Islam but also defends them. She is involved in volunteer activities: Aid to the Balkans Society, Friends of Palestine Society, Sufi Studies Society and the Oxford Islamic Society, where she was a leading member. Peri was shocked that her friend could find time for all these activities. When Peri asked her how she managed, Mona replied, "Allah gave us five prayers a day to structure our lives" (Shafak 128). Peri found a younger version of her mother in Mona, as her explanation shows. Culturally she was a Muslim and Shafak, as the narrator, explains: "Islam, for her, was reminiscent of a childhood memory - so very familiar and personal but also somehow vague, far removed in space and time. Like a cube of sugar dissolved in her coffee, there and not there" (Shafak 143). Consequently, Shirin called Mona 'half and half', not entirely religious or completely without it, a bit of this, a bit of that: a great fusion of Muslim moderns. The three were the perfect triangle and they were most likely of friends; *Three Daughters of Eve: The Believer, The Confused and The Sinner*.



Shirin introduced Professor Azur to Peri. Azur, the atheist, was a walking legend for Shirin. She told Peri that Azur teaches 'God' because he himself appears to be like God. He had published nine books and he was always on a panel or attending a conference. Last year *Time* magazine named him among the one hundred most influential people in the world. While talking about Azur's influence on Peri's thoughts and her personality, it is pertinent to address Azur's views about God because they are influential in resolving Peri's confusion. In Azur's seminar on God, which Peri happened to attend by chance, she hears him clearing his throat and read from his book:

The prevailing question whether God exists elicits one of the most tedious, unproductive and ill-advised disputations in which otherwise intelligent people have been engaged. We have seen, all too often, that neither theists nor atheists are ready to abandon the Hegemony of Certainty. Their seeming disagreement is a circle of refrains. Where there is no possibility of change, there is no real ground for a real dialogue. (Shafak 178)

Azur, in this presentation, manifests a belief that it is important to approach God through every possible way. As a result, Azur is open to every new experience and had a belief there is no place in philosophical arguments for those who are unwilling to change.

Azur's recitation of the poem by the Persian poet, Hafez, about God gives us another insight into the views of the professor about God. The atheist professor says: 'Religion is a fairy tale for those who are afraid of the light' (180). In reply, an Irish professor remarks that 'Atheism is a fairy tale for those who are afraid of light' (180). In turn, Azur replied by stressing 'uncertainty'. He postulated that "I, as a simple human being, need both faith and doubt. Uncertainty, gentlemen, is a blessing. We do not crush it. We celebrate it. That's the way of Third Path" (Shafak 180).

This assertion reveals to Azur his views about faith and makes Peri curious enough to attend further his lectures. She said to one of her class-mates, "God was always a contentious issue in our house. Or religion, I should say. My mother and father have conflicting views; I'd like to study it, properly" (Shafak 183). This statement sheds light on her intention to struggle to solve the mystery of God and end her confusion about the Ultimate Reality. She came to Oxford for her secular studies but her confusion and curiosity led her to study God.

Knowledge is necessary to perceive the reality of God. Reality is not an external entity or phenomenon; it lies deep within the self. Mystical or spiritual knowledge, in reality, illuminates and broadens human perspective. The knowledge of every truth is gained in three ways, by inference, by sight, and by realization. 'Inference' means personal interpretation; 'sight' means visualizing things with the naked human eye

and ‘realization’ means the spiritual awareness of things. This Inference of God’s wonderful creations offers humans their first knowledge of God and it is knowledge that leads a man to the way of God.

Averroes introduced the notion of understanding the attributes of God through the use of reason, where knowledge serves as a medium for such an exploration of divinity and Peri does just that when she learns Professor Azur’s views on religion, which are shaped by Averroes’ philosophy. She was also under the magnetic influence of his personality. At his first meeting with Peri and other students, Azur shares his views by stating:

Just like Aristotle’s octopus, God is an enigma that calls for exploration. But it’s different. We don’t need to believe in octopus; we know it exists. Whereas with God, we can’t even agree on whether there is one or not. My seminar has nothing to do with belief. We’re seeking knowledge. The seminar on God is a meeting of curious minds. We come from all sorts of backgrounds but we have one thing in common. The spirit of inquiry! It is a programme that requires a lot of reading and research. I don’t care whether you are believer or not. (Shafak 203)

This dialogue elaborates Azur’s view of a path that leads to God. He pursues Averroes’s methods in the modern era although they were formulated in medieval times. In the Middle Ages, Muslim theists opposed philosophy, science and logic. They tended to approach God through love only. Reason, for them, corrupts their love towards Divine. Averroes rejected this concept and argued that the attributes of God could be understood by reason, too. Azur, a modern scholar at Oxford, invoked Averroes’ principle to his students and asked them to satisfy their thirst for knowing about God. The sentence, “God is an enigma that calls for exploration” (Shafak 203) is thus an important theme in Peri’s quest to determine the nature of God. Azur offered her different ways to study God and he thought that “the angry and aggressive cannot study the God” (Shafak 201), meaning that a humble nature and a readiness to accept diversities and opposites is the key to knowing God.

Azur addresses eleven students in his seminar entitled ‘Studying God’. He asks them to sit in a circle because “God had to be discussed in a circle, everyone on the circumference equidistant from the centre, looking at one another’s eyes” (Shafak 221). Walking in a circle inside the ring of students, Azur speaks:

We’re not here to confer about Islam or Christianity or Judaism or Hinduism. Ours is a scientific inquiry into the nature of God. You can’t let your personal beliefs get in the way. Just remember, as Russell<sup>4</sup> noted, “The degree of one’s emotion varies inversely with one’s knowledge of the facts” (Shafak 227).

This passage explicitly represents Azur's views. He was more interested in God than religion. He interprets the dream of Descartes in one of his lectures, as the dictionary represents science and knowledge. Poetry symbolizes philosophy, love, wisdom. He thought God was telling him to bring them all together by means of reason and create a marvelous science. Azur taught his students to "stay away from religion, it only divides and muddles. Go to mathematics, Physics, music, painting, poetry, art, architecture... approach God through unlikely channels" (Shafak 243). Thus, Azur has a unique way of adopting every possible source of attaining knowledge and wisdom in order to know about the attributes of God. When Azur meets Peri before Christmas in the library, he sheds light on the significance of the faith the people hold. He says:

There are many in the world whose sense of security comes from their faith. They're convinced that there is only one interpretation of God: their own. Absolute theism or absolute atheism, they are equally problematic. My task is to inject the faithless with a dose of faith and believers with a dose of skepticism. I want all my senses awake. Let's not depend on one centralized brain. Let's bring poetry into philosophy and philosophy straight into our daily lives! (Shafak 266-267)

This reflects his thoughts about how to approach God, and shows that he is not conservative or liberal, neither faithless nor extremist. His beliefs and his words have a deep influence on Peri. Thus, it was Azur who gives her a way to understand God in her spiritual journey. He tells her that the best way to approach 'the question of God' was neither through religiosity nor skepticism but through solitude. Peri develops another way of looking at things because Azur's universe was outside the rigid dichotomies of good and evil, God and Devil, light and dark, theism, and atheism. Azur's personality and his views cause Peri to fall in love with him. Because she has a personal dispute with God, Azur has a special affection for her, but as a result of controversial talk regarding their love affair, Azur left off teaching about God. After years of Azur leaving his job at University, his lecture on 'Debate on God' again presents the dilemma of the modern man of the twenty-first century. He propounds that "it was time to bring God the Saviour back, back into academia, back into the family, back into the public place. Freedoms should never be confused with Godlessness" (Shafak 359).

Through Azur's arguments and teachings about the importance of re-embracing God in the modern era, Peri begins to realize the existence of His presence through knowledge and reason as propagated by Averroes in medieval times. She mixes mortal love with divine love and leaves the University in this confusion. After years, Peri calls Azur and asks him to have one more seminar with her on forgiveness, love, and knowledge, and she would be the professor this time. She is a mature and

wealthy Turkish woman now and it is where the novel opens. The realization that human beings suffer at the hands of a God that they themselves create is the final verdict in Peri's spiritual journey towards God, which she finally ends because of her confusion between mortal love and divine truth.

## **CONCLUSION**

This essay analyzes the spiritual journey interlinked with the dilemma of how to know God's attributes that is undertaken by the protagonist, Peri. This research focuses on the point that people of the modern era are confused about the attributes of Almighty and employ ontological arguments that prove the existence of God through His nature. The other aspect highlighted in this research is how society and family influence the protagonist, Peri, by confusing her with contradictory ideas about the existence of God. She is torn between the rigid and staunch beliefs of her mother and the atheism of her father. With the passage of time and after crossing the intricate web of these opposite poles, she finally channels her direction towards God. The essay explores Peri's gradual spiritual journey through her childhood to adulthood when she finally understands that reason and logic are the proper means of understanding the attributes of God. Hence, this essay argues that rationality - knowledge and reason - are an authentic resource for understanding the mysterious nature of God, as Averroes' philosophical arguments had pointed out in the medieval era. The discussion in the paper sheds light on the fact that sometimes human beings are just channels "to justify the ways of God to men" (Milton,16-25), as Azur does.

## **REFERENCES**

- Averroes. *Faith and Reason in Islam: Exposition of Religious Arguments*. trans. Ibrahim Nijar. England. One word Publications. 2001. Web. 6 November, 2017.
- Averroes. *Averroes (IbnRushd), The Philosophy and Theology of Averroes*. trans. Mohammad Jamil-Ur-Rehman. Baroda. Manibhai Mathurbhal Gupta, 1921. Oll.libertyfund.org. Web. 10 Feb, 2019.
- Milton, John. *Paradise lost*. Hackett Publishing, 2005.
- Shafak, Elif. *Forty Rules of Love*. England: Penguin Random House. 2010. Print
- Shafak, Elif. *Three Daughters of Eve*. UK: Penguin Random House. 2016. Print
- Skirry Justin. "Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Rene Descartes". iep.utm.edu. n.d. Web. 10 August, 2017.
- Pasnua, Robert. "The Islamic Scholar Who Gave Us Modern Philosophy." HUMANITIES, (the magazine). November/December 2011, Volume 32, Number 6. www.neh.gov. Web. 15 Feb, 2019.

